A-DIEU ECCLESIA:

The Kingdom of God and the Ecclesial Implications of Jacques Derrida's Political Philosophy (of Justice).



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Dedicated to my patient family,
inspirational friends,
and supportive faculty.

Ecce Quam Bonum

How very good and pleasant it is
when kindred live together in unity!

-Psalm 133:1

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Contents

A-Dieu Ecclesia - Short Abstract x

A-dieu Ecclesia - Long Abstract xi

SECTION ONE 1

Jacques Derrida and the Philosophy of Justice 1

CHAPTER ONE Introduction 2

1.2 Justice for Derrida and Derrida's Justice 6

1.3 Justice: 'The Mystical Foundation' 9

1.3.1 *Aporia* 10

1.3.2 Undecidability 10

1.3.3 Autoimmunity 11

1.4 Moltmann, Pannenberg and the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ 12

1.4.1 Jürgen Moltmann [Chapter Four] 13

1.4.2 Wolfhart Pannenberg [Chapter Five] 14

1.5 Anglican identity and The *Kingdom of God* 16

1.6 Terminological and Typographical Prolegomenon 20

1.7 Basileia tou Theou? 21

1.8 Author's note 22

CHAPTER TWO: Situating Derrida 23

2.1 Why Derrida? 23

2.2 Obscurantisme Terroriste (or Gives Bullshit a Bad Name) Critical Misconceptions of 'Undecidability' 25

2.3.1 Différance: Doubling meaning (a.k.a Commentary) and Interpretation 30

2.3.2 Closure/Clôture 35

2.4 Deconstruction's categorical imperative 41

2.5 Derrida and Theology 43

2.5.1 Graham Ward - Barth, Derrida and the Language of Theology 44

2.5.2 Jean-Luc Marion 47

2.5.3 The Prayers and Tears of John D. Caputo 50

2.6 Derrida's Justice 53

CHAPTER THREE Derrida's Force of Law: The Mystical Foundation of Authority 56

3.1 "Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice" 57

3.2 The "Mystical Foundation of Authority" 59

3.3 Three *Aporias* of Law and Justice 65

3.3.1 First *aporia*: The Epokhē of the Rule 65

3.3.2 Second Aporia: the Haunting of the Undecidable 66

3.3.3 Third Aporia: The Urgency That Obstructs the Horizon of Knowledge 68

3.4 Justice as both Epistemology and Ontology 73

3.5 Divine Justice in Benjamin's Zur Zritik der Gewalt (1921) 75

3.6 Force of Law II: First Name of Benjamin [*Prénom de Benjamin*] 76

3.7 Derrida and Autoimmunity 81

3.8 Autoimmunity: A biological analogy....84

3.9 The Undecidability of Autoimmunity....88

3.10 Political Examples of Autoimmunity....90

3.11 Conclusion: A "spurious infinity"?....94

SECTION TWO....99

Moltmann, Pannenberg, and The Kingdom of God....99

CHAPTER FOUR *The Kingdom of God* in Moltmann....100

4.1 Intro: Law is to justice…....100

4.1.1 Does *The Kingdom of God* have a History?....101

4.1.2 βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ as eschatology....104

4.1.3 Why Moltmann and Pannenberg?....105

4.1.4 Following Derrida's Structure....109

4.2 Jürgen Moltmann....111

4.2.1 Eschato-*logic*....113

4.2.2 Futurity and Impossibility....119

4.2.3 Futurum and Adventus....124

4.2.3.1 Adventus as correction....125

4.2.3.2 Ecclesial Implications of Adventus....127

4.2.3.3 Preserve and Suspend....130

4.3 Derrida and Moltmann in other literature....133

CHAPTER FIVE....138

Pannenberg on Christ and *The Kingdom of God* 138

5.1 Jesus proclaiming the Coming Kingdom 138

5.1.1 Futurity is Fundamental - Similarities with Moltmann 140

5.1.3 Pannenberg's 'Appearance' and Derrida's 'Specter' 147

5.1.4 Danger, Danger 153

5.2 Implications for Ecclesiological Futurity 153

5.3 Contrast with Moltmann and Agreement with Derrida 155

5.4 Pannenberg's Eschatological Ecclesiology 159

5.5 Differences with *différance* 161

SECTION THREE 166

The Church as Body Politic 166

CHAPTER SIX 167

Eschatology, Ecclesiology and *The Kingdom of God* 167

6.1 Introduction 167

6.2 More Than Communion: Imagining an Eschatological Ecclesiology 168

6.3 Critiques of κοινωνία/communio- ecclesiologies 169

6.3.1 The Eschatological Critique 169

6.4 Four Critical Functions 176

6.5 Five marks of an eschatological ecclesiology 179

6.5.1 Tensiveness 179

6.5.2 Openness 180

6.5.3 Risk 182

6.5.4 Trust 183

6.5.5 Hope 184

6.6 Conclusion 186

CHAPTER SEVEN 189

The Kingdom of God in Anglican Ecclesiology 189

7.1 Introduction to Anglican Ecclesiology 189

7.1.1 *Aporia* 190

7.1.2 Undecidability 190

7.1.3 Autoimmunity 191

7.2 Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission 193

7.2.1 Theologies of Liberation 195

7.3 Eschatology and the Anglican Communion 196

7.4 Anglican Reports, Communiqués and Documents 200

7.4.1 For the Sake of the Kingdom (1987) 201

7.5 Kingdom as Tension, Promise, Gulf, and Horizon 204

7.6 *The Virginia Report* (1997) 213

7.7 *The Windsor Report* (2004) 219

7.8 Communion, Conflict and Hope (2008) 224

7.9 Expansive ecclesial reflection 232

7.9 The Church as a 'Community without Community'? 234

7.9.1 Steven Shakespeare's A Community of the Question 236

7.9.2 Hostipitality 242

7.9.3 Caputo and the "Community without Truth" 243

7.9.4 Caputo's Church Community or Deconstruction as the Hermeneutics of the Kingdom of God 243

CHAPTER EIGHT A-Dieu Ecclesia: A Community of Différance 250

8.1 Retracing steps 250

8.2 Legacy & Inheritance: Eschatology's Relation to the Past. 253

8.3 The Ecclesial Guardrail: Unity and Diversity 256

8.4 Unforeseeability and Recognition: Exploring Offenbarung and Offenbarkeit 258

8.5 Recognizing the Risen Christ 260

8.5.1 The Emmaus Road: Breaking Bread as Offenbarkeit 261

8.5.2 Mary Magdalene: Misrecognition and the Yearning Heart 261

8.5.3 "Who are you?" 262

8.6 Faithful Practices as the Horizon of Recognition 263

8.8 Epilogue 266

A-Dieu Ecclesia- The greeting of the a-Dieu does not signal the end.' 266

BIBLIOGRAPHY 269

A-Dieu Ecclesia - Short Abstract

This dissertation intends to argue that the later political thought of Jacques Derrida has implications which bear on the church's perceived relationship with *The Kingdom of God*. It will be made up of three major sections and will attempt to pursue the thesis that Derrida's *aporetic*[1] description of the quasi-transecendental quality of justice in 'relation' to the law, may be used fruitfully for ecclesial self-reflection in order to contemplate the asymmetrical relationship that exists between the Church and the *Kingdom of God*. An analogy of this relationship might be rendered as follows,

law : justice :: church : *Kingdom of God*

The first section investigates Derrida's political thought, specifically *The Force of Law: The Mystical Foundation of Authority* and highlights of justice's asymmetrical relation to the law and inescapable aporetic structure within.

The second section considers the work of two theologians Wolfhart Pannenberg (1928-2014) and Jürgen Moltmann (1926-2024) who both focus on issues related to the *Kingdom of God*, whilst concurrently arguing for congruencies that exist between their work and that of Derrida.

In the final section I will attempt to highlight this emerging image of eschatological ecclesiology in two areas. Firstly, by examining the work of Scott MacDougall's critique of communion/koinonia ecclesiology working similarly to expand the church's self-reflection to include a more eschatological orientation. Secondly, specific to the Anglican Communion, the work of the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commissions major projects, which include: For the Sake of the Kingdom (1987), TheVirginia Report (1997), Communion Conflict and Hope: The Kuala Lumpur Report (2008) will be examined.

Finally it will be argued that given the analogous structure of Derrida's justice with the The *Kingdom of God*, Derrida's insights are legitimate tools for ecclesial self-relfection.

[1] From Greek ἐποχή meaning suspension, deferral, or etymologically non-path, impassable. "In Derrida's use of the word, *épokhē* names the necessary suspension of rules in the application of justice, while at the same time the one who does the suspending must recognize the necessity of rules." *For Derrida*, Miller, J. Hillis, Fordham: New York, 2009, p. 13.

A-dieu Ecclesia - Long Abstract

Jesus preaching that the '*Kingdom of God* is at hand' seems an incontrovertible reality of the Gospels. The content of this reality is on less sure footing especially in regard to ecclesial polity. A fundamental theological reflection has been driven by an awareness that the church exists in a tension between the ideal that is formulated in the concept of the *Kingdom of God* and the reality of an institution that exists in mundane forms. Resolving this tension that exists between *Kingdom of God* and church would inexorably lead to either to church triumphalism, that the Church *is* the *Kingdom of God* without remainder, or, that the institution of the Church is itself subject only to human authority leading to a total separation of the *Kingdom* as some sort or spiritualized or eternalized ideal incapable of informing any Church polity whatsoever.

This thesis proposes that the French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930-2004), and his aporetic description of the quasi-transecendental quality of justice in relation to the law, may be fruitfully used for ecclesial self-reflection to contemplate the *Kingdom of God*. An analogy of this relationship might be rendered as follows,

law : *justice* :: church : *Kingdom of God*

That is to say, following Derrida, that if law, which is deconstructible, is founded on justice, which is not, and the analogy I propose is cogent, then the structure of the Church, in every form is open to deconstruction, while the *Kingdom of God*, which both founds the Church and is asymmetrical to it, is not.[2] Therefore, if the church is to be open to the reality of the *Kingdom of God* mustn't the structure of the Church necessarily be open to the destabilizing forces

[2] Derrida, "Force of Law", p. 242-243.

which *Kingdom of God* may exert. Despite substantive differences in their vocabulary and methodology, I will argue that Derrida's *différance,* and its effect, which Derrida calls undecidability, finds an important analog in the theologians Wolfhart Pannenberg, and Jürgen Moltmann who are also attempting to think through the problematic relationship that exists between the eternal-transcendental and the temporal-historical.

Moreover, the aim of this thesis is to contribute substantively to the self-reflection of the Anglican Communion, as well as the Church in general. After arguing a congruency exists in the quasi-transcendental thought of Derrida and the eschatological ecclesiology of Moltmann and Pannenberg I shall, in light of this framework, critically examine pivotal ecclesial documents produced by commissions of the Anglican Communion over the last two-and-a-half decades.

This examination will highlight the fact that Derrida, who at first may seem an unexpected contributor to ecclesiology, provides important insights that augment the thought both Moltmann and Pannenberg and make a valuable contribution to ecclesiology by helping the church contemplate the asymmetrical relationship between the *Kingdom of God* - the church triumphant (*Ecclesia Triumphans*), and the "church militant here in earth"[3] (*Ecclesia Militans*). This exploration is distributed in three interrelated parts.

PART I - Derrida's Justice

Firstly, we will examine a key concept of Jacques Derrida which he designates with the neologism *différance*, which designate the condition of possibility of meaning through the simultaneous acts of differing (synchronic, emphasizing the spatial) and deferring (diachronic, which emphasizes the temporal), and its effects which can be seen in correlative concepts justice, undecidability, and auto-immunity.

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[3] The Book of Common Prayer, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1964, p. 301, which introduces the intercessions.

Justice: *'The Mystical Foundation'*

"*Deconstruction is justice*."[4] Derrida demands that "law is deconstructible, justice is not. Deconstructive justice can never be fully assimilated. It is an 'infinite asymmetry.'"[5] We will explore these claims, specifically the *aporia* evident in the asymmetrical relationship that Derrida describes between law and justice in Derrida's "Force of Law: The Mystical Foundation of Authority" presented at Benjamin N. Cardozo Law School, Yeshiva University in October 1989. Derrida states,

> Law is not justice. Law is the element of calculation, and it is just that there be law, but justice is incalculable, it demands that one calculate with the incalculable; and aporetic experiences are the experiences, as improbable as they are necessary, of justice, that is to say of moments in which the decision between just and unjust is never insured by a rule.[6]

We will examine the relationship that exists between law and justice so that we may analogously apply the structure of Derrida's argument to the relationship between church and *Kingdom*. Crucial for the latter part of this argument is the political consequence of this asymmetrical relationship which is evident is any political or ecclesial decision.

Undecidability - The single most repeated misrepresentation of which Derrida is accused is unfortunately the one on which my argument rests so it is necessary to elucidate two terms which have been associated with Derrida: *Undecidability* and *Indeterminacy* - the former rightly, the latter wrongly - they are false synonyms. *Indeterminacy* is the inability to determine any meaning whatsoever vs. *undecidability* which, as we shall see, depends more on the structure of meaning itself than the multiple interpretations that a text (or, of interest to this project a political body) may, or may not, bear. By focusing on *undecidability* I shall explore

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[4] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 243.
[5] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, p. 22.
[6] Law is deconstructible, justice is not. Deconstructive justice can never be fully assimilated. It is an 'infinite asymmetry', *Specters of Marx*, p. 22.

how Derrida treats political and ethical decisions as the inability for a decision to rest on calculations or computations which then belie the notion that any de-cision has been made at all. If one is to apply a "programmable, deducible, calculable, computable result of a logarithm" a decision has not been made. It is only when it has passed through the "ordeal of undecidability" that a decision is truly a decision.[7] Derrida's conceptualization of undecidability attempts to show how the determined intention of any text participates in the repression of a meaning of its unintended other. A deconstructive reading is an attempt to expose these tensions and *aporia* in order to bring to the surface any attempt at a positive and totalizing discourse which assumes a purity of signification of the original referent and which would ignore or suppress the acknowledgement of what is outside and other-than the text.[8]

Autoimmunity - Originally Derrida develops the logic of autoimmunity from a close examination of democracy, however, we shall attempt to apply the same structure to the church in relation to *Kingdom of God*. Derrida applies the principles of autoimmunity which is, biologically speaking when the immune system of the body produces antibodies and or lymphocytes which attack the body itself rather than an outside entity. This process is understood as the body producing what attacks itself. Derrida applies this logic more widely to politics to examine the articulation of self-identity which then also contains a kind of self-destruction, suggesting that a political reality like democracy is threatened from within its own logic.

PART II Moltmann, Pannenberg and the *βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ*

In the second section of this project attention is turned to two modern theologians who have placed the *Kingdom of God* at the center of their own work, Jürgen Moltmann and

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[7] Jacques Derrida, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, Ed. John D. Caputo, New Yord: Fordham University Press, 1997, p. 137.
[8] See Ward, *Deconstruction*, pp. 79-81, especially in the similarities with negative theology.

Wolfhart Pannenberg. Both scholars grapple with the eschatological significance of the *Kingdom of God* within the political reality of the church. Extrapolating Derrida's structure of *différance* (differing, deferring) this section shall undertake a comparative examination of these two theologians in light of the *aporias* that guide Derrida's concept of justice. Particular attention shall be paid to the *aporia* around which Moltmann understands eschatology and also guides his concept of *futurity* as well as Pannenberg's Christology and the eschatological ontology informed by it.

Jürgen Moltmann

This section examines two facets of Jürgen Moltmann's work that bear analogy to certain aspects of Derrida's later political thought, as explicated above. The first area of examination is the *aporia* around which Moltmann's eschatology is structured. The second, following from this, concerns his description of time and history in light of this concept. If the future is to be regarded as radically new, unexpected, or wholly other, then the past and present cannot simply be deployed to comprehend the future as an object of cognition, as *logos*.

> Hope's statements of promise…must stand in contradiction to the reality which can at present to be experienced. They do not result from experiences, but are the condition for the possibility of new experiences. They do not seek to eliminate the reality which exists, but the reality which is coming.[9]

Moltmann, like Derrida, understands that the the present must be understood in tension with the future. This *aporia* will be be examined in light of the aporetic structure at the heart of Derrida's examination of justice which will lead to a further examination about how both Moltmann and Derrida propose a similar concept of the future. Moltmann proposes "two different conceptions of time," which he names *futurum* and *adventus. Futurum*, is a

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[9] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 18.

chronological conception which is understood as mechanical, predictable as opposed to, *adventus*, which is unexpected, unable to be predicted, impossible... and which aligns with Derrida's own conception of time as regards the otherness of the future by which he insists that time is "out of joint".[10]

Wolfhart Pannenberg

The critical implication for Pannenberg is seen in the way he develops the relationship between the *Kingdom of God* and the person of Christ. The question on which this section is focused is: "Is the Kingdom evident only in Jesus' announcement, or is Jesus' person a constructive reality of the Kingdom and thus synonymous with it?" Attention is now turned to Pannenberg, who carefully develops how the historic person of Jesus and the interrelated content of his Messiahship relate to the announcement or instantiation of the eternal *βασιλεία*. Of primary interest to this project is the way he emphasizes the *Kingdom of God* as embodied by Jesus and yet distinct and other from him. While Moltmann, in contrast, often conflates the *Kingdom of God* with the person of Jesus Christ, Pannenberg claims that the efficacy of Jesus' *Kingdom* proclamation is dependent on fidelity to God's future *Kingdom*, which remains other and heterogeneous to the person of Jesus. Pannenberg's concept of the *Kingdom of God*, and its inability to be fully instantiated even in the person of Jesus, clearly reflects an awareness of the problems inherent in claiming that the *Kingdom* is historically present in any pure form, while also maintaining that it must inform the present, however obliquely. This is consonant with Derrida's insistence that justice, if such a thing exists, is never fully present. Like Derrida's ghostly justice, the absent/presence of the *Kingdom of God* is significant for understanding the eschatological aspect of Pannenberg's thought. Pannenberg develops the argument of the

[10] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Coming of God, p. 25.*

Kingdom's future orientation to its consistent conclusion, namely, that God's rule, as *Kingdom*, cannot be separated from God's being.

Marks of an Eschatological Community: Scott MacDougall

Before turning attention toward the Anglican Communion the examination of Scott MacDougall's critique of communion/koinonia ecclesiology is informative. MacDougall argues for an eschatological ecclesiology that prioritizes openness, dynamism, and participatory engagement. MacDougall identifies several marks of an eschatological community, which is offered as a corrective to the limits, he argues, of an ecclesiology based solely on principles of *koinonia*. First, an eschatological community is characterized by openness—a willingness to be disrupted and transformed by the *Kingdom's* in breaking. This openness challenges the Church to move beyond rigid institutional boundaries and embrace a posture of humility and receptivity. Second, the community is tensive, holding together the "already" and "not yet" of the *Kingdom*. The Church lives in the tension between the proclamation of the Kingdom's presence and the recognition that its fullness remains to come. This tension mirrors Derrida's *aporia* of justice, which calls for continual responsiveness without closure. Finally, the community is participatory, inviting all members to actively engage in the work of witnessing to the *Kingdom*. This participatory nature reflects the inclusivity and transformative vision of the *Kingdom*, challenging the Church to embody radical hospitality and justice in its practices.

PART III Anglican identity and The *Kingdom of God*

In the final section I shall endeavor to explicate recent Anglican attempts to discuss its own polity through several international commissions for the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission of the last 25 years, *For the Sake of the Kingdom* (1987), *The Virginia Report*

(1997), *The Windsor Report* (2004), *Communion Conflict and Hope* (2008), and others. A close examination of these reports seeks to expose certain features of the difficulty they face in articulating an ecclesiology that allows ecclesial institutions, Anglican or otherwise, to conceive of their identity (dogma, liturgy, polity, etc.) in light of the disruption or dislocation demanded by a transcendent *Kingdom*. The ecclesial tension at the heart of these documents correlates to the theological tension at the heart of the *Kingdom* orientation of Moltmann and Pannenberg, and similarly Derrida. The question which arises throughout is how to articulate an identity without shutting down, or making room for the destabilizing forces and Spirit and *Kingdom* exert. Endlessly putting off interpretive or political closure for a doctrinal community such as a church has both negative and positive consequences. Negatively, this seems to refuse the development of doctrine at all. Such a position would seem to seriously limit, if not rule out altogether, the nature of creeds, canons, and covenants which delimit a community's identity so that it can regard itself consistently and coherently. Without the means to differentiate a stable identity could a community even claim to exist at all? Positively, however, undecidability anticipates, looks forward to new readings/understandings which relate to ever changing contexts. "The fact that the (church) is deconstructible is not bad news. One may even find in this the political chance of all (ecclesial) progress."[11] to purposely misquote Derrida.

Conclusion

The implications of using Derrida's "Force of Law" as an extended analogue for Christian community means that there can never be a clear and finished community which is not dependent on this aporetic structure. This raises ecclesial issues which are addressed in the final chapter. First, how does the Church honor and receive the traditions and revelations of

[11] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 242, which reads, "The fact that the law is deconstructible is not bad news. One may even find in this the political chance of all historical progress."

its past if it is all merely deconstructible? Following Derrida, it will be argued the church must engage with both *les arrivants*—those who are "to come"—and *les revenants*, those who "return" as spectral figures influencing the present, the future and the past, acknowledging each without allowing either to fully determine its future trajectory.

Secondly, what happens to the idea of unity and identity in light of the challenges posed to the traditional understanding of koinonia that Derrrida posits? Derrida's metaphor of the "guardrail" which functions as a provisional boundary offers insight for the church. The guardrail functions as a structure that offers guidance while allowing for openness and adaptability. Applied to ecclesiology, the concept of the guardrail invites reflection on how the Church might sustain its identity and unity without imposing rigid uniformity. In this model, unity does not necessitate monolithic agreement; rather, it emerges from a communal openness to the unpredictable movement of the Spirit and the unforeseeable demands of the *Kingdom*.

Third, how does the church anticipate or imagine a future that it may fail to recognize; how will we know if or when it has arrived? The conclusion traces several aspects of Derrida's relevant thought. This tension between the unknowable and the knowable, the promised and the given, calls for an exploration of Heidegger's distinction between *Offenbarung* (revelation) and *Offenbarkeit* (revealability). In the context of ecclesiology, this distinction articulates an essential dynamic between revelation as a concrete, identifiable event (*Offenbarung*) and the Church's stance of continuous openness to revealability (*Offenbarkeit*), which affirms an eschatological future beyond fixed form or conditioned recognition. Top do this the examination of several scriptural resurrection narratives will be undertaken.

The implications of this work for the church means that we must take seriously the the Pauline description of our vision as "a mirror dimly" (NRSV, ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι), as an

obscure saying, enigma, a riddle... We must work out our salvation, that is, proceed in all our decisions, with the fear and trembling of undecidability. If the church adopted symbols of this Derridean quasi-hermeneutic it would perhaps be the open window or the (church) door ajar.

SECTION ONE

Jacques Derrida and the Philosophy of Justice

A-DIEU ECCLESIA:

THE *KINGDOM OF GOD* AND THE ECCLESIAL IMPLICATIONS OF JACQUES DERRIDA'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY (OF JUSTICE)

It seems to me that adieu can mean at least three things:

1. *The salutation or benediction given (before constative language "adieu" can just as well signify "hello," "I can see you," "I see that you are there," I speak to you before telling you anything else—and in certain circumstances in French it happens that one says adieu at the moment of meeting rather than separation);*
2. *The salutation or benediction given at the moment of separation, of departure, sometimes forever (this can never in fact be excluded), without any return on this earth, at the moment of death;*
3. *The a-dieu, for God or before God and before anything else or any relation to the other, in every other adieu. Every relation to the other would be, before and after anything else, an adieu.*[12]

-Jacques Derrida

Jésus annonçait le Royaume et c'est l'Église qui est venue.[13] -Alfred Loissy

CHAPTER ONE Introduction

Jesus' preaching that the *Kingdom of God* is at hand[14] seems an incontrovertible reality of the Gospels; the content of this reality is on less sure footing, especially in regard to ecclesial polity. This fundamental theological reflection has been driven by an awareness that the Church exists in the tension between the ideal formulated in the concept of the *Kingdom of God* and the reality of an institution existing in temporal and historical forms. The resolution of this tension, though it shall later be suggested as an *aporia*, between *Kingdom of God* and church,

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[12] Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, trans. David Wills, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995, p. 48 (*Donner la mort* in *L'éthique du don, Jacques Derrida et la penseé du don*, Métailié-Transition, Paris, 1992); also *Adieu Levinas*, translated by Pascale-Anne Braulot and Michael Naas, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999, p. 127, This thesis shall, at chapter's end, closely examine the multitude of meanings that Derrida ascribes to *adieu* while at the same time expanding the definitions relative to the use I mean to apply here in regards the "A-Dieu Ecclesia."

[13] "Jesus announced the Kingdom and it is the Church that came." Alfred Firmin Loisy, *Evangile et l'Eglise*, Paris: Picard, 1902; See also similar thought from Nikolai Alexandrovich Berdyaev, *The Divine and the Human, London: J. Bles,* 1949. "But after all the Gospel is the good news of the coming of the Kingdom of God; and the very idea of the Kingdom of God is an eschatological idea. We pray 'Thy kingdom come'; and that means that the Kingdom of God has not yet come, although the Church has already existed for some two thousand years. The Church is simply the path of history, and not the actual appearance of the Kingdom of God."

[14] Mark 1:15; cf. Matt. 6:33, 12:28, 19:24, 21:43; Mark 1:14-15, 4:11, 4:26, 4:30, 9:1, 9:7, 10:14-15, 10:23-25, 12:34, 14:25, 15:43, Luke 4:43, 6:20, 7:28, 8:1, 8:10, 9:2, 9:11, 9:27, 9:60, 9:62, 10:9, 10:11..., Acts 1:3, 1:6, 8:12, 14:22, 19:8, 20:25, 28:23, 28:31, Rom. 14:17, 1 Cor. 4:20, 6:9-10, 15:50; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5; Col 1:13; 1 Th 1:5; 2 Tim 1:15, 4:18; Rev. 1:9, 12:10. The Gospel of Matthew renders the phrase as "Kingdom of Heaven" (βασιλεία τῶν Ουρανῶν) Mat. 3:2, 4:7, 4:23, 5:3, 5:10, 5:19-20, 6:13, 7:21, 8:11, 8:12, 9:35, 10:7, 11:11-12, 13:11, 13:19, 13:24, 13:31, 13:33, 13:38, 13:43, 13:44-45, 13:47, 13:52, 16:19, 18:1, 18:3-4, 18:23, 19:14, 19:23, 20:1, 22:2, 23:13, 25:1, 25:14, 25:34.

would inexorably lead to either church triumphalism, that the church *is* the *Kingdom of God* without remainder, or, that the institution of the church is itself subject only to human authority,[15] leading to a total separation of the *Kingdom* as some sort of spiritualized or eternalized ideal incapable of informing any church polity or ecclesial decision whatsoever. Several serious questions evolve out of this description of the church. How does an ecclesial body, given the coming *Kingdom*, conceive of itself, i.e. its identity? How does the church's historicity impact the conceptualization of the *Kingdom of God*, or as Kant asks, "how can one expect something completely straight to be built from such crooked wood?"[16] Asked another way, how may the church, especially in the attempt to move *towards God* [*A-Dieu*][17], conceive of itself with sufficient coherence and consistency through time while maintaining an open and provisional identity? This is a critical question in light of the church the church's future and its relation to the *Kingdom of God*. For if the *Kingdom of God* is fully present in the church, there is no hope; obversely, if the church and *Kingdom of God* are separate realities, there is no future. Jürgen Moltmann (1926-2024) explicitly recognizes this tension: "people who think that they are living in an already fulfilled hope cannot tolerate any still open hope for the future."[18] Focus on our ecclesial future is paramount.

This thesis proposes that the French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930-2004), specifically in "Force of Law: The Mystical Foundation of Authority"[19], as well as in his latter

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[15] A community where the 'truth' is merely a "rhetorical pat on the back." Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982, p. xvii.
[16] Kant, *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason*, translated by Werner S. Pluhar, Cambridge, Hackett Publishing Company, 2009, p. 110.
[17] The first epigraph for the introduction details three meanings Derrida attaches to 'a-dieu'. The conclusion below suggests two more that contribute to the particular understanding of 'a-dieu' taken up with respect to ecclesiology: the prefix 'a-' can alternatively mean 4. in or towards God such as ashore; away. It may also mean 5. against; without; opposite; not, as in a-theism. These particular uses are developed further in the conclusion.
[18] Moltmann, *Coming of God*, p. 154.
[19] Jacques Derrida, "Force of Law: The Mystical Foundation of Authority," *Acts of Religion,* London: Routledge, 2002. Other explicitly political work frequently referenced here include: *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning & the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf, New York: Routledge, 1994, *Rogues:Two Essays on Reason*, translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005.

political work,[20] makes an important contribution to thinking about the ecclesial tension described above. His *aporetic*[21] description of the quasi-transcendental quality of justice in 'relation' to the law, may be used fruitfully for ecclesial self-reflection in order to contemplate the asymmetrical relationship this thesis argues exists between the Church and the *Kingdom of God*. An analogy of this relationship might be rendered as follows:

law : justice :: church : *Kingdom of God*

Law is to justice as church is to the *Kingdom of God*. That is to say, following the structure of Derrida's argument, if law, which is deconstructible, is founded on justice, which is not[22], and the analogy proposed is cogent, then the structure of the church, in every form, is open to deconstruction, while the *Kingdom of God*, which both founds the church and is asymmetrical to it, is not. Therefore, if the church is to be open to the reality of the *Kingdom of God*, mustn't the structure of the church necessarily be open to the destabilizing forces which The *Kingdom of God* may exert. Despite substantive differences in vocabulary and methodology, this thesis argues that Derrida's *différance*[23]—and its effects, which Derrida names deconstruction or undecidability, among others—finds an important analogue in theology, especially eschatology's relation to ecclesiology, which resides in the work of Moltmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg (1928-2014). These two contemporary theologians, whose work regularly addresses the reality of the *Kingdom of God* in relation to the church, also attempt to think

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[20] Latter political work refers to the explicit development of more overtly political themes as the implicitly political adheres throughout Derrida's work. See Jonathan Blair "Context, Event, Politics: Recovering the Political in the Work of Jacques Derrida, "Telos, Critical Theory of the Contemporary," (Winter 2007), no. 141, pp. 149-165.

[21] From Greek ἐποχή meaning suspension, deferral, or etymologically non-path, impassable. "In Derrida's use of the word, *épokhē* names the necessary suspension of rules in the application of justice, while at the same time the one who does the suspending must recognize the necessity of rules." *For Derrida*, Miller, J. Hillis, Fordham: New York, 2009, p. 13.

[22] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 242-243.

[23] *différance* - a neologism designating the condition of possibility of meaning through the simultaneous acts of *differing* (synchronic difference) and *deferring* (diachronic deferring) and anticipates, looks forward to new readings/understandings which relate to ever changing contexts. *Différance* deliberately misspells différence, (pronounced identically), and plays on the French word *différer* which means both "to defer" and "to differ."

through the problematic relationship existing between the eternal-transcendental and the temporal-historical. This study will examine the different paradigms Moltmann and Pannenberg deploy to overcome the qualitative differences and, following the two parallel aspects of Derrida's neologism *différance,* will highlight both temporal (to defer) and spatial (to differ) difference. Moltmann and Pannenberg both attempt to overcome these infinite differences between *Kingdom* and Church, in the same way Derrida attempts to name, but not overcome or master, the 'absolute alterity' between justice and the law. Derrida's work suggests to us some ways *Kingdom* and Church, like justice and law, may be 'asymmetrically' related, however heterogenous they may appear at first glance.

Moreover, the aim of this thesis is to contribute substantively to the self-reflection specifically of the Anglican Communion, as well as the Church in general. After arguing a congruency exists in the quasi-transcendental thought of Derrida [Chapters Two and Three] and the eschatological ecclesiology of Moltmann [Chapter Four] and Pannenberg [Chapter Five], this study shall, in light of this framework, critically examine another reflection which attempts to highlight eschatological deficiencies within current ecclesial thought provided by Scott MacDougall [Chapter Six] as well as ecclesial documents produced by commissions of the Anglican Communion [Chapter Seven] over the last two-and-a-half decades by the The Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission (IATDC). Established by the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) in 1976, the IATDC provides the backbone for Anglican theological reflection in several major reports, including: *For the Sake of the Kingdom* (1987), *The Virginia Report* (1997), *The Windsor Report* (2004), *Communion Conflict and Hope: The Kuala Lumpur Report* (2008) and the continuance of this work with the formation of the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity Faith and Order (IASCUFO), whose mandate was approved by the Joint Standing Committee of the ACC in November 2008. Although the Anglican Communion is not a 'church', per se, the systematic reflections undertaken by the

communion have been with the express purpose of aiding ecclesial polity both without and within. In *For the Sake of the Kingdom (1987),* these commissioned reports begin with the *Kingdom of God* as an original starting point for ecclesial reflection, yet, as it shall be argued, lack a sufficient eschatological framework to ensure continuity once political tensions within the Anglican Communion become more critical.

This analysis will highlight the fact Derrida, who at first may seem an unexpected contributor to ecclesiology, provides important insights correlating to, and augmenting the thought of, both Moltmann and Pannenberg, the result of which comprises a valuable contribution to ecclesiology, namely by helping the church contemplate the asymmetrical relationship between the *Kingdom of God*—the church triumphant (*Ecclesia Triumphans*) and the "church militant here in earth"[24] (*Ecclesia Militans*)—on which it is ostensibly based. This exploration is distributed in three interrelated sections which will be brought together in the conclusion to highlight the specific contributions Derrida makes to ecclesiology, especially in light of the eschatological contributions made by Moltmann and Pannenberg.

1.2 Justice for Derrida and Derrida's Justice

The first section is subdivided into two chapters. The first [Chapter Two], examines commentary on Derrida's work and his reception within theology and, to a lesser degree, philosophy. Within both Theology and Philosophy, there has been an abundance of either mis-understanding or the misrepresenting of Derrida's work, as well as a consistent stream of invective, evident in several controversies: the quarrel between Jacques Derrida and John Searle over sharp disagreements of basic elements and function of philosophy and language; the interior and exterior pressures on Cambridge University not to award Derrida an

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[24] *The Book of Common Prayer*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974, p. 301, which introduces the intercessions.

honorary degree for allegedly stretching the "forms of academic scholarship beyond recognition"; as well as being accused of employing a writing style that "defies comprehension;"[25] and the dispute with Richard Wolin and the New York Review of Books, who writes about Derrida's work,

> Whatever deconstructions methodological intentions may be, its pragmatic effect accords with the anti-intellectual orientation of the anti-philosophies. By the time deconstruction gets through with the history of philosophy, very little remains. One is tempted to seek refuge in myth, magic, madness, illusion, or intoxication—all seem preferable to what "civilization" has to offer. The end result is that deconstruction leaves its practitioners in a theoretical no-man's land, a forlorn and barren landscape.[26]

Despite the innumerable fears surrounding deconstruction's detractors, Derrida's legacy has also been hailed as making immense contributions. One only has to regard the enormous influence he has had on a number of scholars in multiple disciplines to recognize his appeal and wide contributions in diverse contexts and schools of thought. There have also been scholars who, though not theologians, per se, have sensed in Derrida something of the religious, even the theological within his work: John D. Caputo[27], Mark C. Taylor[28], as well as Thomas J.J. Altizer, Max A. Myers, Carl A. Raschke, Robert P. Scharlemann, Mark C. Taylor, Charles E. Winquist, et al. Within theology itself there have been numerous works,

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[25] The Times, London, Saturday, May 9, 1992.
[26] Richard Wolin, *The Seduction of Unreason: The Intellectual Romance with Fascism from Nietzsche to Postmodernism*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004, p. 21. For a detailed rebuttal of some of Derrida's critics who had either failed to read or distorted see Points: Interviews 1974 /1994.
[27] Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion without Religion, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997; On Religion, London: Routledge, 2001; The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event, Bloomington: Indiana University press, 2006; What Would Jesus Deconstruct: The Good News of Post-Modernism for the Church, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007, Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A conversation with Jacques Derrida, New York, Fordham University Press, 1997.
[28] Mark C. Taylor, *About Religion: Economies of Faith in Virtual Culture,* Chicago: University of Chicago press, 1999; *After God,* Chicago: University of Chicago press, 2007; *Altarity*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1987; *Deconstructing Theology,* New York: Crossroad, 1982; *Erring: A Postmodern A/Theology,* Chicago: Chicago University press, 1984; *About Religion: Economies of Faith in Virtual Culture,* Chicago: University of Chicago press, 1999.

the most important of which include Graham Ward,[29] Stephen Shakespeare,[30] James K. A. Smith,[31] and Jean Luc Marion,[32] and this chapter, designed to explicate the impact of Derrida's work, shall highlight these contributions especially where it might be directly relevant to ecclesiology.

The next chapter [Chapter Three], explores key concepts of Jacques Derrida's latter political writings especially "Force of Law: Part I, The Mystical Foundation of Authority" and *Part II,* "First Name of Benjamin *[Prénom de Benjamin]."*[33] Although there will be occasions to refer to Derrida's explicitly religious texts, such as: *Glas* (1974), "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials" (1986), *Circumfession* (1991), *The Gift of Death* (1992), and "Faith and Knowledge" (1996), the specific intent is to develop a religious analogy beginning with Derrida's overt political writing, which focuses on *différance*, while paying special attention to the spectrum of significant related concepts, specifically justice, *aporia*, undecidability, and auto-immunity. The neologism *différance* was created by Derrida to bring together two types of difference pointing to the act of deferring and differing. *Différance* indicates the condition of possibility of meaning through the simultaneous acts of differing or synchronic, emphasizing the spatial, and deferring or diachronic, emphasizing the temporal and its effects which can be seen in many of these above correlative concepts. Though the theme of community and politics will

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[29] Graham Ward, *Barth, Derrida and the Language of Theology,* Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1995; *Cities of God,* London: Routledge, 2000; "Deconstructive theology," *The Cambridge companion to Postmodern Theology,* Kevin J. Vanhoozer, ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
[30] Shakespeare, Stephen, *Derrida and Theology*, London: T&T Clark, 2009; "Thinking About Fire: Derrida and Judaism," *Literature and Theology*, Volume 12, Number 3, (1998).
[31] James K. A. Smith, *Jacques Derrida: Live Theory,* London: Continuum, 2005; *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism? Taking Derrida Leotard and Foucault to Church,* Grand Rapids, Baker academic, 2006, Derrida's Structural Religion," *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 78, No. 2, (April 1998), pp. 197-212; "A Principle of Incarnation in Derrida's (Theologische?) Jugendschriften: Towards a Confessional Theology," *Modern Theology* 18:2, (April 2002), pp. 217-230; Determined Hope: A Phenomenology of Christian Expectation," in Miroslav Volf and William Katerberg, eds., *The Future of Hope: Essays on Christian Tradition Amid Modernity and Postmodernity,* Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 2004, pp. 200-227.
[32] Jean-Luc Marion, *God Without Being,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991; "In the Name: How to Avoid Speaking of 'Negative Theology,'"John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon, eds., *God, the Gift and Postmodernism*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999.
[33] Derrida, "Force of Law," pp. 230-298.

be addressed directly, it will be necessary to elucidate the asymmetrical structure composing *différance* more generally. To that end, Derrida's concept of 'justice,' and its asymmetrical relationship with law, as articulated in "Force of Law," shall be investigated thoroughly.

1.3 Justice: 'The Mystical Foundation'

"*Deconstruction is justice.*"[34] Derrida posits that "law is deconstructible, justice is not. Deconstructive justice can never be fully assimilated. It is an 'infinite asymmetry'."[35] These claims will be explored, specifically the *aporia* evident in the asymmetrical relationship Derrida describes between law and justice in "Force of Law", presented at Benjamin N. Cardozo Law School, Yeshiva University in October 1989. In "Force of Law" Derrida states,

> Law is not justice. Law is the element of calculation, and it is just that there be law, but justice is incalculable, it demands that one calculate with the incalculable; and aporetic experiences are the experiences, as improbable as they are necessary, of justice, that is to say of moments in which the decision between just and unjust is never insured by a rule.[36]

The aporetic relationship existing between law and justice will be elucidated so that the inherent structure of Derrida's argument may be analogously applied to the relationship existing between church and *Kingdom*. Crucial for the latter part of this argument is the political consequence of this asymmetrical relationship which, Derrida claims is evident in any political decision, and is arguably evident within the *ecclesia* as well. So justice may be understood in the manner Derrida intends, it will be prudent to first explicate some related concepts, specifically the manner in which he defines and deploys three interrelated concepts *aporia*, undecidability, and autoimmunity.

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[34] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 243.
[35] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, p. 22.
[36] "Law is deconstructible, justice is not. Deconstructive justice can never be fully assimilated. It is an 'infinite asymmetry,'" Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, p. 22.

1.3.1 *Aporia*

Aporia means "a perplexing difficulty" or closer to Derrida's usage the "impassable" a "nonpath."[37] For Derrida, an "*experience of aporia*" is an experience of the passage through understanding or cognition which is impossible. "From this point of view, justice would be the experience of what we are unable to experience…there is no justice without this experience, however impossible it may be of aporia."[38] Impossibility in Derrida's usage does not mean 'impossible' but, rather, '*the* impossible' - a category rather than a descriptive limitation. François Raffoul helps to explain this particular meaning,

> The impossible would no longer be the opposite of the possible but, on the contrary, would be what "haunts the possible," what truly "enables" or possibilizes the possible. The impossible, Derrida would claim, is possible, not in the sense that it would become possible, but in a more radical sense in which the impossible, as impossible, is possible."[39]

Aporia as opposed to paradox, tension, enigma, etc. expresses the difficulty of bringing together two asymmetrical concepts in Derrida's latter work—justice and the law—which will comprise the heart of the analogy being proposed between the church and the *Kingdom of God*.

1.3.2 Undecidability

The next concept to be addressed is one of the single most repeated misrepresentations of which Derrida's work is accused; and one on which the argument of this thesis rests. It will be necessary, then, to elucidate two terms which have been associated with Derrida: *Undecidability* and *Indeterminacy*—the former rightly, the latter wrongly—they are false synonyms. *Indeterminacy* is the inability to determine any meaning whatsoever versus

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[37] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 244.
[38] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 244.
[39] François Raffoul "Derrida and the Ethics of the Im-possible," Research in Phenomenology 38, (2008), p. 273.

undecidability which, in Derrida's use of the term, depends more on the structure of meaning itself than the multiple interpretations a text or, of interest to this project, a political body, may or may not bear. By focusing on *undecidability,* this analysis shall explore how Derrida treats political and ethical decisions as the inability for any decision to rest on calculations or computations, which then belie the notion that any de-cision has been made at all. If one is to apply a "programmable, deducible, calculable, computable result of a logarithm" a decision has not been made. It is only when it has passed through the "ordeal of undecidability" that a decision is truly a decision.[40] Derrida's conceptualization of undecidability attempts to show how the determined intention of any text participates in the repression of meaning of its unintended other. A deconstructive reading, then, is an attempt to expose these tensions and *aporia* in order to bring to the surface any attempt at a positive and totalizing discourse which assumes a purity of signification of the original referent and which would ignore or suppress the acknowledgement of what is outside and other-than the text.[41]

1.3.3 Autoimmunity

Tangential to Derrida's understanding of community and hospitality, he develops the logic of autoimmunity from a close examination of politics, especially democracy.[42] Following Derrida, who employs the principle of autoimmunity to politics, this study will attempt to

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[40] Jacques Derrida, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, ed., John D. Caputo, New York: Fordham University Press, 1997, p. 137.
[41] See Ward, "Deconstruction," *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology*, edited by Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 79-81, especially in the similarities with negative theology.
[42] Derrida introduces the concept of autoimmunity in *Politics of Friendship,* translated by George Collins, London, New York: Verso, 2005 (*Politiques de l'amitié*, Editions Galilieé, Paris, 1994); and *Specters of Marx,* translated Peggy Kamuf, New Work, London: Routledge, 1994, (*Spectres de Marx*, Editions Galileé, 1993); but develops it more thoroughly in "Faith and Knowledge," *Acts of Religion*, translated by Gil Anidjar, New York and London, Routledge 2002; and *Rouges: Two Essays on Reason,* Translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005; Jacques Derrida, "Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicides — A Dialogue with Jacques Derrida," in *Philosophy in a Time of Terror*, ed. Giovanna Borradori, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003; J. Hillis Miller, "Derrida's Politics of Autoimmunity," Discourse, 30/1-2, (Spring/Winter, 2008).

place autoimmunity in the context of the Church, which is, in its historic form, understood as a political entity. Biologically speaking, autoimmunity occurs when the immune system of the body produces antibodies and/or lymphocytes that attack the body itself, mistaking it for an invader, something from outside the entity. This process is understood as the body producing that which attacks itself. Derrida applies this logic more widely to politics to examine the articulation of self-identity which, he maintains, also indicates a kind of self-destruction, suggesting a political reality like democracy is threatened from within its own logic.

Once the above concepts have been illuminated, they will be drawn into a theological and ecclesiological landscape to suggest a non-provisional, fixed identity is detrimental to eschatological ecclesiology, following Moltmann and Pannenberg. This is not to argue Derrida is theological, though others have undertaken that work to some degree, but rather to highlight a congruence existing within current ecclesial theology, especially when it concerns the *Kingdom of God.*

1.4 Moltmann, Pannenberg and the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ

In Part II of this project, attention turns to two modern theologians who have placed the *Kingdom of God* at the center of their own work and attention: Jürgen Moltmann [Chapter Four] and Wolfhart Pannenberg [Chapter Five]. Both scholars grapple with the eschatological significance of the *Kingdom of God* within the political reality of the Church and unknowingly extrapolate certain features of Derrida's notion of *différance*—differing and deferring. A comparative examination of these two theologians will follow, highlighting those features of their work that, this thesis argues, correlate to Derrida. Just as Derrida develops an asymmetrical relationship between justice and law, so too, Moltmann and Pannenberg, who are each keenly aware of the difficulties of articulating the relatedness of church and *Kingdom*

of God. Each deploy their own theological stratagems to portray the *Kingdom of God* to be transcendent, other and future, while also being able to to inform the present, albeit with the same asymmetry present between law and justice that Derrida highlights. Because the 'gap' between *Kingdom* and church is analogous to justice and law, it will be argued Derrida makes substantive contributions to both Moltmann's eschatology, especially his articulation of the future expressed in temporal *(futurum)* and transcendent *(Adventus)* registers; as well Pannenberg's eschatology revealed in his Christology and the future-oriented ontology informed by it.

1.4.1 Jürgen Moltmann [Chapter Four]

Chapter Three will examine two facets Jürgen Moltmann's work that are analogous to certain aspects of Derrida's latter political thought. The first area of examination will recognize the *aporia* around which Moltmann's eschatology is structured. Second, following from this, an examination of how he describes both time, especially the future, and history in light of this concept. For Moltmann, it is important to correct the eschatological and transcendent *kingdom* that, he argues, Karl Barth's theology "condemned to ineffectiveness."[43] If the future is to be regarded as radically new, or unexpected, or totally other, then one cannot simply deploy the past and present in order to understand the future as an object of cognition, as *logos*. Moltmann writes,

> Hope's statements of promise…must stand in contradiction to the reality which can at present to be experienced. They do not result from experiences, but are the condition for the possibility of new experiences. They do not seek to eliminate the reality which exists, but the reality which is coming.[44]

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[43] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 39.
[44] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 18.

Moltmann, like Derrida, understands the *present* must be understood in tension with the *future*. The tension present/future creates in Moltmann will be examined as the same aporetic structure at the heart of Derrida's examination of justice. This will lead to a further examination of both Moltmann and Derrida and how each propose a similar concept of the future as *other*. Chapter Three particularly focuses on Moltmann's "two different conceptions of time"[45] which he names *futurum* and *adventus. Futurum*, is a chronological conception which is understood as mechanical, predictable; A*dventus*, on the other hand, is unexpected, unable to be predicted, "and by the standard of present experience appears *impossible*."[46] This dual understanding of time has huge consequences for how temporality informs Moltmann's understanding of the *Kingdom*. Moltmann's alternative to chronological time correlates with the conception of temporality Derrida insists must be in place to avoid closing down the future into merely a repetition of the past/present. The consequence of which, is that for both, the necessity of the future for thinking about *justice* or *Kingdom* is of utmost importance. These similarities are one point at which Derrida may be helpful, not only in a theoretical and theological sense, but also an ecclesial one.

1.4.2 Wolfhart Pannenberg [Chapter Five]

Pannenberg develops an eschatological ontology which is, like Moltmann, oriented towards the future and suggests a certain 'absence of presence' which he attributes to the *Kingdom of God*. Like the ghost Derrida suggests haunts democracy—as well as a range of other entities: theology, ontology, eschatology,[47] the absent/presence of the *Kingdom* is also significant for understanding the eschatological and ontological aspect of Pannenberg's

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[45] Moltmann, *The Coming of God, p. 25.*
[46] Moltmann, *Theology*, p. 103, emphasis added. Note that Moltmann's conceptualization of 'impossible' is as category and not merely a descriptive limitation.
[47] Derrida, *Specters*, p. 51.

thought. Pannenberg develops his argument about futurity and ontology to what he claims is its consistent conclusion, which is that God's rule, as *Kingdom*, cannot be separated from God's being. The radical implication of this insight is that, for Pannenberg, God cannot be said to 'exist,' such existence being relegated only to the future. The deferment to the future of any real ontological status of the *Kingdom of God* leads to the inevitable conclusion that there is "envisioned and expected an overthrowing and restructuring of all forms of social life..."[48] In other words, the future *Kingdom of God* for Pannenberg claims ontological priority over the past and present, allowing the latter to be restructured. This parallels Derrida's own thought which argues justice, which is always to come, always futural, allows the present, in this case the law, to be deconstructed/restructured in light of its provisionality.

A contrasting feature between Pannenberg and Moltmann is observed in the way each think of Jesus in relation to the *Kingdom*, i.e. Christology. Pannenberg is unique in the way he presents the relationship between the *Kingdom of God* and the person of Christ. The question around which Pannenberg organizes his ontology of *Kingdom*: Is the *Kingdom* evident only in Jesus 'announcement or is Jesus 'person a constructive reality of the *Kingdom* and thus synonymous with it? Here the analysis will turn to Pannenberg's Christology to develop carefully how the historic person of Jesus and the interrelated content of his Messiahship relate to the announcement or instantiation of the eternal *Kingdom*. Of primary interest to this project is the way Pannenberg emphasizes the *Kingdom of God* as embodied by Jesus and yet, distinct and *other* from him. While Moltmann, in contrast, often conflates the *Kingdom of God* with the person of Jesus Christ. Pannenberg claims the efficacy of Jesus' *Kingdom* proclamation is dependent on the fidelity to God's *future Kingdom* which remains other and heterogeneous to the person of Jesus. Pannenberg's concept of the *Kingdom of God*, and its inability to be fully

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[48] Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, p. 479.

instantiated even in the person of Jesus, is clearly mindful of the problems of claiming the *Kingdom* is historically present in any pure form and yet must also be able to inform the present, however obliquely. This is consonant with Derrida's insistence that justice, 'if such a thing exists,' is never fully present. Derrida, similarly, is consistently reticent to allow the content of justice to rest complete in any decision, or any person. "...at no time can one say presently that a decision is just...or that someone is just, and even less, 'I am just.'"[49] Similarly, Jesus proclamation of the *Kingdom* is never fully present but always "to come" or "at hand."[50] Like Derrida's ghostly justice, the absent/presence of the *Kingdom of God* is significant for understanding the eschatological aspect of Pannenberg's thought.

After arguing that there are certain corollaries in the structure, even if not in the language, between Derrida's justice and the kingdom focused theology of both Moltmann and Pannenberg, that insight will be brought to bear within a branch of theology, namely ecclesiology, and specifically Anglican ecclesiology. A careful examination of The Anglican Communion's recently produced theological work by the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, will attempt to bring to light some of the features of Anglican ecclesiology that resonate with the proposed eschatological project contained in this thesis.

1.5 Anglican identity and The *Kingdom of God*

Part III consists of two chapters that bring the theological insights from previous chapters to bear directly on ecclesiology. Chapter Six examines a recent monograph by Scott MacDougall entitled *More Than Communion: Imagining an Eschatological Ecclesiology,*[51] who

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[49] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 252.
[50] Matthew 3:2,10:7 4:17, Mark 1:15, Luke 10:9, 10:11.
[51] Scott MacDougall, *More Than Communion: Imagining an Eschatological Ecclesiology,* London, New York: Bloomsbury, T&T Clark, 2015.

provides an excellent critique of the shortfalls of current communion ecclesiology which he argues, is based on *koinonia*, or communion/unity. MacDougall articulates a robust eschatological ecclesiology to ameliorate these shortfalls. Although his concern is broader than that of this study— he surveys Roman Catholic and Orthodox perspectives and well as ecumenical commissions—he also appraises the reports from the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission in order to augment the *koinonia* ecclesiology which he argues is uncritically adopted by the Commission's theologians. MacDougall presents a compelling argument for eschatological ecclesiology which will be brought alongside this project in order to offer alternative means of ensuring his eschatology doesn't fall into the same trap as those philosophers Derrida critiques, as well as the theologians critiqued by both Moltmann and Pannenberg. To this end, MacDougall's project is reviewed to identify certain areas in which he ends up inadvertently collapsing the eschatology he wishes to affirm into the koinonia/communal ecclesiology he desires to augment. To enshrine an eschatological ecclesiology not only requires the church to embrace it's own tenseness and provisionality, but also recognize that any ecclesiology which is ostensibly based on the *Kingdom of God* must be aware of and tolerate the *aporetic and asymmetrical.*

In Chapter Six, the focus will narrow to recent Anglican attempts to discuss its own polity through several international commissions for the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission (IATDC) of the last 25 years, specifically: *For the Sake of the Kingdom* (1987), *TheVirginia Report* (1997), and *Communion Conflict and Hope* (2008).[52] A thorough examination of these reports will expose certain theological features of the communion's ecclesial polity, which over the years has ebbed and flowed, towards and away from referring

[52] Other Anglican Global projects and reports will be referenced including: *The Windsor Report* (2004), and *Communion Conflict and Hope* (2008) and *The Bible in the Life of the Church* (2012), published by the Anglican Communion Office, London, England.

to the eschatological *Kingdom of God* at all. The Anglican Communion's first theological report, *For the Sake of the Kingdom,* directly addresses the tensions inherent in the church/kingdom relationship. The IATDC brief was to examine "the relationship between the Church of God as experienced and the Kingdom of God as anticipated."[53] There is much to commend the IATDC's first report in light of this project. However, as tensions grew in the Anglican Communion, especially in regard to The Episcopal Church in the United States of America's (ECUSA) irregular ordination of eleven women in Philadelphia on July 29, 1974, and the debates that ensued at every level of the church, the desire to strengthen the instruments of unity within the Communion became urgent. In response to this tension, *The Virginia Report* attempts to ensure cohesion amongst diverse Anglican provinces and establish lines of authority to minimize too much heterogeneity. The privileging of an ecclesiology based on the unity of the Trinity (koinonia) undermined any attempt to understand division or conflict as the possibility that the *Kingdom of God* is exerting pressure on the structures of the church in the same way justice may exert pressure upon the law. This realization is evident in the following report, *Communion, Conflict and Hope* which attempts to reflect on how a "communion in action" may address itself, "especially in times of change and disruption."[54] Explicating these reports in the light of Derrida's *différance* is not to dismiss the insights of the church's own theologians, but rather to highlight the tensions inherent within the church-kingdom relationship and offer the insight that *undecidability* as the condition for the possibility of all decisions must then apply to all ecclesial decisions as well. Applying Derrida's quasi-concept of *undecidability* does not mean endlessly putting off interpretation nor imply political decisions or maintenance of doctrine is impossible. Such a facile position would seem to limit, if not rule out altogether, the nature of creeds, canons, and covenants that delimit a community's

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[53] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 2.
[54] *Communion, Conflict and Hope*, p. 13, ¶11.

identity. In contrast, *undecidability* anticipates and looks forward to new readings and/or understandings that relate to ever changing contexts. "The fact that the (church) is deconstructible is not bad news. One may even find in this the political chance of all (ecclesial) progress."[55] to purposely misquote Derrida.

The implications of using the aporetic structure at the heart of Derrida's "Force of Law" as an extended analogue for church and *Kingdom* means there can never be a clear and finished community. An eschatological church must refuse to let its identity be fixed and final. Further, it means conflict stems not only from diversity or plurality, but is sewn into the very fabric of the Christian community itself. As such, conflict cannot be held to be only a negative attribute of diversity but also a constructive opening into which our future may emerge. There is a great deal of institutional trepidation around Anglican ecclesiology now, and calls to innovate an ecclesiology that ameliorates the tensions to which diversity contributes.[56] This is precisely the community that gives Derrida pause.

> I don't much like the word community; I am not even sure I like the thing. If by community one implies, as is often the case, a harmonious group consensus, and fundamental agreement beneath the phenomena of discord or war, then I don't believe in it very much and I sense in it as much threat as promise. There is doubtless this irrepressible desire for a 'community 'to form but also for it to know its limit – and for its limit to be an opening.[57]

At the conclusion of this argument three things will be accomplished; first, an explication of Derrida's considerable work around *différance*, *aporia* and undecidability; second, a cogent argument that these same features of Derrida's thought are congruent to, at least in certain critical points the work of Moltmann and Pannenberg, and contribute to theological

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[55] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 242, which reads, "The fact that the law is deconstructible is not bad news. One may even find in this the political chance of all historical progress."
[56] In reaction to the consecration of Gene Robinson the IATDC was asked to create a report contemplating the theological connection between the historic actions of the church and the transcendent kingdom.
[57] Derrida, *Points: Interviews, 1974-1994*, ed. Elisabeth Weber, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995, p. 355.

reflection of the *Kingdom of God/Basileia tou Theou,* and, thus, ecclesiology; and third, to open the door on some of the shortcomings and the opportunities an eschatological ecclesiology might hold for the future of the Anglican Church specifically and the Church in general.

1.6 Terminological and Typographical Prolegomenon

Eschatological - This project relies on certain conceptualizations in order to proceed successfully. Of critical importance is the eschatological character of the *kingdom* itself. As shall be revealed, Moltmann and Pannenberg indubitably conceive of the *Kingdom of God* as eschatological although they are not in univocal agreement with other contemporary scholarship. Bruce Chilton, who also regards the *Kingdom of God* as having primarily an eschatological orientation, dismisses alternatives that de-eschatologicalize the *Kingdom of God* by pointing out that eschatology is too often conflated with *apocalypse* or denied altogether. However, he argues, "The denial of eschatology, however it has been justified, has never prevailed."[58]

> Unhappiness with eschatology as the primary reference of the kingdom is easily converted into an equation of the kingdom with whatever the going orthodoxy is: the kingdom is the Church (so Carmignac), the kingdom is Christ (so Dodd), the kingdom is the mystical experience of the sage Jesus (so Borg), or his philosophy in a Hellenistic key (so Mack).[59]

The *Kingdom of God* in this work shall be exclusively referenced as an eschatological concept. I am conscious of, but will not refer to, other recent non-eschatological conceptualizations.

Religion- A further assumption from which I proceed might be exemplified in the double-handed definition of religion offered by Mark C. Taylor:

> Religion is an emergent, complex, adaptive network of symbols, myths

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[58] Bruce Chilton, *Pure Kingdom: Jesus' Vision of God*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans/SPCK, 1996, p. 21.
[59] Chilton, *Pure Kingdom*, p. 21, referring to the following contributions: Marcus Borg, *Conflict, Holiness & Politics in the Teachings of Jesus*, New York: Continuum, 1984.

> and rituals that, on the one hand, figure schemata of feeling, thinking and acting in ways that lend life meaning and purpose and, on the other, disrupt, dislocate every stabilizing structure.[60]

To adopt such a typology of religion without notation, would, I think, be a mistake. In order to even begin to adopt a Derridean structure into this theological and ecclesiological project it is necessary to acknowledge religion is fundamentally comprised of both apophatic and cataphatic discourse. Only in this limited meaning could *différance* as a analogous concept be applied. This dissertation intends to broadly examine how faith communities, in light of the new horizons post-modernity—especially Derrida's *différance*—suggest, might conceive of themselves. Given the disruption and dislocation of any stabilizing structure, how might their identity (dogma, liturgy, polity, ethics) be constituted especially when identity and self-understanding are regarded as being consistent through time and logically coherent, ie. the *ology (logos)* of ecclesiology?

1.7 Basileia tou Theou?

Following recent scholarship[61] and agreeing on the need to be aware of feminist and post-colonial matters it is tempting to leave the phrase 'Kingdom of God' untranslated from the Greek *βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ* maintaining the typographical convention of an italicized, linguistically foreign, or conceptually significant word. Scott MacDougall maintains in his recent monograph that "using 'kingdom' language to express the ultimate communal,

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[60] Mark C Taylor, *After God*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2009, p. 12.
[61] Ben Witherington, *Jesus Paul and the End of the World: A comparative Study in New Testament Eschatology*, Downers, Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992; Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "To Follow the Vision: The Jesus Movement as Basileia Movement" in Margaret Farley and Serene Jones, eds., *Liberating Eschatology: Essays in Honor of Letty M. Russell*, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1999; Hart & Wall, *The Experience of God: A Postmodern Response*, Fordham University Press, 2005.

egalitarian vision of God's promised future is irredeemably problematic."[62] But for clarity, and for agreement with the *kingdom* language of Moltmann and Pannenberg I will instead leave the translated *Kingdom of God* in place, italicizing the phrase in order that the reader is reminded of both the lexical breadth of the concept and Capitalized to ensure that conceptually the *Kingdom of God* is understood as a historically proper name.

1.8 Author's note

> *Why Derrida? This question is answered explicitly in Chapter 2 but the answer is in many ways personal. My introduction to Jacques Derrida occurred shortly before he died whilst I was doing research and writing a thesis on Meister Eckhart and negative theology my senior year of seminary in 2003-2004. The reason for my interest in negative theology were three tumultuous events that occurred the year prior within the Anglican Church. The authorization of the blessing of same-sex couples in the Canadian diocese of New Westminster; The withdrawn appointment of Dr. Jeffrey John, a gay man living in a celibate relationship, as the bishop of Reading in the Oxford Diocese, England; the election, and consent at the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in Minneapolis of a gay priest, V. Gene Robinson, in a sexually active same-sex relationship who had been elected bishop in the Diocese of New Hampshire. These three events, all radical changes to ecclesial practice and understanding, put the church into an anxious tailspin. I am persuaded that the reaction to the events of 2003 might have been handled more judiciously by a community (from -munire - literally fortified, with munitions & com- all around), that was better in touch with its own radical provisionality and necessary relation to a future (Adventus) unexpected and unpredicted. This thesis was intended to begin building a foundation of what might be called 'A Theology of openness' or a 'Theology of Change'.*

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[62] Scott MacDougall, *More than Communion, Imagining an Eschatological Ecclesiology*, Bloomsbury, T&T Clark: London, New York, 2015, p. 11, McDougall states that the term 'reign' is a preferable term than 'Kingdom of God' "because it is dynamic and relational rather than static and spacial." p. 11, following Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Gottes Herrschaft und Reich* (God's Rule and Kingdom), New York: Herder & Herder, 1963.

CHAPTER TWO: Situating Derrida

> *However careful one is in the theoretical preparation of a decision, the instant of the decision, if there is to be a decision, must be heterogeneous to the accumulation of knowledge. Otherwise, there is no responsibility. In this sense not only must the person taking the decision not know everything... the decision, if there is to be one, must advance towards a future which is not known, which cannot be anticipated.*[63]
>
> *-Jacques Derrida*

2.1 Why Derrida?

At best, Derrida's relationship to theology is complicated. He is a philosopher who affirms, "I quite rightly pass for an atheist,"[64] yet repeatedly approaches religious themes and admits to prayer. This chapter addresses Derrida's oblique contribution to theology and will proceed on several fronts: The first is a review of the reception, or lack thereof, Derrida has had amongst some contemporary philosophers [2.2 Obscurantisme Terroriste]. Revealing some of the misconceptions that have caused contention will assist in better understanding and justifying how Derrida contributes substantively to theology and by extension to ecclesiology. The next section [2.3.1 Différance: Doubling meaning (a.k.a Commentary) and Interpretation] elucidates some of the grammar and structure of Derrida's thought on which his latter political writings are based and on which the remainder of this argument builds. An overview of this kind is necessary because, in order

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[63] Derrida, "Nietzsche and the Machine: Interview with Jacques Derrida," (interviewer Beardsworth) in Journal of Nietzsche Studies, Issue 7, (Spring 1994), p. 37.

[64] Geoffrey Bennington & Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*, Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1993, p. 13, also see John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997, he has also written extensively on a wide range of religious topics including: theology, negative theology, circumcision, angels, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam and other religions, the Kabbalah, the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, Paul, Augustine, The Talmud, messianism, forgiveness, hospitality, prayer… For a more exhaustive list see Gil Anidjar, Introduction to Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Religion*, Edited by Gil Anidjar, New York and London, Routledge, 2002, p. 2.

to justify an ecclesiological application of Derrida's work, it is imperative to shed light on the misconceptions that are commonly made in regard to Derrida's use of the term *différance* and its effect, which he calls 'undecidability'. Critics often conflate this term with a host of false synonyms such as indeterminacy, free play, etc., relegating Derrida's work wrongly to the nether regions of relativism or nihilism. There is a strong, though complex, argument to be made that Derrida rightly passes as a philosopher of the enlightenment. Understanding deconstruction in more precise terms allows Derrida to be understood as a philosopher who has contributed to political and social discourse—the basis of arguing his use in ecclesiology—by arguing that *différance* is the condition of their possibility.

Section 2.3.2 Closure/Clôture will examine Simon Critchley's "rapprochement" of Derrida's thought with that of Levinas. Critchley argues deconstruction contains an ethical imperative if understood through Levinas, who provides the basis of ethics as the "non-totalizable relation to the other."[65] Critchley successfully places Levinas alongside Derrida to address a perceived "impasse" in Derrida's work, namely the insistence of undecidability on the one hand and, on the other hand, the necessity for political structure in the form of decisions, identity, and judgement. The application of Derrida's thought, especially as it pertains to political entities, will be crucial as this argument progresses into the realm of ecclesiology.

Section 2.5 Derrida & Theology undertakes a critical examination of the reception the work of Jacques Derrida specifically amongst theologians (§2.5.1 - 2.5.3): such as Graham Ward, Jean-Luc Marion, John Caputo, Stephen Shakespeare, and James K. A. Smith. The goal is to examine the way in which Derrida's work has intersected with that of other theologians, while also highlighting the ways in which the door to this particular

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[65] Critchley, *Ethics*, p. 238, 256.

study was inspired and opened by the questions raised in these same projects.

Finally, a contrast of Derrida to other thinkers who have developed competing ideas on justice will comprise Section 2.6, providing the opportunity to understand the essential alignment of Derrida's original concept of justice that closely aligns with this particular project. Derrida's concept of justice will be compared through the lens of other thinkers for whom justice is also a significant topic: Rawls, Habermas, Rorty.

Taken together, these sections contribute to a chapter that argues a portion of Derrida's later work, especially "Force of Law" —building upon Levinas' claim of otherness and alterity— develops an important political application of deconstruction in his own right, utilizing *différance* as the means of revealing the duplicitous structure and unstable relation between law and justice.[66] These foci together make a strong case Derrida *is* a political thinker whose contributions reveal the aporetic structure at the heart of all politics, all community, and all interpretation. Thus, an argument begins to emerge that Derrida's contribution to the way we conceive of the political comprises the basis of thinking of Derrida as also making corollary contributions in the field of ecclesiology. From the political insight of Derrida an argument will ensue that Derrida provides valuable insights to any community, including the church, which must interpret, decide, mediate, and adjudicate a provisional (eschatological) identity.

2.2 Obscurantisme Terroriste (or Gives Bullshit a Bad Name)[67] Critical Misconceptions of 'Undecidability'

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[66] The importance of Derrida's work in this regard could be addressed in several registers: messianicity, the gift, forgiveness, hospitality, etc.

[67] Both attributable to John Searle: Edward Feser and Steven Postrel, "Reality Principles: An Interview with John Searle," *Reason Magazine*, February 2000; "The World Turned Upside Down," [A Review of Jonathan Culler's On Deconstruction], *New York Review of Books*, (Oct. 27, 1983), He snidely adds, "We cannot, of course, exclude the possibility that this may be an expression of praise in the deconstructionist vocabulary."

The following quotes are representative of the critique leveled at Derrida from multiple disciplines. Before proceeding, it is worth examining the vitriol leveled at Derrida that contributes to his work being marginalized, at least by some. Although differing in their approach, Derrida's strongest critics share a common trait: the association of Derrida with the invitation to interpretive free play, the inability to make sense or to determine meaning, an undisciplined flight from reason and intellect and a "transcendental argument for nihilism."[68] It is a peculiar irony that many critics of Derrida irresponsibly accuse Derrida of irresponsibility; that is, of promulgating textual free play, relevancy, and nihilism, even the refutation of gravity![69] These charges are not only unfounded, but largely ignore Derrida's writing, which explicitly addresses these accusations. The critiques follow a similar vein:

> All "writing," for Derrida, is subject to the ineluctable vagaries of interpretation. Meaning is incessantly deferred, put off, or delayed. According to Derrida, no piece of writing can have an absolute, determinate meaning because words do not refer to any world outside of the text itself. In this sense, texts suffer from a "nihilism of reference," in that any philosophical or cognitive "value" is a linguistic illusion—ultimately a "nothingness." Interpretation results, then, in a "free play" of signification in which all interpretations are considered arbitrary and ultimately *indeterminable*.[70]

> Deconstruction is a certain masturbation with the text, playing with the

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[68] Graham Ward, "Deconstructive theology," p. 83, "My colleagues John Milbank and Catherine Pickstock have both criticized Derrida for composing a transcendental argument for nihilism." See Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1990, and Pickstock, *After Writing: The Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1997. For a careful treatment of this accusation see Hugh Rayment-Pickard, "Derrida and Nihilism," in *Deconstructing radical orthodoxy: postmodern theology, rhetoric, and truth*, edited by W. J. Hankey, Douglas Hedley, Ashgate, Burlington VT, 2005.

[69] Reporting on a the instance of a New York Times article on May 18, 1996, in which physicist Alan Sokal had submitted a hoax article in *Social Text*, an academic journal published by Duke University Press, entitled "Transgressing the Boundaries: Toward a Transformative Hermeneutic of Quantum Gravity," John Caputo writes: Sokal's satire, the Times reporter comments, is an "impenetrable hodgepodge" bolstered with lengthy footnotes and citations of the work of Aronowitz and "the likes of Jacques Derrida." "The likes of Jacques Derrida! Alas, that Derrida should live to hear his name used as a sign of non-sense and resistance to gravity!" John Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, p. 73.

[70] Michael C. Milam, "Notes and Fragments: The Misuse of Nietzsche in Literary Theory," *Philosophy and Literature*, 1992, 16: pp. 320-332, emphasis added. For similar mis-understanding see also: Mark Lilla, *The Reckless Mind: Intellectuals in Politics*, New York: New York Review of Books, (2001), pp. 159-190, cf. "The Politics of Jacques Derrida," *New York Review of Books*, (June 25th 1998), pp. 36-41.

> terms at hand. Derrida demonstrates the careful, contingent manipulation of meanings and the endless *deferral of sense*.[71]

> In undoing the oppositions on which it (deconstruction) relies and between which it urges the reader to choose, the text places the reader in an impossible situation that cannot end in triumph but only in an outcome already deemed inappropriate: *an unwarranted choice or a failure to choose*.[72]

It goes on and on... Derrida is quick and adamant to dismiss such comments as a misunderstanding, or misrepresentation, of his work and that such an understanding of deconstruction "is false (that's right: false, not true) and feeble; it supposes a bad (that's right: bad, not good) and feeble reading of numerous texts, first of all mine, which therefore must finally be read or reread."[73] Moving on from invective to a more honest deliberation of Derrida's work, it is important to highlight some of the legitimate concerns that are summarized as follows:

> Derrida's radicalisation of Saussurian linguistics as a differential play of signs and the contamination of hierarchal binary oppositions in language is an assault on metaphysics, ethics and subjectivity. It is an assault because Derrida's differential play of signs is an abandonment of absolute meaning in favour of indeterminacy. Consequently, Derrida's deconstruction is unethical and nihilistic.[74]

Derrida replies to such spurious claims by insisting "the value of truth... is never contested or destroyed in my writings, but only reinscribed in more powerful, larger, more stratified contexts."[75] *Of Grammatology,* rarely referenced directly, provides much of the context for

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[71] Somer Brodribb, *Nothing Mat(t)ers: A Feminist Critique of Postmodernism* (North Melbourne: Spinifex, 1992, p. 8, emphasis added.
[72] Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism*, New York: Cornell University Press, 1982, p. 81, emphasis added.
[73] Derrida, *Limted*, p. 146. A secondary misconception aimed at Derrida is that, in Derrida's own words, "I am a skeptical nihilist who doesn't believe in anything, who thinks nothing has meaning, and text has no meaning. That's stupid and utterly wrong…I insist on affirmation and faith…I'm full of respect for the texts I read." Derrida: Screenplay and Essays on the Film, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005, pp. 121-122.
[74] Nicole Anderson, "Free-play? Fair-play! Defending Derrida," Social Semiotics, 16:3, 407-420, p. 408.
[75] Derrida, *Limited*, p. 146.

the Derrida-Searle debate[76], making clear the repetition of an author's intended meaning, what Derrida refers to as:

> doubling commentary, should no doubt have its place in a critical reading. To recognize and respect all its classical exigencies is not easy and requires all the instruments of traditional criticism. Without this condition and this respect, critical production would risk developing in any direction at all and authorize itself to say almost anything.[77]

It is thus necessary to keep interpretation from free play, i.e., meaning whatever one wants it to mean, so that certain critical tools, the same tools Derrida is accused of ignoring or subverting, may be correctly used. Derrida refers to this doubling the text as an "indispensable guardrail" or "safeguard,"[78] indispensable precisely because it allows for the intentions of an author to be understood, that is, to allow the text a coherent and consistent meaning. Derrida does not endorse free play, nihilism nor indeterminacy; in clear opposition to those who would place Derrida in this camp, he insists "all the instruments of traditional criticism" are necessary to "recognize and respect" the text/context. Derrida acknowledges the guardrail of the "conscious, voluntary, intentional relationship that the writer institutes," confining his attention to the text at hand, "our reading must be intrinsic and remain within the text."[79] Derrida affirms the "ambiguous field" opened by communication "can be massively reduced by the limits of what is called a context."[80] The text, or context, thus constrains and acts as a limiting structure or "guardrail," as Derrida

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[76] This debate, which began after Derrida's publication of *Signature Event Context,* and extended through Searle's 1977 essay *Reiterating the Differences* and Derrida's *Limited*, Inc., is exemplary of the many encounters endured between Derrida and analytic philosophy and which gained public notoriety during the Cambridge Affair in 1992.

[77] Jacques Derrida, *De La Grammatologie*, (Paris, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1967. "Sans doute ce moment du commentaire redoublant doit-il avoir sa place dans la lecture critique. Faute de la reconnaître et de respecter toutes ses exigences classiques, ce qui n'est pas facile et requiert tous les instruments de la critique traditionnelle, la production critique risquerait de se faire dans n'importe quel sens et s'autoriser à dire à peu près n'importe quoi. p. 227.

[78] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 158.

[79] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 159.

[80] Derrida, *Limited*, p. 2.

calls it, affirming the text as well as the author's stated intentions within the text. Further, Derrida deploys, rather than destroys, the critical tools of the philosophical tradition. In seeking the ways in which a text stabilizes an interpretation within itself,[81] it should be possible to "invoke rules of competence, criteria of discussion and of consensus, good faith, lucidity, rigor, criticism, and pedagogy."[82] What Derrida is not willing to concede, however, is that the author's intentions or interpretations may portray a pure or absolute presence or fixed meaning.

In order to use certain elements from Derrida's œuvre for the development of this thesis, it is important to separate erroneous accusations and vitriolic critique from authentic and careful scholarly review of his work. Were criticisms of Derrida's not so polemical, it might suffice simply to name the discrepancies or misrepresentations of his work and move on. However, it is imperative to demand a more thorough and detailed analysis, recognizing the potential for readers of this argument to have erroneously adjudicated Derrida's legitimacy as a philosopher, based merely on a cursory reading of Derrida himself, or on secondary sources that too often profoundly misrepresent his work. As much of the latter stages of this thesis rely on a precise understanding of Derrida's thought, it is, then, necessary to exhume Derrida's thought from the casket into which it has erroneously been entombed. It is not the intention, nor would it scarcely be possible, to defend Derrida from the legion of critique his work has received, but rather to focus primarily on one particular aspect of his work, namely *différance*. Exemplified by the above critiques, this is one of the most misunderstood aspects of Derrida's work, and the most vital to this project in particular.

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[81] Derrida admits that the stability of certain texts can sometimes appear "almost unshakeable," *Limited*, p. 146.
[82] Derrida, *Limited*, p. 146.

2.3.1 Différance: Doubling meaning (a.k.a Commentary) and Interpretation

The aim in this section is to elucidate a particular feature of Derridean deconstruction, namely *différance*, a semantically ambivalent neologism designating the condition of possibility of meaning through the simultaneous acts of differing—synchronic difference—and deferring— diachronic difference. What precisely is meant by the term *différance* and the corresponding notion of *undecidability*? For the purposes of furthering the overall argument of this thesis, it is critical to distinguish between two concepts connected to Derrida: undecidability and indeterminacy, the former rightly and the latter wrongly. Both terms advocate a disruption of meaning of a fixed or final interpretation of a text, but the term indeterminacy advocates an interpretive free play of meaning, or nihilism, within a text. In contrast, undecidability distinguishes itself through the differential interpretations of *determinable* history, that is, the oscillation between differing determinate meanings that lie at the heart of language itself.[83] Building upon that definition, the next section will examine how the key feature of undecidability, which is a *clôtural* reading, is also a necessary feature of interpretation and decision making, and is therefore an indispensable tool for political considerations in general and ecclesial polity in particular.

In addressing the mistaken notion that by *différance,* Derrida means something like indeterminacy or free play, he is quite clear: "différance is not indeterminacy."[84] It is not indeterminacy of meaning which governs Derrida but undecidability:

> What has always interested me the most, what has always seemed to me the most rigorous (theoretically, scientifically, philosophically, but also for a writing that would no longer be only theoretical-scientific-philosophical), is not indeterminacy in itself, but the strictest possible determination of the

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[83] See also Paul DeMan, *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust,* New Haven, Conn., 1979, pp.10-12; and David Bates, "Crisis Between the Wars: Derrida and the Origins of Undecidability," *Representations*, Vol. 90, No. 1, (Spring 2005), pp. 1-27, pp. 4-8; Yvonne Sherwood, *Prostitute and the Prophet: Hosea's Marriage in Literary-Theoretical Perspective*, esp. section 1.3.6 "Deconstruction is not a joyous affirmation of word-play," New York: T&T Clark International, 1996, pp. 170-173.
[84] Derrida, *Limited,* p. 149.

> figures of play, of oscillation, of undecidability, which is to say, of the differential conditions of determinable history. [85]

By "strictest possible determination," Derrida attempts to mitigate the vagaries of textual free play in order that determinable meanings, even though they are differential, may be addressed with a focus the text itself provides. Derrida is not interested in indeterminacy in itself but in undecidability, which critics too often fail to distinguish.[86] Derrida disputes the claim that he has ever argued for or has been remotely interested in "indeterminacy as such." In a moment of impassioned self-defense, Derrida protests, "I do not believe I have ever spoken of 'indeterminacy,' whether in regard to 'meaning' or anything else. Undecidability is something else again, namely always a determinate oscillation between possibilities (for example, of meaning, but also of acts)."[87] Undecidability, not indeterminacy, is the operative concern here:

> I say 'undecidability' rather than 'indeterminacy' because I am interested more in relations of force, in differences of force, in everything that allows, precisely, determinations in given situations to be stabilized through a decision of writing (in the broad sense I give to this word, which also includes political action and experience in general). There would be no indecision or double bind were it not between determined (semantic, ethical, political) poles....Which is to say that from the point of view of semantics, but also of ethics and politics, 'deconstruction' should never lead either to relativism or to any sort of indeterminism.[88]

Deconstruction is not then properly understood as a choice between determinacy or indeterminacy, but between undecidability and a final, stable, single determinable meaning. Derrida attempts a way of thinking about this relationship that questions the

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[85] Derrida, *Limited,* p. 145.
[86] For example, see James K. A. Smith, "Determined Hope: A Phenomenology of Christian Expectation," in *The Future of Hope,* Miroslav Volf and William Katerberg, eds., Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004, pp. 200-227, which although is focused exclusively on the eschatological question "What to expect when you're expecting" never mentions any distinction between determination and undecidability.
[87] Derrida, *Limited*, p. 148.
[88] Derrida, *Limited*, p. 148. See also *Of Grammatology* (Part II, Section 2, §4 "The Exorbitant Question of Method"); also Bruce Ellis Benson, *Graven ideologies: Nietzsche, Derrida & Marion on modern idolatry*, InterVarsity Press, 2002.

very structure of determinacy, rather than the total refusal of determinable meaning at all.

> 'Undecidability' is not caused here by some enigmatic equivocality, some inexhaustible ambivalence of a word in a 'natural' language...What counts here is not the lexical richness, the semantic infiniteness of a word or concept, its depth or breadth, the sedimentation that has produced inside it two contradictory layers of signification (continuity and discontinuity, inside and outside, identity and difference, etc.). What counts here is the formal or syntactical praxis that composes and decomposes it.[89]

Derrida addresses, not the infinitude of interpretations a text may or may not support, but rather the examination of the aporetic structure that is the founding of language and meaning itself; the ability of a (con)text to contain both its apparent or dominant meaning while also signifying that which is unexamined or repressed. *Différance*, then, is a critique of sorts; one that,

> reads backward from what seems natural, obvious, self-evident, or universal, in order to show that these things have their history, their reasons for being the way they are, their effects on what follows from them, and that the starting point is not a (natural) given but a (cultural) construct, usually blind to itself.[90]

What brings undecidability into even sharper focus is the moment when a decision is made. Recall that for Derrida decisions are not merely interpretive, but may include "political action and experience in general."[91] This is why such a distinction is so critical as it will be applied it to ecclesial polity. Derrida carefully elaborates undecidability at the moment of decision as the inability for a decision to rest on a calculation or computation, belying the notion any decision has been made at all. Undecidability, then, is the crucible

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[89] Derrida, *Acts of Literature*, 173.
[90] Barbara Johnson, *Introduction to Jacques Derrida, Dissemination*, Chicago & London: Chicago University Press, 1981, xv. Following this quote are four illuminating marks of deconstruction: 1)That the rhetoric of an assertion is not necessarily compatible with its explicit meaning. 2)That this incompatibility can be read as systematic and significant as such. 3) That an inquiry that attempts to study an object by means of that very object is open to certain analyzable aberrations... 4) That certain levels of any rigorous text will engender a systematic double mark of the insistent but invisible contradiction of différance (the repression of) which is necessary for and in the text's very elaboration.
[91] Derrida, *Limited*, p. 148.

through which decisions must pass in order to be truly decisions, ethical, political or otherwise. If one is to apply a "programmable, deducible, calculable computable result of a logarithm," a decision has not been made. Only when it has passed through the "ordeal of undecidability" has a decision has been made at all.[92] The implication of undecidability when understood properly is—and this is crucial for alleviating indeterminacy or textual freeplay—that "deconstruction can happen only if there is a range of determinate possibilities that are strictly constrained by a given context or situation."[93] Derrida's conceptualization of undecidability attempts to show how the determined intention of any text participates in the repression of meaning in its unintended other. A deconstructive reading attempts to expose these tensions and *aporia* to bring to the surface any attempt at a positive and totalizing discourse which assumes a purity of signification of the original referent and which would ignore or suppress the acknowledgement of what is outside and other-than the text.[94] Decisions therefore, can not be calculable. As Niall Lucy correctly suggests:

> If decisions were entirely calculable, they would not be decisions. For something to be a decision, it has to risk being wrong. This is why Derrida says that every decision, in order to be decision, has to pass through what he calls the "experience and experiment of the undecidable."[95]

Or in Derrida's own words,

> There would be no decision, in the strong sense of the word, in ethics, in politics, no decision and thus no responsibility, without the experience of some undecidability. If you don't experience some un-decidability, then the decision would simply be the application of a programme."[96]

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[92] Jacques Derrida, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, p. 137.
[93] Phillips, *You are Either Here*, p. 208.
[94] See Ward, *Deconstruction*, pp. 79-81, especially in the similarities with negative theology.
[95] Lucy, *A Derrida Dictionary*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2004, p. 149. See also Margrit Shildrick, "Relative Responsibilities," in *Women: A Cultural Review*, Vol: 14, No: 2, (2003), pp. 182-194 who argues that "paradox and undecidability, emerge as the very elements that mobilize ethical response."
[96] Derrida, "Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility," in *Questioning Ethics, Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*, edited by Richard Kearney and Mark Dooley, London: Routledge, 1999, p. 66.

If undecidability has an opposite then perhaps it would be "programmability" and not indecision.[97] Derrida recognizes that decisions, and judgements are necessary elements whether they be interpretive, political, ethical, or social. However, undecidability does not call for the elimination or refusal to make decisions.[98] If decisions, that is, determinations, are refused, then the very idea of politics would be rendered impossible.[99]

In light of Derridean *différance*, decisions that are contemplated and undertaken demand all "the instruments of traditional criticism."[100] It becomes necessary to see a decision not as madness or intoxication, but as needing a great deal of competence, lucidity, and rigor. So, far from nihilism or free play, Derrida insists that deconstructive reading comes with a great deal of responsibility.

> Deconstructive reading proceeds on the basis that the text, when carefully attended to, offers up evidence (linguistic, rhetorical, conceptual, etc.) which an attentive reader can use to read back against the text (and herself) to disclose more about its fullness and depth than its original author or reading audience ever imagined. To think this way about texts and reading is tantamount to saying there is more about a text than I ever thought; more to my responsibility as reader than applying a method or to thinking in Procrustean methodological terms."[101]

This study expounds on the false association between *indeterminacy* and *undecidability,* which

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[97] See John Caputo, *Richard Kearney's Enthusiasm: A Philosophical Exploration on The God Who May Be*, Modern Theology 181, (January 2002), p. 93. Caputo further elaborates that "undecidability was first recognized by Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where *phronesis* was precisely the acquired skill of figuring out what to do in situations that are unique enough to fall below the radar of rules and universals."

[98] Derrida, *Limited*, p. 116, referring to decisions in the ethical and political realm as a "necessary condition"; see also, Colin Wight, *Limited incorporation or sleeping with the enemy: reading Derrida as a critical realist*, Realism Discourse and Deconstruction, p. 210, who despite accusing Derrida of dualism articulates well the notion of undecidability.

[99] See Colin Wight, *Limited Incorporation or sleeping with the enemy: Reading Derrida as a critical realist*, in Realism Discourse and Deconstruction, Edited by Jonathan Joseph and John Michael Roberts, London : Routledge 2004; Ernsto Laclau, "The Time is out of Joint," *Diacritics*, Vol. 25, No. 2, (Summer 1995), pp. 85-96; Geoffrey Bennington, "Derrida and Politics," in *Jacques Derrida and the Humanities: a critical reader*, edited by Tom Cohen, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001; William Sokoloff, "Between Justice and Legality: Derrida on Decision," *Political Research Quarterly,* (2005), 58.

[100] Derrida, Of *Grammatology*, p. 159.

[101] Gary A. Phillips, "You are Either Here, Here, Here or Here: Deconstructions Troublesome Interplay," *Semeia*. 71, (1995), p. 200, "If Derrida stands for anything, it is that as readers we are obliged to pay close attention to texts."

are quite distinct concepts. As opposed to textual freeplay, undecidability requires careful analysis as well as responsible handling of texts and their intended meaning. Aporetic structure is revealed by undecidability and lies at the heart of deconstruction. A thorough examination of both Derrida and Levinas begins to address the charge that Derrida's writing is apolitical, that is, is only parasitic of other writing and therefore makes no serious contribution to political thought. One of the examples of undecidability and *différance* may be located within the concept of *clôture* which exemplifies the inability to operate as a full or final structure.

2.3.2 Closure/Clôture

The use of the term *clôture* (*closure*) is of significance for Derrida because it is both a key concept for understanding his work and because it frames a difficulty: the notion that philosophy can bring itself to completion or conclusion, or affirm a closed system or structure. Simon Critchley, notes:

> For Derrida, logocentrism always desires to attain a unitary closure, where the distinction between the inside and the outside, philosophy and non-philosophy, can be rigorously maintained. The philosophical enterprise is the 'mastery of the limit' (*la maîtrise de la limite*)…the desire to command one's frontiers and thereby regulate the traffic that moves in and out of one's territory. Philosophy is the territorial desire for totality and closure.[102]

Cloture is the concept of a "finite totality which is continually breached by a movement of infinitization."[103] The term *clôture*, which Derrida adapts from Heidegger and Husserl as *Vollendung* (completion) and of Hegel's *Aufhebung* (sublation), evolves in and through his later

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[102] Critchley, *Ethics*, p. 74. I focus here on Critchley exclusively, but an alternative option for revealing such limits can be found in Drucilla Cornell, *The Philosophy of the Limit*, New York: Routledge, 1992. Cornell argues that Derrida exposes the "quasi-transcendental conditions that establish any system…the very establishment of the system as a system implies a beyond to it, precisely by virtue of what it excludes." p. 1. See also Merold Westphal, *Overcoming Onto-Theology: Toward a postmodern Christian Faith*, New York: Fordham University Press, 2001, especially chapter 11.
[103] Critchley, *Ethics*, p. 64.

work, which will be of interest in this discussion. In this section, the origin of the word *clôture*, especially as it is used by Simon Critchley in *The Ethics of Deconstruction,* will be examined. For Critchley the concept of *clôture* is a keystone of his argument on which is balanced the ethical implications of Derrida's work. *Clôture* as used by Critchley, especially in relation to Levinas' *Totality and Infinity*, will be traced; and finally, the importance of the double gesture of *clôtural* reading in Derrida's work while simultaneously indicating its importance for the current argument will be discussed.

The word *clôtural* and its English equivalent 'closure' derive from medieval French and may describe both a temporal and a spatial usage. Spatially, it indicates an enclosed area such as with a fence or partition; temporally it can mean to bring to an end or completion. In either its spatial or temporal sense *clôture* denotes a limit, a boundary, as discussed in Immanuel Kant's *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason*.[104] When a process is brought to completion, or a space is delimited, it creates both the area within the enclosure as well as the area on the outside of that enclosure, or what Derrida names the *outre-clôture*—defining the conclusion or termination of an event but then also its commencement or genesis.[105] The delimitation defines both an inside and an outside, an ending and beginning. Derrida examines Husserl's use of this concept in his introduction of *Origin of Geometry*. For Husserl, systems like geometry were "de-finite domains, de-limited closures"[106] and as such, a fixed and finite discipline. Such a geometric example may at first glance seem outside the realm of this thesis, but the development and debate over axiomatic systems like Geometry generate an important distinction to be made about closed systems which will have important ramifications for this argument. The question at

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[104] Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason*, Translated with Notes by Werner S. Pluhar, Hacket Publishing Company Inc., Indianapolis, Cambridge, 2009.
[105] Critchley, *Ethics*, pp. 61-68.
[106] Critchley, *Ethics*, p. 67.

hand is whether a domain like mathematics is structurally closed and finite. Derrida distinguishes two infinities: the first, which is associated with Euclidean geometry is an "a priori system which... remains 'finitely closed'"[107] and the second, which describes science as an axiom which, as an infinite task, is unable to be a closed system. The debate concerning closed systems is best exemplified between the two competing theories developed by German mathematicians David Hilbert (1862-1943) and Kurt Friedrich Gödel (1906-1978). Hilbert, desiring to show mathematics is formulated on a complete logical foundation, developed the *axiom of completeness*, which is one of a set of geometric assumptions proposed in 1899 in *Grundlagen der Geometrie* (The Foundations of Geometry). He proposed geometry is axiomatic and, thus, a closed and finite system. In contrast, Gödel proposed a series of theorems rgueing for mathematical *incompleteness* in 1931. *The Second incompleteness theory* from *Über formal unentscheidbare Sätze der Principia Mathematica und verwandter Systeme* (*On formally undecidable propositions of Principia Mathematica and related systems*) "demonstrated that meta-logical statements concerning the completeness or closure of axiom systems can neither be demonstrated nor refuted within those axiom systems."[108] Such a proof refuted Hilbert's *axiom of completeness* and as a result was used by Husserl's to argue the inability to close axiomatic systems, like geometry, applied to systems of logic and language as well. Derrida's *Writing and Difference* capitalizes on this understanding by connecting it directly to Levinas' use of the language of philosophy in *Totality and Infinity*. Derrida argues that philosophical discourse cannot be breached or overcome by relying on the resources of discourse itself:

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[107] Critchley, *Ethics*, p. 66. (associated with Galileo see Rodolphe Gasché, *Europe, or the infinite task: a study of a philosophical concept*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.
[108] Critchley, *Ethics*, p. 67; Although he argues that Derrida based his work on concepts that were "already philosophically dead," see David Bates, "Crisis Between the Wars: Derrida and the Origins of Undecidability," *Representations*, Vol. 90, No. 1, (Spring 2005), pp. 1-27.

> the attempt to achieve an opening toward the beyond of philosophical discourse, by means of philosophical discourse, which can never be shaken off completely, cannot possibly succeed *within language*—and Levinas recognizes that there is no thought before language and outside of it—except by *formally* and *thematically* posing *the question of the relations between belonging and the opening*, the *question of closure*.[109]

The differential nature of the term *clôture* now begins to take shape. On one hand, *clôture* describes the refusal to remain within the limits of philosophical discourse, and on the other hand, recognizing the inevitability of finding a breach or opening of that discourse must begin from within itself. *Clôture*, then, is discourse which attempts to overcome discourse:

> The problem of closure at the heart of Husserl's project is that the very gesture that carries it beyond the metaphysical closure rein-scribes it within the limits of closure. The closure of metaphysics is bound in a double gesture, one of transgression and restoration, a transgression of the closure that can proceed only by employing the metaphysical language and conceptuality that restores metaphysics to itself. Phenomenology is a double metaphysics that can proceed only with the novelty of its overcoming of metaphysics by employing an ancient metaphysical language—that is to say, by employing a logic of palaeonymy.[110]

Clôture reveals the double nature of Derrida's work which is concerned with destabilizing the dominant interpretation of a text by repeating or doubling the commentary of the text's (and author's) auto-representation, so that the text may also reveal an inseparable heterogeneity located within itself. This alternative meaning is located within the text itself, but dislocated from the dominant or traditional interpretation. Critchley recapitulates his understanding of *clôture*: "First, the text is engaged in a repetition of its internal exigencies through an act of 'commentary'. Second, within and through this repetition, an ellipsis, or moment of alterity, opens up within the text which allows it to deliver itself up to a wholly

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[109] Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, p. 138.
[110] Critchley, *Ethics*, p. 71.

other reading."[111] Or said in the negative, "Closure is the double refusal of both remaining within the limits of the tradition and of the possibility of transgressing that limit."[112] A *clôtural* reading is one that interprets a text by making a priority of how the text may be read against itself; how a text both belongs to the machine of philosophic or logocentric discourse, but also how it transgresses beyond the same discourse. "Deconstructive reading leaves the logocentric text as a scarred, flawed body which is unable to demarcate its inside from its outside and which is divided within itself between belonging and not belonging to the logocentric tradition."[113]

The importance of *clôtural* reading is evident throughout Derrida's work and is most evident in the notion of undecidability or the perpetual deferment of a stable or static meaning. Critchley argues it is within the double reading, the undecidability or dislocation resting within a text's two alternatives—commentary or doubling interpretation—that "the ethical dimension of deconstruction is opened and maintained."[114] The destabilization of text often revolves around a "semantic ambivalence," the duplicitous meaning of words.[115] If there is no transcendental signified and 'nothing outside the text' there can also not be a means to unconditionally resolve or choose between the heterogeneous and irreconcilable

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[111] Critchley, *Ethics*, p. 89.
[112] Critchley, *Ethics*, p. 259.
[113] Critchley, *Ethics*, p. 74.
[114] Critchley, *Ethics*, p.88.
[115] Examples in Derrida are like *supplément* in Rosseau (*Of Grammatology*; see *The Derrida Dictionary* By Simon Morgan Wortham p. 114-115); Hymen in Mallarmé (Derrida, Jacques '*The Double Session*', in *Dissemination*. trans. Barbara Johnson, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.) *pharmakon* in Plato ("Plato's Pharmacy", in *Dissemination*, Barbara Johnson tr., London: Athlone Press, 1981, also see Plato, Derrida, and writing By Jasper P. Neel, p. 79-84, translatable as both poison and cure, and *Geist* in Heidegger (Jacques Derrida, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1987, see also *Heidegger and Derrida: Reflections on Time and Language* By Herman Rapaport. By no means is Derrida the first to address semantic duplicity as can be evidenced in Sigmund Freud, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, New York, Boni and Liveright, 1920, 148-149, "In this way, from ken meaning both strong and weak, there was derived a ken, strong, and a ken, weak. It is said not only the most primitive languages in their last developmental stage, but also the more recent ones, even the living tongues of today have retained abundant remains of this primitive opposite meaning. Let me give you a few illustrations of this taken from C. Abel ("den Gegensinn der Urworter")(1884). In Latin there are still such words of double meaning: altus-high, deep, and sacer, sacred, accursed. As examples of modifications of the same root, I cite: clamare- to scream, clam- quiet, still, secret; siccus-dry, succus-juice. And from the German: Stimme- voice, stumm- dumb."

meanings offered in a *clôtural* reading of any text; "deconstruction must persistently interrupt the argumentative process that results in consensus."[116] But is consensus not a necessary element for the formation of a community or political structure? This question goes to the heart of Critchley's *The Ethics of Deconstruction*.

Critchley maintains that deconstruction, far from being immoral or nihilistic as it is often portrayed, should "be considered as an ethical demand...provided that ethics is understood in the particular and radical sense given to it in the work of Emmanuel Levinas."[117] Critchley senses an "impasse" in Derrida's work, namely the relationship between undecidability on the one hand and, on the other hand, the necessity for political structure in the form of decisions, identity, judgment, etc., is problematic. In shorthand: is Derrida, as Richard Rorty suggests of Derrida's writing, merely "fantasy" with no "moral," "nor any public (pedagogic or political) use?"[118] Is Derrida's writing only pernicious to pre-existing thoughts and structures or is there some positive, constructive or necessary element that might contribute to a political or communal identity? Critchley argues although deconstruction may be "employed as a powerful means of political analysis," it lacks the ability to determine, to decide a question "essential to the possibility of politics."[119] Said another way, "If politics is the moment of the decision—of judgement, of justice, of action, of antagonism, of beginning, of commitment, of conflict of crisis—then how does one take a decision in an undecidable terrain?"[120]

Following Ernesto Laclau, Critchley agrees deconstruction in its critical mode is a formidable force for the overturning of preexisting political structures. "For example,

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[116] Critchley, *Ethics*, p.254.
[117] Critchley, *Ethics*, pp. 250-251.
[118] Rorty, *Contingency, irony, and solidarity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 125.
[119] Critchley, *Ethics*, pp. 199-200
[120] Critchley, *Ethics*, p. 188.

showing how a certain dominant political regime—apartheid, say—is based on a set of undecidable presuppositions is an important step in the subversion of that regimes's claim to legitimacy."[121] Although this "is a crucial step in the subversion of dominant conceptions of society and the development of new political strategies,"[122] Critchley contends that the perpetual openness deconstruction maintains is problematic for actual concrete decisions, which must be made at the political level. He sums up this dilemma by asking,

> is the account of politics given by Derrida either too formalistic and abstract at the level of undecidability or too contingent and empty at the level of decision? More gravely, in the rigorous, quasi-transcendental delineation of undecidability as the dimension of political responsibility, is there not an implicit refusal of the ontic, the factical and the empirical—that is to say, of the space of doxa, where politics takes place in a field of antagonism, decision, dissension, and struggle?[123]

Even Derrida alludes to this potential conflict, inherent when deconstruction moves into a political sphere in *Writing and Difference* in an epigraph quoting Kierkegaard, "The instant of the decision is madness."[124] Even while conceding that decisions cannot be grounded "on some ontological basis, or *eidos*, or on a set of *a priori* principles or procedures,"[125] Critchley is not content to let such political decision be governed by 'madness' and so brings deconstruction alongside Levinas' progression from ethics to *politics*.

2.4 Deconstruction's categorical imperative

Critchley maintains for Levinas, "politics begins as ethics, that is, as the possibility

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[121] Critchley, *Ethics*, p. 199.
[122] Critchley, *Ethics*, p. 199.
[123] Critchley, *Ethics*, p. 200.
[124] Derrida, Jacques, "Cogito and the History of Madness," from *Writing and Difference,* trans. Alan Bass. London & New York: Routledge, 1978, p. 36.
[125] Critchley, *Ethics*, p. 200.

of sacrifice; and this leads him to articulate a form of political life that would interrupt all attempts at totalization, totalitarianism, or immanentism. The interruption of the political order of totality occurs with the infinity of the ethical, the moment of transcendence that maintains the community as an open community, an interrupted community."[126] This does not mean that deconstruction can be understood rightly as a moral ethic; in fact, Derrida adamantly cautions against such attempts. Rather, deconstruction may best be understood in an ethical framework and as an ethical demand in the Levinasian sense as the "non-totalizable relation to the other" or what Levinas calls an "exteriority." For the purposes of this argument, it is important to point out that if deconstruction is ethical, it also then possesses as an unconditional categorical imperative which demands an openness to the other, whether the otherness of undecidability in a *clôtural* reading of a text, the other as person or as face as Levinas suggests, or the refusal to allow any forms of political homogeneity or totalitarianism.[127] Kant's second categorical imperative insists for an end to be objective, it must be necessarily and categorically pursued. Similarly, Derrida posits there is a type of categorical imperative best represented as an "obligation to the other;" in distinction with Kant, it is "prior to all procedures of universalization and legislation."[128] Deconstruction's categorical imperative, when understood in light of Levinas, carries an

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[126] Critchley, *Ethics*, p.225.

[127] This categorical imperative is addressed as a Kantian theme in Derrida's work. Critchley examines Derrida's translation of Kantian imperatives,

> For Kant, all imperatives command the will of a rational being either hypothetically or categorically...Hypothetical imperatives are conditioned, that is, a person counts this or that maxim as belonging to his or her happiness. By contrast, categorical imperatives command actions that are entirely good in themselves and are not performed for some ulterior end. Thus a categorical imperative is limited by no condition; it is simply and wholly the law that must be obeyed unconditionally and which possesses universal, objective necessity. Ethics, properly speaking, is restricted to imperatives that are categorical; and for Derrida, the ethical moment is the interruption of the general context of conditioned hypothetical imperatives by an unconditional categorical imperative. Ethics arises in and as the undecidable yet determinate articulation of these two orders. As Derrida writes, this moment of unconditional appeal is revealed in the link that connects reconstruction to the 'Yes', the moment of affirmation that one finds repeatedly in Derrida's writings.

[128] Critchley, *Ethics*, p. 256.

affirmation of the necessity to regard otherness and alterity, and is considered ethically significant. "Prior to all questioning, deconstruction opens a dimension of responsibility—grant, pledge, prayer, demand, call, saying—that precedes ontology and puts me into relation with another."[129] A community accepting this undecidability will always be provisional, conditional and will need to make room for this reality in the form of contention, conflict, debate, difference, openness. As it is not possible to close the system of interpretation, neither is it possible then to close the community that is ostensibly based on such an undecidable interpretation. This is by no means an original insight, as will be shown through an exploration of theologians' use of Derrida in Chapters Four and Five.

2.5 Derrida and Theology

Situating Derrida amongst theologians is not a primary focus of this thesis because others have in large part, already successfully undertaken it. Stephen Shakespeare's *Derrida and Theology* offers a robust and well-informed account of Derrida's life and work whilst also attempting to situate Derrida among theologians such as Carl Raschke (Death of God Theology), Mark C. Taylor (a/theology), Don Cupitt, Robert Magliola (Buddhist theology), David Klemm, John Milbank and Catharine Pickstock (Radical Orthodoxy), James K. A. Smith and Bruce Ellis Benson (Evangelical).[130] Numerous other books have placed Derrida's thought at more specific intersections with theology[131] as well as within a range of theological

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[129] Critchley, *Ethics*, p. 197.
[130] Stephen Shakespeare, *Derrida and Theology*, London: T&T Clark, 2009, see especially Chapter 7, "Theological Responses to Derrida," pp. 175-208.
[131] John Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida*; —*The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999; —*Hoping Against Hope, Confessions of a Postmodern Pilgrim*, Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015; Hugh Rayment-Pickard, *The Impossible God: Derrida's Theology*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003; Graham Ward, *Barth, Derrida and the Language of Theology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995; —*Cities of God*, London: Routlledge, 2000;

subtopics, including Feminist Theology,[132] Negative Theology,[133] Ethics,[134] Atheism,[135] Rabbinic Interpretation,[136] Social Theory,[137] Biblical Interpretation,[138] and the Evangelical Church.[139] In order to capitalize on what other scholars in this field have already achieved within Derrida's relationship to theology, this study will survey those germane to the advance of its argument as well as highlight those instances when ecclesiological matters, or those referencing the *Kingdom,* are approached. The work of three theologians who engage with Derrida in constructive ways and see within his work an opportunity for dialog or argue an analogue exists between a portion of Derrida's work and a particular theological insight will be examined. Surveying these other theologians will show how this project shares certain continuity with those preceding it.

2.5.1 Graham Ward - Barth, Derrida and the Language of Theology

Graham Ward's *Barth, Derrida and the Language of Theology*, alongside arguing for Barth's relevance within postmodernity and his "centrality for theology in the midst of today's postmodern debates on rhetoric," seeks to argue Derrida's *différance* can be understood as sharing operations with theology, specifically of the Barthian variety, within

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[132] See, Ellen Armour, *Deconstruction, Feminist Theology and the Problem of Différance: Subverting the Race/Gender Divide*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999; Ellen Feder, Mary Rawlinson and Emily Zakin, eds., *Derrida and Feminism: Recasting the Question of Woman*, London, Routledge, 1997; Grace Jantzen, *Becoming Divine: Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Religion*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000.
[133] Jean-Luc Marion, Harold Coward and Toby Foshay eds., *Derrida and Negative Theology*, Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1992; Robert Scharlemann Robert ed., *Negation and Theology*, Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992.
[134] Simon Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, 1992.
[135] Martin Hägglund, *Radical Atheism: Derrida and the Time of Life*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008.
[136] Susan Handelman, The Slayers of Moses: The Emergence of Rabbinic Tradition in Modern Literary Theory, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1982.
[137] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1998, —*The World Made Strange: Theology, Language, Culture*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1997.
[138] Theodore W. Jennings, Jr., *Reading Derrida / Thinking Paul*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006.
[139] Carl Rasche, *The Next Reformation: Why Evangelicals Must Embrace Postmodernity*, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004.

language and representation.[140] Ward argues Derrida's "economy of différance" may be understood in a Barthian sense as *analogia fidei,* thus making language "ineradicably theological."[141] For Barth, the *analogia fidei* does not "transcend language" nor allow us to "gaze upon the nakedness of God," but remains a human reflection (*menschliche Spiegelbild*).[142] Ward understands Derrida as the necessary supplement to Levinas, as the means to maintain the "double origin of language" Ward maintains is at the heart of theology's "primary concern;" the possibility "of its own relationship as a discourse to the original *Deus dixit*."[143] Ward examines Barth's struggle to "define the operation of a Logos beyond the embrace of a language system, beyond logocentrism."[144] But the problem for Barth is the "eschatological event."[145] Quoting Barth, "on the threshold of the Kingdom of God! There no one asks. There one sees. There one hears. There one has. There one knows."[146] Ward suggests that Barth, as he develops a deeper sense of dialectical revelation, becomes more aware of "mediacy, of interpretation" and the need to account for human reception of the *Deus Dixit* to be "counterposed by the constitutive consciousness of it human reception…the realm of the in-between."[147] This 'in-between' leads inexorably to the questioning which "constitutes the relationship between humankind and the Godhead, human words and the divine Word. It is a moment of self-criticism and doubt which both requires and engenders faith."[148] But Ward not only suggests the engendering

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[140] Ward, *Barth*, p. 10.
[141] Ward, *Barth*, p. 9. Derrida similarly suggests that "The sign and divinity have the same place and time of birth. The age of the sign is essentially theological." *Of Grammatology*, p. 14.
[142] Ward, *Barth*, p. 255.
[143] "God said it," Ward, *Barth*, p. 10. Ward also points out that "Barth's work was executed within the context of a major philosophical reorientation towards the problem of language." p. 2.
[144] Ward, *Barth*, p. 9.
[145] Ward, *Barth*, p. 88.
[146] Ward, *Barth*, p. 88, quoting Barth, *The Word of God and the Words of Men*, tr. D Horton, London, 1928, *Das Wort Gottes und die Theologie*, Munich, 1924.
[147] Ward, *Barth*, p. 88.
[148] Ward, *Barth*, p. 249.

of faith for the self but for the Church:

> The sphere of questioning, its de-construction and re-construction, is the sphere of Jesus Christ within which we, as the Church, move… the Church becomes the community of both the question and the promise, the temptation and the comfort, the Cross and the Resurrection… Outlining the form of this incarnation by claiming a true knowledge of God and entering the sphere of temptation has been the burden of Barth's presentation itself. This is the movement within his theological discourse, an economy of *différance* which constitutes and inhabits the process of representing Christ's representation. It is the tracing in the discourse of the veiling and unveiling of the Trinitarian God, inseparable from this economy of *différance* which forms the household rule for the community of the Church.[149]

Graham Ward offers a compelling and successful alignment of Derrida's 'economy of *différance* and Barth's *analogia fidei,* providing this argument a foundation on which to build while simultaneously removing at least some of the burden in suggesting that Derrida's work is indeed relevant to theology, provoking new questions within theological discourse. This is the foundation from which this thesis proceeds. Ward also bequeaths this project a gift, in the form of a question and the tantalizing image of the Church as a community of the question. What are the implications for a Church, Ward wonders, that is a "community of both the question and the promise, the temptation and the comfort, the Cross and the Resurrection?"[150] What are the implications for a Church that mediates its identity in light of the realities explicated by Ward's examination of Barth and Derrida? What sort of ecclesiology is imagined when the 'law of the house '(*oikos-nomos*) *is* the economy of *différance*? These are the questions which haunts the community of the Church, awakening it to the *aporias* and the impossible existence that it faces.

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[149] Ward, *Barth*, p. 250.
[150] Ward, *Barth*, p. 250

2.5.2 Jean-Luc Marion

Derrida has spent considerable energy demarcating *différance* from negative theology (apophaticism) while also extolling, at least in part, its virtues. At a 1968 meeting of the *Society Française de Philosophie, différance* was accused of being a mode of negative theology; the "source of everything and one cannot know it."[151] Derrida's enigmatic reply, "It is and it is not. Above all it is not." Derrida would later respond at length to this question and say that *différance* could at times resemble negative theology, "even to the point of being "indistinguishable from negative theology."[152] Derrida insisted,

> [D]ifférance is not, does not exist, is not a present-being (on) in any form; and we will be led to delineate also everything that it is not, that is, everything; and consequently that it has neither existence nor essence. It derives from no category of being, whether present or absent. And yet those aspects of différance which are thereby delineated are not theological, not even in the order of the most negative of negative theologies, which are always concerned with disengaging a superessentiality beyond the finite categories of essence and existence, that is, of presence, and always hastening to recall that God is refused the predicate of existence, only in order to acknowledge his superior, inconceivable, and ineffable mode of being.[153]

Though Derrida's carefully considered response would seem to close the matter, that has hardly been the case amongst thinkers focused on *theologia negativa*. There has been much ink spilt in pursuing this question.[154] Of particular interest is the deep engagement between

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[151] "Bruce Parain observed that *la différance* "is the source of everything and one cannot know it: it is the God of negative theology." Derrida responded, "Difference [i.e. *la différance*] is not, it is not a being and it is not God." Quoted from Kevin Hart, "Jacques Derrida," *Twentieth-Century Philosophy of Religion: The History of Western Philosophy of Religion*, Volume 5, Graham Oppy and N. N. Trakakis, eds., London, New York: Routledge, 2014, p. 263.

[152] Derrida, *Margins*, p. 6.

[153] Derrida, *Margins*, p. 6.

[154] Harold Coward, Toby Foshay, Jacques Derrida, *Derrida and Negative Theology*, New York, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992; For a detailed argument with an alternate view of the "hyper-essentiality" that Derrida asserts negative theologians like Meister Eckhart and Pseudo-Dionysius espouse see Ian Almond, "How Not to Deconstruct a Dominican: Derrida on God and 'Hypertruth,'" Journal of the American Academy of Religion, (June 2000), Vol. 68, No. 2, pp. 329-34, as well as "Negative Theology, Derrida and the Critique of Presence: A Poststructuralist Reading of Meister Eckhart," The Heythrop Journal, Volume 40, Issue 2, (April 1999), pp. 150–165; and Mary-Jane Rubenstein, "Dionysius, Derrida, and the Critique of Ontotheology," 2008, Division I Faculty Publications. Paper 98.

Derrida and Jean-Luc Marion, a former student of Derrida, who is, like his teacher, committed to critiquing what he names the metaphysics of presence.[155]Although, the goals of both Derrida and Marion are similar, there are critical differences. One element of this exchange between Derrida and Marion is described by John Caputo, who summarizes the debate:

> Derrida quite agrees with Marion that the meaning of the name of God is ultimately settled on the terrain of pragmatics, not apophantics, for Marion that means that the name of God is enacted in praise and liturgy, but for Derrida it means that it is enacted in peace and justice. The impossible, which we love and desire, is for Derrida a justice, indeed a democracy, to come. The question of radical social and political justice is, to my knowledge, never mentioned by Marion…The tendency of discussions of the confrontation of Derrida and Marion to be preoccupied with the question of mystical theology obscures the genuinely religious import of deconstruction, which is its prophetic import…The name of God for Derrida has a prophetic not an apophatic force, and is more Jewish than Christian, more religious than theological, more concerned with the ethico-politics of hospitality than with mystical or negative theology.

Assuming that Caputo is correct in his summation of the debate between Marion and Derrida, the dichotomy between praise and liturgy on the one hand and justice on the other reveals serious limitations. To understand 'Church' as merely what happens exclusively within the church's own walls and amongst its congregation is, given the prophetic and eschatological *Kingdom of God* deployed by Moltmann and Pannenberg, a myopic ecclesial view that cannot be tolerated. Perhaps what Marion is alluding to, however, is less a limitation than a means to understand law is to Derrida what *Kingdom* might be for Marion. A round table discussion that took place at Villanova University in 1997 was the occasion to bring together Derrida and Marion for a face-to-face discussion on the:

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[155] John D. Caputo, Michael J. Scanlon, eds., *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism*, Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1999; Jason W. Alvis, *Marion and Derrida on The Gift and Desire: Debating the Generosity of Things*, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing; Robyn Horner, *Rethinking God as Gift: Marion, Derrida, and the Limits of Phenomenology,* Perspectives in Continental Philosophy, New York, Fordham University Press, 2001.

> questions of mystical theology and the gift…a moment in which the "overcoming of metaphysics" characteristic of continental philosophy since Heidegger and questions of a profoundly religious character have become increasingly and surprisingly convergent.[156]

Marion, in a lengthy reply, describes more precisely where he agrees and differs from Derrida, quoted at length below, because he alludes, albeit elliptically, to the main proposition of this thesis, namely, the community comprising the Church, intuits an excess experienced in liturgy and prayer which cannot be fully comprehended or claimed, and so must defer its realized presence into the future, meaning any present structure of church must necessarily be able to be 'deconstructed' by the destabilizing presence that the kingdom may exert.

> In negative theology the difficulty is not that we lack intuitions concerning God(we are overwhelmed by them), but that we lack concepts fitting God. What we share in common, Derrida and myself, is that the concepts have to be criticized even in theology, as they are deconstructed in deconstruction. But it is for opposite reasons. In theology—and I am *not* referring now to my work on givenness-we receive an amount of experiences through prayer, liturgy, life in the community, fraternity, etc. The difficulty lies in that we have an utmost experience without the words, the significations, and the concepts able to utter it, to explain it, and to articulate it.

Marion then discusses several Gospel examples such as the transfiguration where Peter "knew not what to say" and the road to Emmaus where "their hearts burned within us" as experiences of having "no concept which matches their intuitions," that the intensity of the situation was too overwhelming which in philosophical language he names as an "excess of intuition over the concept or the signification."[157]

> This is the very special situation in the so-called negative theology. This is also the reason why it is not a good choice of words to describe it as "negative theology"—as it seems much more an excessively positive theology. Concepts are negative and, by the way, put out of play only because they do not match the excess of intuition. This is the reason why in

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[156] Caputo, Scanlon, *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism*, p. *1.*
[157] Marion, *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism*, Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, pp. 68-69.

> theology, in fact, pluralism is implied in the very notion of revelation. If there is a real revelation, no concept could achieve to say and to make intelligible in its own way the excess of intuition. Pluralism is implied at the inner core of revelation. There are four gospels and an infinite number of spiritualities within the same experience of the Church. I conclude that deconstruction and the so-called negative theology have something very much in common; that is, the fact that no concept is able to give us the presence of what is at stake, and that presence not only is impossible but cannot be claimed. If there could be any revelation, I would say that no heart, no mind, and no word would be wide enough to host that revelation. The presence of any self-revealed event remains impossible in our world. That is the reason why Christ has to come again-Because now we could not receive him yet, nor have enough room for him (John 1:10-11).[158]

Negative Theology, according to Marion, keeps us aware of the radical limitations of receiving revelation outside of language, context, etc. If this be true, then it applies not only to theology and to the theologian but both to the theological discourse *in toto.* The implications of this insight must then directly impact any Church which attempts theological discourse so that, not only does theology become unstable, provisional and heterogeneous, but so too the community which bases its identity on such discourse. The revealed event must, as Marion points out, "come again," that is, be relegated to the future, (*à venir*). Both Moltmann and Pannenberg who develop these insights specifically around the futurity of the *Kingdom of God,* address this theme in detail which shall be the focus of Chapters Four and Five.

2.5.3 The Prayers and Tears of John D. Caputo

Caputo's engagement with and writing about Derrida has been nothing short of prolific.[159] In "Edifying Divertissement No. 4. Deconstruction and the Kingdom of God,"

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[158] Marion, *The Gift, God, the Gift, and Postmodernism*, pp. 68-69.
[159] Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida,* Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1997; *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*, ed./auth., New York: Fordham University Press, 1997; *More Radical Hermeneutics: On Not Knowing Who We Are, On Religion, The Weakness of God, What Would Jesus Deconstruct?: The Good News of Postmodernism for the Church, Hoping Against Hope…* also see bibliography.

along with Derrida's engagement with Meister Eckhart and the apophatic tradition, the inspiration for this thesis, Caputo writes "The kingdom of God: viens! …a way to love and trust and seek justice, to seek the kingdom, which is here and now, which is for the lame and the leper, the outcast and the center, the widow and the orphan… the Kingdom is the call of the other."[160] Caputo, following Derrida, insists that the *tout autre* of Derrida's deconstruction is "closer to the prophets than to the 'church' and 'religion.'"[161] He continues:

> The *tout autre* always means the one who is left out, the one whose suffering and exclusion lay claim to us and interrupt our self-possession, our *bei-sich-sein*, our sense of being on God's side, of occupying the privileged site where God became man. But that does not pit deconstruction against the kingdom of God, against the kingdom to come. On the contrary![162]

Following Derrida, who maintains, "I don't much like the word community…I am not sure I even like the thing," Caputo challenges his audience to see deconstruction as the invitation to cope with the *aporia* and undecidability of community, reminding them of the etymological basis of the word community: "communitas is a military formation, referring to the common defense we build against the other,"[163] —"to build a common (com) "defense" (munis)"[164] The community or culture must "hold itself more radically open to a "future" (l'avenir), to what is to-come (à venir). History, thus, is not a course set in advance headed toward its telos, but toward a future-present, a foreseeable, playable, programmable, anticipatable, masterable future."[165] To better reveal Derrida's community without community, Caputo turns to Derrida's concept of hospitality. Not only does the

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[160] Caputo, *Prayers and Tears*, p. 225.
[161] Caputo, *Prayers and Tears*, p. 248.
[162] Caputo, *Prayers and Tears*, p. 248, "*bei-sich-sein*"="be-with-you"
[163] Caputo, "A community without Truth: Derrida and the Impossible Community," Research in Phenomenology, Vol. 26 (1996), pp. 25-37.
[164] Caputo, "Community without Community," in *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, New York: Fordham University Press, p. 108.
[165] Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, pp. 117-118.

word hospitality carry its own opposite within itself,[166] it is at its core an "enigmatic 'experience'."[167] There is an *aporia*, a paralysis built into hospitality. In order to be a host, one must claim an identity and possess power of the house (community, nation, church, etc), the power to host. How, Caputo asks, following Derrida, may I invite the other without "surrendering my property or my identity?"[168] In order for the guest to feel at home it is necessary "for hospitality to go beyond hospitality. That requires that the host must, in a moment of madness, tear up the understanding between him and his guest, act with 'excess,' make an absolute gift of his property, which is of course impossible,"[169] as doing so would sacrifice the identity of the host and thus collapse the hospitality.

Thus, *the* impossible, the "paralysis" of community (and hospitality) is it must limit itself, remain a community while remaining open, forbidding itself the "luxury of collecting itself into a unity."[170] Caputo emphasizes this 'community without community' and develops implications along lines of democracy, European identity, and international organizations.[171] This thesis attempts to bring Church alongside these other institutions to ask what, if any, are the implications of Derrida's thought to our understanding of the relationship between *Kingdom* and Church.

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[166] "The word 'hospitality' derives form the Latin *hospes*, which is formed from *hostis*, which originally meant a 'stranger' and came to take on the meaning of the enemy or 'hostile' stranger (*hostilis*), *pets (potis, potes, potentia*), to have power." Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell, p. 110.*
[167] Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell, p. 112.*
[168] Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell, p. 111.*
[169] Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell, p. 111.*
[170] Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell, p. 113, cf.* Derrida, *Points p. 355.*
[171] Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell, p. 119.* At one point in the roundtable discussions noting that international associations "have a way of ending up serving the interest of the most powerful member-nations, nations who set the international course." One wonders if such a question applies to the logic of an International association like the Anglican Communion?

2.6 Derrida's Justice

Before discussing Derrida's pivotal work "Force of Law", where he develops his idea of justice, it will occur to any reader to ask how Derrida's treatment of justice compares with other work that has been undertaken in this same field. Although it is beyond the scope of this argument to analyze contrasting approaches to justice, it is worthwhile to briefly discuss the connection Derrida shares with other models of justice.

A complete analysis of justice would be a difficult undertaking. Plato's *Republic*, Aristotle's Book V of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* II-II, 58, all invoke justice as a topic, as do Hobbes, Hume, Mill, Marx, and a host of modern commentators: John Rawls, Michael Sandel, Jürgen Habermas, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Amartya Sen. What connects Derrida's treatment of justice with other contemporary thinkers is the work of Immanuel Kant. In a recent comparative treatment of constructive (Rawls and Habermas) and deconstructive (Levinas and Derrida) justice, Miriam Bankovsky affirms, "These four accounts of justice affirm a common reference point: Kant's practical philosophy."[172] While debating and commenting on one another's work, Derrida and

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[172] Miriam Bankovsky, "Social Justice after Kant: Between Constructivism and Deconstruction (Rawls, Habermas, Levinas, Derrida)" thesis is submitted to the School of History and Philosophy at the University of New South Wales in fulfilment of the requirements of a PhD in Philosophy, (September 2008). Bankovsky also analyzes prominent Kantian liberals such as Nancy Fraser, "The French Derrideans: Politicizing Deconstruction or Deconstructing the Political?" New German Critique 33, (1984); Thomas McCarthy, "The Politics of the Ineffable: Derrida's Deconstructionism," in *Ideals and Illusions: On Reconstruction and Deconstruction in Critical Theory*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993; Seyla Benhabib, "Democracy and Difference: Reflections on the Metapolitics of Lyotard and Derrida" and "Afterword," in *The Derrida-Habermas Reader*, ed. Lasse Thomassen, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006; Amy Gutmann, *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Amy Gutmann, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994; As well as those who consider the relevance, for the constructive tradition, of Derrida's later, distinctly political, writings, including Iris Marion Young "Activist Challenges to Deliberative Democracy," Political Theory 29, no. 5, (2001), and Iris Marion Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000; Drusilla Cornell, *The Philosophy of the Limit*, London: Routledge, 1992; Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, London, New York: Verso, 2000 and *The Return of the Political*, London, New York: Verso, 1993; Bonnie Honig, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics,* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993; Axel Honneth, "The Other of Justice: Habermas and the Ethical Challenge of Postmodernism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Habermas*, ed. Stephen K. White, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995; Paul Patton, "Derrida's Engagement with Political Philosophy,"

Habermas both attest to their shared reference point in Kant.[173] One of the important themes directly addressed is whether justice is attainable. Bankovsky highlights Rawls' adoption of Kant's "defense of justice's possibility."

> If a reasonably just society which subordinates power to its aims is not possible and people are largely amoral, if not incurably cynical and self-centred, one might ask with Kant whether it is worthwhile for human beings to live on the earth?[174]

But as Bankovsky continues to pursue the constructivist justice of Habermas and Rawls, it becomes evident that although the pursuit of justice would make no sense if it were not attainable:

> [J]ustice is not exhausted by the determined content that Rawls, Habermas, and Honneth assign to it. No local determination can ever fully reconcile the conflicting demands that Derrida believes our historical concept of justice includes…Deconstruction requires the pursuit of the constructive strategies that Rawls, Habermas and Honneth defend, while, conversely, drawing attention to the pragmatic implications of the impossibility of exhausting justice's demands in the form of laws, principles and procedures.[175]

Derrida himself picks up this theme in "Force of Law" as he suggests at some point discourse "comes up against its limit" which he names "mystical."[176] Though only in

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in *Histories of Postmodernism*, eds. Mark Bevir, Jill Hargis and Sara Rushing, New York: Routledge, 2007; and Lasse Thomassen, *Deconstructing Habermas,* New York: Routledge, 2008. See also Richard Bernstein, "An Allegory of Modernity/Postmodernity: Habermas and Derrida," in The Derrida- Habermas Reader, ed. Lasse Thomassen Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006; See also Miriam Bankovsky, *Perfecting Justice in Rawls, Habermas and Honneth: Deconstructive Perspective*, London: Bloomsbury, 2012.

[173] "Whatever their differences, Derrida and Habermas are aligned against the same common adversaries: inequalities arising from neoliberal capitalism, terrorism, including state-terrorism, nationalism, and xenophobia. In addition, as Derrida writes, Kant 'means a great deal to Habermas and me', something echoed by Habermas when he writes that, '[a]part from all the politics, it is the philosophical reference to an author like Kant that connects me to Derrida." Quoted in Lasse Thomassen, *Deconstructing Habermas*, New York, London: Routledge, 2008, p. 3.

[174] Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1996, quoted from Miriam Bankovsky, *Perfecting Justice in Rawls, Habermas and Honneth: Deconstructive Perspective*, London: Bloomsbury, 2012, p. 1.

[175] Bankovsky, *Perfecting Justice*, p. 1. This admission would be in opposition to Richard Rorty who supposes that "full social justice (at least Rorty's conception of it) can be attained," Rorty, *Philosophy and Social Hope*, p. 203; As James K. A. Smith highlights in Rorty thought "perhaps even in the next hundred years." Smith, "Determined Hope: A Phenomenology of Christian Expectation," in Miroslav Wolf and William Katerburg, eds., *The Future of Hope*, Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2004, pp. 202-203, pointing to Rorty's essay "Looking Backwards from the Year 2096, in Philosophy and Social Hope, pp. 243-251.

[176] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 14.

passing, Derrida suggests that some of the texts on which he reflects, including Montaigne and Pascal, would benefit thinkers such as Stanley Fish in "Force," H. L. A. Hart's Concept of Law, Sam Weber, and John Rawls.[177] It is not unreasonable to assume the content of justice is an issue contemplated by many thinkers, though Derrida makes a unique and important contribution which is pertinent not only to politics, which has been argued; but also to (Anglican) ecclesiology, which has not.

In order to align Derrida's asymmetrical relatedness of justice and law, which will then be analogously aligned with Church and *Kingdom of God*, the next chapter explicates Derrida's "Force of Law," by examining the interrelated *aporia* on which the logic of justice revolves, the work of Walter Benjamin, especially *Zur Kritik der Gewalt*, and Blaise Pascal's *Pensées et opuscules*, as well as introducing a number of concepts relevant to ecclesiology, particularly autoimmunity. The latter borrowing a biological term to describe the (a)logic of applying the same logic to a socio-political group or context, which shall make up a large part of the argument that this work is eradicably politico-ecclesiological.

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[177] Samuel Weber, *Institution and Interpretation*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987; Stanley Fish, "Doing What Comes Naturally: Change, Rhetoric, and the Practice of Theory" in *Literary and Legal Studies*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1989; H. L. A. Hart, *The Concept of Law*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1961; John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Cambridge, MA : Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971.

CHAPTER THREE Derrida's Force of Law: The Mystical Foundation of Authority

Everything would still be simple if this distinction between justice and law were a true distinction.[178] -*Jacques Derrida*

Justice and the law, Derrida insists, share an asymmetrical relationship. The "law is deconstructible, justice is not. Deconstructive justice can never be fully assimilated. It is an 'infinite asymmetry.'"[179] However, the distinction between justice and law is not a "true distinction, an opposition the functioning of which was logically regulated and masterable. But it turns out that law claims to exercise itself in the name of justice."[180] Obversely, "Justice does not end with law."[181] The goal of this chapter is to explicate the relationship between justice and the law through the lens of deconstruction, which "takes place at the interval that separates the undeconstructibility of justice from the deconstructibility of law,"[182] so that in the subsequent chapters the same asymmetry may be deployed analogically to describe the relationship—and the same tensions and *aporia*—existing between the Church and the *Kingdom of God*. This author contends Derrida's political thought, especially his concept of *différance*, provides powerful insights for the church. The two crucial elements of this concept are, first, the aporetic structure around which Derrida describes the asymmetrical relationship between justice and law, and second, the implication of temporality at the heart of Derrida's

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[178] Jacques Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 250-251.
[179] Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx,* p. 22.
[180] Jacques Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 250-251.
[181] Giovanna Borradori, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003; Derrida, "Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicides," p. 133.
[182] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 243.

thought. Justice, Derrida writes, is never fully present: "Justice remains to come, it remains by coming [*la justice reste á venir*], it has to come [*elle a à-venir*] it is to-come, the to-come [*elle est à-venir*]; it deploys the very dimension of events irreducibly to come. It will always have it, this *à-venir*, and will always have had it."[183] The *sine qua non* of justice, according to Derrida, is its futurity. Justice which is fully present cannot then be justice; and a justice, if it is to be related in any way to the law, must then not be reduced without remainder to the law. Justice is 'other than' the law and any relationship that justice has with law will be not be straightforward. These two elements make up the crux of the analogical argument in the subsequent chapters focused on Moltmann and Pannenberg, which will themselves be structured around the bivalent defer/differ neologism *différance*. Chapter 4 highlights Moltmann's eschatological, future oriented theology (how it is deferred); Chapter 5 focuses on Pannenberg's struggle to determine the relationship between history as the "provisional character of all ecclesial organizations,"[184] and the *Kingdom of God* (how it differs) which "cannot be delineated exhaustively or conclusively."[185] In analyzing these three strands of thought, the hope is to highlight the similarities and shared structure between Derrida's *différance,* and the way Moltmann and Pannenberg conceptualize the *Kingdom of God* and attempt to relate it to historical, and thus ecclesial, experience.

3.1 "Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice"

In October 1989, Derrida participated at a conference in New York City at The Benjamin N. Cardozo Law School at Yeshiva University with the theme "Deconstruction

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[183] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 256. "Perhaps this is why justice, insofar as it is not only a juridical or political concept, opens up to the *avenir,* the transformation, the recasting or refounding [*la refondation*] of law and politics.""

[184] Pannenberg, *Theology*, p. 78.

[185] Pannenberg, *Theology*, p. 116.

and the Possibility of Justice." As the keynote speaker, on whose thought the rest of the conference was to be hung, he presented "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundation of Authority'" at the opening colloquium.[186] Its subsequent publication included a second part entitled "First Name of Benjamin [*Prénom de Benjamin*]."[187] The publication of Derrida's "Force of Law: The Mystical Foundation of Authority"—which was published in the Cardozo Law Review in 1990, in French in 1994, and included in the *Acts of Religion* in 2001—began a succession of political thought which includes Derrida's critique of Marx and the definitive entrée into social and political philosophy in *Specters of Marx* (1993); an examination of Carl Schmitt's political thought in *The Politics of Friendship* (1994); *Aporias* (1993); discussion of the United Nations in *Rogues* (2005); Gift of Death (1996); as well as articles on capital punishment, apartheid, the imprisonment of Nelson Mandela, and immigrants rights.

This **c**hapter will discuss Derrida's conceptualization of justice as well as the work produced after 1989, when it is claimed his work makes a decidedly political shift in tone.[188] However, Derrida is adamant that justice has been an oblique focus in his work since the very beginning:

> discourses on double affirmation, the gift beyond exchange and distribution, the undecidable, the incommensurable or the incalculable, on

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[186] Force de loi: le 'fondement mystique' de l'autorité; tr. Mary Quaintance as "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundation' of Authority," in Cardozo Law Review, Vol. 11, No. 5/6, (1990), Included in Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Religion*, ed., Gil Anidjar, New York/Oxford: Routledge, 2002.

[187] The second part of "Force of Law" (Prénom de Benjamin) was printed out and handed to the participants at Cardozo and subsequently read at The University of California, Los Angeles in April 1990.

[188] "[I]t isn't the case that Derrida's work became political in the 1990s; rather, it would be better to say that the topics of his analysis shifted fro the deeper metaphysical assumptions that undergird the political (the dualism that produces structures of exclusion and marginalization; logocentrism as ethnocentrism) to those institutions and sites that we more regularly regard as 'political' (matters of law, justice, ethics, religious wars, etc)." James K. A. Smith, *Jacques Derrida: Live Theory*, London: Continuum, 2005. p. 65.

> singularity, difference and heterogeneity are also, through and through, at least oblique discourses on justice.[189]

Even as justice is the *raison d'être* of "Force of Law," justice remains only addressed in an elliptical way, as Derrida is careful not to determine justice as a program or power that would betray its 'mystical' origins. Justice may only, it seems, be spoken of in an

> oblique fashion. I say *oblique*, since at this very moment I am preparing to demonstrate that one cannot speak *directly* about justice, thematize or objectivize justice, say "this is just," and even less "I am just," without immediately betraying justice, if not law.[190]

As justice may not be addressed directly, then its relationship to law must also be considered in an oblique fashion and, as shall be revealed, only through an aporetic or paradoxical understanding may be undertaken at all. The explication of Derrida's thought begins by drawing out from his argument the asymmetrical relationship that Derrida develops between law and justice, providing powerful insights not just for legal/judicial application, but for politico- socio- and communio- self-understanding, including, of course, the importance of political decisions transposed later into an ecclesiological register.

3.2 The "Mystical Foundation of Authority"

Derrida addresses the need for deconstruction "to aspire to something more consequential"[191] than a deconstruction which is purely theoretical, that is, Derrida will

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[189] Derrida, "Force of Law", p. 235, There is much debate about this political turn. "On one hand," John Caputo writes, "do not think there is anything like a 'reversal 'or massive transformation in Derrida's thought, of the sort one finds in Heidegger, say, anything like a Derrida I and a Derrida II. But I do think there is a profession in which the originally ethical and political motif in his work, deeply Levinasian in tone, has worked its way more and more to the front of his concerns in the writings of the 1980s and 1990s. Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, p. 127. Also see Geoffrey Bennington, "Derrida and Politics," in *Jacques Derrida and the Humanities: A Critical Reader*, ed. Tom Cohen, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, 193- 212. Derrida maintains however, "there never was in the 1980s or 1990s, as has sometimes been claimed, a political turn or an ethical turn in 'deconstruction,' at least not as I experience it," *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, p. 39.

[190] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 237. "oblique" see also *Du droit à la philosophie*, esp. 71ff, and "Passions: An Oblique Offering" in *On the Name*, translated by David Wood, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995.

[191] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 236.

reveal a deconstruction which is to "change things and to intervene" and to manifest itself in "the city, pólis...the world."[192] It takes up, although obliquely, the "problem of justice."[193] Derrida quickly admits this attempt "to address" will be elliptical and oblique since he is at pains to show "one cannot speak *directly* about justice…" Recall, one cannot "say 'this is just, ' and even less 'I am just, 'without immediately betraying justice, if not law."[194] Derrida is attempting to problematize a stable distinction between justice and law and to do this, relies on the necessity of the *experience of aporia*; fundamentally, justice cannot be fully 'experienced'. "Justice is an experience of the impossible,"[195] which cannot be fully realized or achieved.

The two essays comprising "Force of Law" focus explicitly on Walter Benjamin's "Critique of Violence," in which Benjamin argues violence is required as the foundation of the law. Derrida focuses carefully on the concept of violence in Benjamin's text in order to reveal some of the problems inherent in it, specifically around the notion that violence, force [*Gewalt*] is a necessary and justified means, what Benjamin calls "Divine violence" or "sovereign violence".[196] Furthermore Derrida wishes, by way of critique of Benjamin and elliptically Carl Schmitt, to attempt to include "the impossible 'force of weakness, 'the 'experience of the impossible 'that is justice." Derrida begins by showing the interpretations of the German word *Gewalt* in Benjamin's *Zur Kritik der Gewalt*, —"translated in French as 'Pour

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[192] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 236, Derrida mentions a few attempts to do just this in the discipline of "critical legal studies" including deconstructive work taken up by Stanley Fish, Barbara Herrstein-Smith, Drucella Cornell, and Sam Weber.
[193] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 237.
[194] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 237.
[195] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 243.
[196] Walter Benjamin, *Critique of Violence*, in Selected Writings, Volume 1, Belknapp/Howard, 1999. p. 300.

une critique de la violence' and in English as 'Critique of Violence'" — both fail to reveal the nuance inherent in the original German.

> *Gewalt* also signifies, for Germans, legitimate power, authority, public force. *Gesetzgebende Gewalt* is legislative power, *geistliche Gewalt* the spiritual power of the church, *Staatsgewalt* the authority or power of the state. *Gewalt*, then is both violence and legitimate power, justified authority.[197]

Derrida wishes to bring this nuance into the fore so that he may distinguish between "a legitimate power and the allegedly original violence that must have established this authority and that could not itself have authorized itself by any anterior legitimacy."[198]

Derrida's argument against Benjamin's revolves around distinctions between violence and authority Derrida admits on one hand are "interesting, provocative" and "necessary up to a certain point,"[199] but on the other hand, he insists are, "radically problematic."[200]

Derrida's focus on the problematic distinctions, and the *aporia* inherent in them, comprises the main thrust of his argument. The asymmetrical relationship between Justice and Law and the problematic "distinction" between these two concepts—which is not a distinction per se because as distinctions they are unable to be logically regulated— is drawn initially from one of Blaise Pascal's *Pensées*,

> *La justice sans la force est impuissante* [Justice without force is powerless—in other words, justice is not justice, it is not achieved if it does not have the force to be 'enforced'; a powerless justice is not justice, in the sense of law—J.D.]; l*a force sans la justice est tyrannique. La justice sans force est contredite, parce qu'il a toujours des méchants; la force sans la justice est accusée. Il faut donc mettre ensemble la justice et la force; et pour cela faire que ce qui est juste soit fort, ou que ce qui est fort soit juste* [force without justice is tyrannical. Justice without force is gainsaid, because there are always offenders; force without justice is condemned. It is necessary then to combine justice and force; and for this end make what is just strong, or what is strong just].[201]

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[197] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 234.
[198] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 234, see also pp. 264-274.
[199] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 264.
[200] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 264.
[201] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 238, quoting Blaise Pascal, *Pensées et opuscules*, ed. Léon Brunschvicg Paris: Hachette, 1961, fragment 298, 470. Pascal here is relying on Montaigne, *Essais,* 3, ch.13, "De l'expérience" Paris: Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1962.

All too aware such an interpretation moves "toward the sort of pessimism, relativistic and empiricist skepticism,"[202] Derrida wishes to propose a counter by developing a "more internal, more complex relation" between law and force, power and violence. It is important to stress here one might be tempted to remedy the situation found in Pascal by supposing the law might be amended so it is congruent with justice. But, of course, two problems arise. The first is, if justice grounds or founds the law, then the question arises, "What grounds justice?" The ultimate question of founding has merely been deferred. Second, if the asymmetry existing between justice and law could be amended, and law and justice unified as a coterminous event or body of just legal code, then justice would become redundant. Derrida suggests the founding moment of law requires a force which he calls 'performative' and alternatively a "call to faith:"[203]

> Justice—in the sense of *droit* (right or law)—would not simply be put in the service of a social force or power, for example an economic, political idealogical power that would exist outside or before it and that it would have to accommodate or bend to when useful. Its very moment of foundation or institution, besides, is never a moment inscribed in the homogenous fabric [*tissu*] of a story of history, since it rips it apart with one decision. Yet, the operation that amounts to founding, inaugurating, justifying law, to *making law*, would consist of a *coup de force*, of a performative and therefore interpretive violence that in itself is neither just nor unjust and that no justice and no earlier and previously founding law, no preexisting foundation could, by definition, guarantee or contradict or invalidate…Discourse here meets its limit—in itself, in its very performative power. It is what I propose to call here the *mystical*.[204]

The founding or grounding of the law cannot rest on any authority, "cannot rest on anything but themselves."[205] Derrida insists this does not mean laws are illegal or illegitimate, but

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[202] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 239.
[203] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 241.
[204] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 241-242, emphasis in the original.
[205] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 242,

rather a determination about their legality, in their founding, is impossible—their origin exceeds the simple opposition between founded and unfounded. This leads Derrida to reasonably insist law is deconstructible—one might add amendable, interpretable and transformable—and introduces his (quasi?) concept of justice by distinguishing it to the deconstructible law and aligning it with the concept and structure of deconstruction.

> In the structure I am describing here, law is essentially *deconstructible* whether because it is founded, that is to say constructed, upon interpretable and transformable textual strata (and that is the history of law, its possible and necessary transformation, sometimes its amelioration), or because its ultimate foundation is by definition unfounded. The fact that law is deconstructible is not bad news. One may even find in this the political chance of all historical progress. But the paradox that I would like to submit for discussion is the following: it is this deconstructible structure of law or, if you prefer, of justice as law, that also ensures the possibility of deconstruction. Justice, in itself, if such a thing exists, outside or beyond law, is not deconstructible. No more than deconstruction itself, if such a thing exist. *Deconstruction is justice.*[206]

In contrast with both Pascal, who cites Montaigne, and Benjamin, Derrida wishes to complicate the relationship between justice and law to propose that justice is beyond law, unable to be grasped or comprehended, and as his language suggests, perhaps does not even exist at all except in a mystical, indirect, impossible or performative way.

To elaborate this point Derrida makes three propositions:

1. The deconstructibility of law (for example) makes deconstruction possible.
2. The undeconstructibility of justice also makes deconstruction possible, indeed is inseparable from [se confound avec] it.
3. Consequence: Deconstruction takes place in the interval that separates the undeconstructibility of justice from the deconstructibility of the law. Deconstruction is possible as an experience of the impossible, there where, even if it does not exist, if it is not present, not yet or never, there is justice [il y a justice].[207]

"Since the origin of authority, the founding or grounding [*la fondation ou le fondement*], the positing of the law [*loi*] cannot by definition rest on anything by themselves, the are themselves a violence without ground [*sans fondement*]." Derrida's point here is not that the law is illegitimate, as he stresses that laws are necessary, nor are they considered illegal precisely because at their founding moment they are prior to the law that would legitimize or ground them, Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 242.

[206] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 242-243.

[207] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 243.

Distinguishing justice from law in this manner reveals a complexity seeming at first to obfuscate his argument unnecessarily. However, in producing a distinction which is unstable and asymmetrical Derrida is attempting to show the impossible relationship existing between law and justice. Law, on one hand is a "stabilizeable, statutory and calculable apparatus [*dispositif*], a system of regulated and coded prescriptions"; justice, on the other hand, is "infinite, incalculable, rebellious to rule and foreign to symmetry, heterogeneous and heterotropic".[208] So while law is not justice, it is evident that "law claims to exercise itself in the name of justice."[209] Law and justice are two distinct concepts claiming a common ground. To quote John D. Caputo, "For justice and the law are not supposed to be opposites but to interweave: laws ought to be just, otherwise they are monsters; and justice requires the force of law, otherwise it is a wimp."[210] Derrida describes the experience of *aporia*, of non-passage as critical to this distinction.[211] He develops three of these *aporias* in "Force of Law" but insists that while there are other iterations or *aporia*, it is clear "there is only one aporetic potential that infinitely distributes itself."[212] Derrida's aporetic example only serve to problematize the distinction between justice and law so it is clear that Derrida is not suggesting a "true distinction, an opposition the functioning of which was logically regulated and masterable."[213]

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[208] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 250.
[209] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 251..
[210] Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, p, 136.
[211] *Aporias*, from the Greek *ἀπορία* meaning 'impassable, 'from a- 'without '+ poros 'passage.'
[212] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 250.
[213] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 250. The three *aporias* developed in Chapter 3 are as follows: First *Aporia*: The Epochē of the Rule (pp. 251-252), which questions the freedom of ensuring a decision, as of a judge, which must both follow the letter of the law and its interpretation which is never calculated but must both preserve and suspend the law to render each case as unique thereby advocating the rulings of judge as responsible and free and not the result of a mere calculation. Second *Aporia*: The Haunting of the Undecidable (pp.252-255) which is developed in Section 3.3.2 which insists that undecidability is the name given to the impossibility of final decision and not merely the "oscillation between two significations or two contradictory and very determinate rules..." In other words the experience of that which is "heterogeneous to the order of the calculable..." Third *Aporia*: The Urgency That Obstructs the Horizon of Knowledge (pp. 255-258) is Derrida's attempt to remove

3.3 Three *Aporias* of Law and Justice

Although Derrida maintains that there is a single "aporetic potential that infinitely distributes itself"[214] he proposes several specific aporetic examples. In the first of three *aporia* Derrida argues the relationship between law and justice, if, for instance, both are referred to in a court of law by a judge making a decision or ruling, requires calculating with the incalculable.

3.3.1 First *aporia*: The Epokhē[215] of the Rule

Derrida turns his attention to a "common axiom…that to be just or unjust, to exercise justice or transgress it, I must be free and responsible for my action, my behavior, my thought, my decision."[216] So, on one hand, one's decision to follow a law or "give itself to the law"[217] must indeed follow a law or rule. On the other hand, if one's decision conforms to the law only through applying a rule or following a calculation, it may be considered legal but it wouldn't follow that it is just, nor would it be a decision made by a free and responsible agent. Derrida is attempting to highlight the tenuous relationship existing between law and justice. "To be just, the decision of the judge, for example, must not only follow a rule of law or a general law [*loi*] but must also assume it, approve it, confirm its value, by a reinstituting act of

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this aspect of deconstruction from "Kantian regulative idea" by focusing on the Greek etymology of the word 'horizon 'which "is both the opening and the limit" which defines either an infinite progress or waiting. Derrida insists however that justice is "that which must not wait." Justice must be rendered "immediately" even though it "cannot provide itself with the infinite information and the unlimited knowledge of conditions, rules, or hypothetical imperatives that to justify it."

[214] Derrida, *Acts of Religion*, p. 250. "I recalled that, for many years now, the old, worn out Greek term *aporia*, this tired word of philosophy and of logic, has often imposed itself upon me, and recently it has done so even more often," See also Jacques Derrida, *Aporias*, trans. Thomas Dutoit Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993.

[215] *Aporia*-from the Greek ἐποχή meaning suspension, deferral. "In Derrida's use of the word, épokhē names the necessary suspension of rules in the application of justice, while at the same time the one who does the suspending must recognize the necessity of rules." For Derrida, Miller, J. Hillis, New York: Fordham, 2009, p. 13.

[216] Derrida, *Acts of Religion*, p. 251.

[217] Derrida, *Acts of Religion*, p. 251.

interpretation, as if, at the limit, the law [*loi*] did not exist previously—as if the judge himself invented it in each case."[218] Quoting Fish, Derrida presses us to see the "fresh judgement" which is required in each distinct case; in every decision of which no two are alike: "each decision is different and requires an absolutely unique interpretation, which no existing, coded rule can or ought to guarantee absolutely."[219] The point here is less about the diversity of cases before a court and more about the problem in bringing both the law and justice to bear in a single case. One may be able to say a person acted in accordance with the code of the law, but it is impossible to say one acted justly in a final way.

> In short, for a decision to be just and responsible, it must, in its proper moment if there is one, be both regulated and without regulation: it must conserve the law and also destroy or suspend it enough to have to reinvent it in the reaffirmation and the new and free confirmation of its principle."[220]

From this paradox it follows there is never a moment in the present a decision can be said to be just; each new decision can only further defer the problem of justice.

3.3.2 Second Aporia: the Haunting of the Undecidable

Derrida's second *aporia* follows from the first, that a decision, directed toward justice must be a *decision*—and here Derrida has in mind a decision, as its etymology suggests, as something that "cuts and divides [*une décision qui tranche*]."[221] A rule must be calculated with the incalculable. It follows that any decision, which can be logically determined in multiple forms can then never be finally decided, and that every decision, in order to be a decision, must pass through the crucible of undecidability in order to be a decision. Recalling the structure of undecidability, as distinct from indeterminacy, any decision must "begin, by right

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[218] Derrida, *Acts of Religion*, p. 251.
[219] Derrida, *Acts of Religion*, p. 251.
[220] Derrida, *Acts of Religion*, p. 251.
[221] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 252. Decision comes from Latin verb *decidere*: de- off or away; *caedere* – to cut, strike or kill. Root of homicide, incision.

[en droit]…in the initiative that amounts to learning, reading, understanding, interpreting the rule and even calculating.[222] It is critical to note here undecidability isn't merely about being trapped between alternative decisions, or even the "oscillation or the tension between two decisions," but the experience of the impossible itself, "for example, respect for equity and universal right, and also for the always heterogeneous and unique singularity of the unsubsumable example."[223] Derrida explains,

> There is apparently no moment in which a decision can be presently and fully just: either it has not yet been made according to a rule, and nothing allows it to be called just, or it has already followed a rule—whether received, confirmed, conserved or reinvented—which in its turn is not absolutely guaranteed by anything; and, moreover, if it were guaranteed, the decision would be reduced to calculation and we couldn't call it just.[224]

In other words, undecidability requires that any decision must experience, consider and weigh, the asymmetrical, the foreign, the incalculable, or else a decision, in the strict sense of the word, has not been made. Decisions are not calculable, they cannot be run as programs or algorithms. As one commentator of Derrida, Niall Lucy, correctly asserts:

> If decisions were entirely calculable, they would not be decisions. For something to be a decision, it has to risk being wrong. This is why Derrida says that every decision, in order to be decision, has to pass through what he calls the 'experience and experiment of the undecidable.'[225]

In Derrida's own words, "there would be no decision, in the strong sense of the word, in ethics, in politics, no decision and thus no responsibility, without the experience of some undecidability. If you don't experience some un-decidability, then the decision would simply

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[222] Recall also from the last chapter the importance of the "guardrail" Derrida suggests.
[223] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 252.
[224] Derrida, "Force of Law," p.253.
[225] Lucy, N., *A Derrida Dictionary*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2004, p. 149. See also Margrit Shildrick, "Relative Responsibilities," in *Women: A Cultural Review*, Vol: 14, No: 2, (2003), pp. 182-194 who argues that "paradox and undecidability, emerge as the very elements that mobilize ethical response."

be the application of a programme."[226] If undecidability has an opposite then perhaps it would be "programmability" and not indecision.[227] To experience the undecidable is to recognize that no computer, even with the most complex algorithms or programming, is able to decide or consider anything outside its own programming and thus the human element of judgement, of justice which is *other*.

> That is why the test and ordeal of the undecidable, of which I have just said it must be gone through by any decision worthy of its name, is never past or passed [passée ou dépassée], it is not a surmounted or sublated [relevé] (aufgehoben) moment in the decision.[228]

3.3.3 Third Aporia: The Urgency That Obstructs the Horizon of Knowledge

Derrida's final *aporia*, which will figure large in the arc of this thesis' argument, situates justice in relation to a structural openness to the future; not merely a chronological future, but one that "must rend time and defy dialectics."[229] Derrida begins by explaining he is adamant in avoiding a reliance on anything like a Kantian regulative idea of a messianic event in discussing justice, because such ideas are "precisely horizons…both the opening and the limit that defines either an infinite progress or waiting and awaiting." Justice, Derrida demands, is not a bad infinity; justice, however unrepresentable it remains, does not wait:

> It is that which must not wait. To be direct, simple and brief, let us say this: a just decision is always required immediately, right away, as quickly as possible. It cannot provide itself with the infinite information and the

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[226] Derrida, "Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility," in *Questioning Ethics, Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*, edited by Richard Kearney and Mark Dooley, London: Routledge, 1999, p. 66.
[227] Derrida addresses this theme in *Donner la mort*, Paris: Galilée, 1999 translated by David Wells, *Gift of Death*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2008; where he invokes Kierkegaard. Describing this moment of decision which "remains irreducible to presence or presentation, it demands a temporality of the instant without ever constituting a presence. It belongs to an atemporal temporality, to a duration that cannot be grasped: something one can neither stabilize, establish, grasp [prendre]. apprehend or comprehend." p. 66, See also John Caputo, *Richard Kearney's Enthusiasm: A Philosophical Exploration on The God Who May Be*, Modern Theology 181, (January 2002), p. 93. Caputo further elaborates that "undecidability was first recognized by Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where *phronesis* was precisely the acquired skill of figuring out what to do in situations that are unique enough to fall below the radar of rules and universals." Also, John Llewelyn, 'Responsibility with Indecidability 'in David Wood, ed., *Derrida: A Critical Reader,* Oxford: Blackwell, 1992, ch. 4.
[228] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 253.
[229] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 255.

> unlimited knowledge of conditions, rules, or hypothetical imperatives that could justify it…The instant of decision is madness, says Kierkegaard.[230]

Action in the face of injustice cannot be deferred, as no amount of knowledge or information would be able to justify or guarantee the just outcome of the decision. Paradoxically, Derrida insists that justice is always 'to-come, [à-venir]' but that one will have to "rigorously distinguish from the future"[231] because the future as chronology "loses the openness, the coming of the other (who comes), without which there is no justice."[232] What Derrida is adamant to avoid here is an understanding of the future which "can always reproduce the present."[233] The to-come Derrida is describing is wholly other and cannot be predicted, regulated, presented, but must be wholly unrepresentable and distinguished from a future which is merely a predictive extension of the past and present. In Chapter 4 this distinction appears again, as Moltmann refers to the hope of resurrection as also relying on a non-chronological future which is not already existent in the past/present. In *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida,* Caputo emphasizes Derrida's deployment of *différance* revolves around the concept of time as "out of joint."[234] "Everything in deconstruction turns on the constellation of *venir* and *à-venir*…"[235] Caputo emphasizes deconstruction's dependence on futurity, the coming and the to-come. He develops this theme of Derrida alongside Blanchot who

> distinguishes ordinary, lived time (temps ordinaire) from an "other" time…a time without the present, an exceedingly un-Husserlian time…The familiar notion of time, phenomenology's "lived time" is synthetically formed out of the present, past-present, and future-present…In this "other" time—which would be unphenomenal, un-lived, non-experiential, extra-ordinary—the past is always already past, a past that was never present, never lived through, a *tout autre* past that did not pass through conscious life and experience…By the same token, the future, no less *tout autre* is not a future present, a not-yet present toward which consciousness can stretch out, pretend, foresee, anticipate living through, as it

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[230] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 255.
[231] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 256.
[232] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 256.
[233] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 256.
[234] Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act I, Scene 5, Hamlet: "The time is out of joint—O cursèd spite, That ever I was born to set it right!"
[235] Caputo, *Prayers and Tears*, p. 69.

> gradually comes about, but rather a future that will never be present, that is prohibited in principle from ever being actualized at some future point in time.[236]

This theme of futurity in Derrida's work is critical for understanding much of his thought:

> But for this very reason, it (justice) has perhaps an *avenir*, precisely [*justement*], a "to come," [*à-venir*] that one will have to [*qu'il faudra*] rigorously distinguish from the future…and the future can always reproduce the present, announce itself or present itself as a future present in the modified form of the present. Justice remains *to come*, it remains *by coming* [*la justice reste à venir*], it *has* to come [*elle a à venir]* it *is* to-come, the to-come *[elle est à-venir],* it deploys the very dimension of events irreducibly to come. It will always have it, this *à-venir*, and will always have had it. Perhaps this is why justice, insofar as it is not only a juridical or political concept, opens up to the *avenir* the transformation, the recasting or refounding [*la refondation*] of law and politics.[237]

Justice, as an event or concept, must remain unrepresentable or else be in danger of merely being a projected past/present. The future, and the future of justice, must "exceed calculation, rules, programs, anticipations and so forth."[238] In other words, if the content of justice can be defined and expected, even if not established in the present, then the expectation of justice has already been conditioned by the past/present and is predictable, foreseeable. The justice Derrida wishes to preserve by relegating its presence into the future is unexpected, unforeseeable, unpredictable, impossible. When Derrida writes, that justice "remains by coming [la justice reste à venir]," he is questioning the self-contained identity or present presence, maintaining that this self-contained presence eludes us; that being is only *being* when it is deferred, which he will eventually term "messianic." Any predetermined content one places in the future arrival has already shut down the very experience of the future and other by making it present and same. As shall be argued in subsequent sections, this aspect of Derrida's thought has important implications for the concept of the *Kingdom of*

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[236] Caputo, *Prayers and Tears*, p. 77. See also Maurice Blanchot, *The Step Not Beyond*, translated by Lynette Nelson, Albany: The State University of New York Press, 1992; and *The Writing of the Disaster*, translated by Ann Smock, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986.
[237] Derrida, "Force of Law," pp. 256-257.
[238] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 257.

God, which on one hand is future, coming and anticipated, but on the other hand, cannot be predetermined making conceptualization more demanding than often recognized. Derrida claims, "Justice as the experience of absolute alterity is unrepresentable, but it is the chance of the event and the condition of history."[239] Justice for Derrida then, is an "unrecognizable history," an "overflowing of the unpresentable over the determinable," a call to faith precisely where discourse "meets it limit" and is therefore called by Derrida, "mystical."[240]

The third *aporia* is of immediate interest as Derrida's insistence that justice, if it is to remain within this aporetic structure, may not ever be construed or understood as final; that is, with "no horizon of expectation (regulative or messianic)."[241]

> But for this very reason, it has perhaps an *avenir*, precisely [*justement*], a 'to-come ' [*à-venir*] that one will have to...rigorously distinguish from the future. The future loses the openness, the coming of the other (who comes), without which there is no justice; and the future can always reproduce the present, announce itself or present itself as a future present in the modified form of the present.[242]

To summarize the three *aporias* Derrida establishes in relation to justice: First, in attempting to address the foundation of the law and the responsibility before the law in relation to justice, Derrida may only focus on justice indirectly because the law may not claim itself as fully or finally just. Therefore justice, as it is pursued by law or a judge, must be responsible for one's actions within the law, but at the same time may not simply apply a rule or program, as that may be legal but not just; a judgement must both confirm and suspend the law, must

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[239] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 257.
[240] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 242, Derrida points out that for Pascal the foundation of law as justice is mystical due to "original sin" but Derrida "dissociates" Pascal's Christian pessimism and following Montaigne, sees the structure of laws and justice as a premise of "modern critical philosophy" which understands that the "instituting, founding, and justifying moment of law implies a performative force, that is to say always an interpretive force and a call to faith." Derrida deploys 'mystical' in a latter Wittgensteinian sense.
[241] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 256.
[242] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 256.

calculate with the incalculable. There is an endless deferral, and any definition or instantiation of justice, and thus of politics, is open to contestation and reform.

> Law is not justice. Law is the element of calculation, and it is just that there be law, but justice is incalculable, it demands that one calculate with the incalculable... decisions which attempt to navigate between that which is just and that which is not just can never be safe, they can never be insured by a rule.[243]

Second, the asymmetrical structure Derrida describes between law and justice removes the possibility that a particular law *is* just or a person *is* just. Derrida is not suggesting a complex form of antinomianism, nor that his concept of justice is merely absent or unable to be dealt with in any fashion, and is then too unreliable to mention at all in relation to law. Conversely, he insists that justice requires vigilance in regard to law. One must constantly question not only the origin or the ground of law itself, but also the "conceptual theoretical or normative apparatus surrounding justice itself."[244] Derrida explains that attending to justice in this way is quite different from the accusations directed at him personally, wrongly promoting him as irresponsible or neutral towards a concept like justice. Derrida claims that constant attending to justice "raises the stakes"[245] both for the conceptualization of justice and also more tangible injustices. So what is just must remain undecidable, not indeterminable. Third, a decision is required immediately, it cannot wait. No decision can provide itself with "infinite information

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[243] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 244, As Derrida underscores in "Faith and Knowledge," the alterity of spacing "will never have entered religion and will never permit itself to be sacralized, sanctified, humanized, theologized. . . . Radically heterogeneous to the safe and sound, to the holy and the sacred, it never admits of any indemnification," See the conversation between Martin *Hägglund* and Caputo on the "safe and sound," John D. Caputo, "The Return of Anti-Religion from Radical Atheism to Radical Theology," Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory, 11.2 (Spring 2011), written as a response to: Martin Hägglund, *Radical Atheism: Derrida and the Time of Life,* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008, and Hägglund's response, Martin Hägglund, "The Racial Evil of Deconstruction: A Reply to John Caputo," Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory, 11.2 (Spring 2011).

[244] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 248.

[245] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 248.

or unlimited knowledge."[246] Every decision is temporally and structurally finite. Therefore just decisions must "rend time and defy dialectics"[247] Justice should be a priority even though it cannot be fully realised. Judith Butler expresses this well:

> Not to strive for justice because it cannot be fully realized would be as mistaken as believing that one has already arrived at justice and that the only task is to arm oneself adequately to fortify its regime. The first is a form of nihilism (which he opposed) and the second is dogmatism (which he opposed). Derrida kept us alive to the practice of criticism, understanding that social and political transformation was an incessant project, one that could not be relinquished, one that was coextensive with the becoming of life and the encounter with the Other, one that required a reading of the rules by means of which a polity constitutes itself through exclusion or effacement.[248]

3.4 Justice as both Epistemology and Ontology

The implication of this aporetic instability applies not only to knowledge pertaining to justice and law (epistemology), but these same *aporia* also call into question the certainties of political and communal identities (ontology) as well. Identity through time requires a consistent and coherent repetition requiring logic (onto-logic, theo-logic, etc.). The *aporias* described above both write and efface this logic. Applying Derridean 'logic' to political realities like democracy, for example, means identity comes not from a stable and repeatable presence of self, but rather from the movement of undecidability. Matthias Fritsch argues:

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[246] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 255; and additional expression of *aporia* is also found in Derrida, *Aporia*, translated Thomas Dutoit, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993. "A plural logic of the aporia thus takes shape. It appears to be paradoxical enough so that the partitioning [*partage*] among multiple figures of *aporia* does not oppose figures to each other, but instead installs the haunting of the one in the other. In one case, the nonpassage resembles an impermeability; it would stem from the opaque existence of an uncrossable border: a door that does not open or that only opens according to an unlocatable condition, according to the inaccessible secret of some shibboleth. Such is the case for all closed borders (exemplarily during war). In another case, the nonpassage, the impasse or *aporia*, stems from the fact that there is no limit. There is not yet or there is no longer a border to cross, no opposition between two sides: the limit is too porous, permeable, and indeterminate. There is no longer a home [*chez-soi*] and a not-home [*chez-l'autre*].… Finally, the third type of *aporia*, the impossible, the antinomy, or the contradiction, is a nonpassage because its elementary milieu does not allow for something that could be called passage, step, walk, gait, displacement, or replacement, a kinesis in general. There is no more path."p. 20–21.

[247] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 255.

[248] Judith Butler, "Jacques Derrida," London Review of Books, Vol. 26 No. 21, (4 November 2004), p. 32.

> To establish identity, we need to project future horizons of meaning and repeat what we have inherited, but such repetition, in the same movement, opens up the horizons to the absolute future. In other words, repetition from the open future makes identity possible, but also again and again undermines it.[249]

Derrida points to a certain aporetic reality of justice, which, then also applies to other similarly constructed realities. When, for instance, a political decision is made there is a necessary exclusion at work within the logic of the de-cision (thus the etymological to cut-away) or for an identity to be construed. This exclusion, far from being able to be either eliminated or fully incorporated, is the very essence of such relations as identity, politics, friendship, and the impossible condition for their possibility.

Derrida proposes the structure between justice—which is "infinite, incalculable, rebellious to rule and foreign to symmetry, heterogenous and heterotropic"— and law—which is a "stabilizable, statutory and calculable apparatus [dispositif], a system of regulated and coded prescriptions"[250]— is itself problematic. The distinction between justice and law is not itself a true distinction nor an opposition which is logically or even dialectically opposed. This is an important point because it undergirds the argument that justice is not a distinction in the classical sense, which may be "logically regulated and masterable."[251] In support of his argument, Derrida suggests Levinas is an important figure. The suggestion Derrida makes here is that justice is closest to Levinas who writes "*la relation avec autrui - c'est à dire la justice* [the relation with the other - that is to say, justice.]"[252] Before adopting a coterminous position *vis-a-vis* justice in Levinas, Derrida points out that for Levinas, justice is closely associated with

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[249] Matthias Fritsch, "Derrida's Democracy To Come," Constellations: An International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory 9:4, (December 2002), p. 584.
[250] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 250.
[251] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 250-251.
[252] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, p. 89.

"holiness [*saintteté*]."[253] This theme will be addressed more directly in the next section as we address Derrida's critique of Benjamin, and again in the examination of justice as an analogical concept to the *Kingdom of God*. From these *aporias*, three important aspects will be carried forward, comprising the structure of the analogy proposed in subsequent chapters: 1) Undecidability haunts every decision, so the condition of possibility of just decisions is its impossibility; 2) No decision, no person can be said to *be* fully and finally just; 3) The full presence of justice is always deferred to the future.

3.5 Divine Justice in Benjamin's Zur Zritik der Gewalt (1921)

In part two of "Force of Law" [*Prénom de Benjamin*], Derrida returns to the theme of foundations, that is, the founding of the law and examines and distinguishes violence of the law as founding violence "the one that institutes and posits law (*die rechtsetzende Gewalt*)," as opposed to" law-preserving" justice, which "maintains, confirms, insures the permanence and enforceability of law (*die rechtserhaltende Gewalt*)."[254] Derrida elucidates several warnings concerning *Gewalt* as used by Benjamin—violence and authority, especially when divine, ie. *göttliche Gewalt*—and Derrida's critique of Benjamin's distinction between founding and preserving violence/authority which Derrida maintains is "radically problematic."[255] Derrida explicates Benjamin's distinction by showing the state, which in his example is the order of the law in its greatest force, does not fear the transgression of the law as crime "even on the grand scale of the Mafia of heavy drug traffic; as long as they transgress the law [loi]."[256] To

[253] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 250.
[254] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 264.
[255] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 264.
[256] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 268.

transgress the law is to respect the boundaries and authority such laws represent. To operate outside the boundaries of the law explicitly announces its relevance, even if not submitting to it. In contrast, the state is "afraid" of the violence which is "able to justify, to legitimate (*begründen*), or transform the relations of law[*Rechtsverhältnisse*]"[257] -that is, a founding violence able to justify rights and laws by itself.

3.6 Force of Law II: First Name of Benjamin [*Prénom de Benjamin*]

Derrida redoubles his focus on the law through Walter Benjamin's *Critique of Violence [Zur Kritik der Gewalt]* to bring Benjamin's "mystical" and "neo-messianical"[258] reading of the law to light as a continuation of—and it seems on the surface at least, a commendation of—the first part of "Force of Law" in which the asymmetrical relation between law and its other, justice are examined. Similar to Derrida, Benjamin is interested in both law and justice and the relationship they have with violence: "The task of a critique of violence can be summarized as that of expounding its relation to law and justice."[259] To this end, Benjamin sets two opposing traditions of law, natural law and positive law, together in order to show a similarity and also a blind spot in each.[260] Benjamin examines the "dogmatic presuppositions" in each, hoping to expose the fact both share the presupposition that "just ends can be attained by just means."[261]

> Natural law attempts, by the justness of ends (*durch die Gerechtigkeit der Zwecke*), to 'justify' ('*rechtfertigen*') the means, positive law to 'guarantee' ('*garantieren*') the justness of the ends through the justification (*Gerechtigkeit*)

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[257] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 268.
[258] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 263.
[259] Benjamin, *Violence*, p. 277, the opening line of his text.
[260] "This thesis of natural law that regards violence as a natural datum is diametrically opposed to that of positive law, which sees violence as a product of history." Benjamin, *Violence*, p. 278.
[261] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 266.

> of the means"…Positive law would remain blind to the unconditionality of ends, natural law to the conditionality of means.[262]

In other words, natural law supposes that means are justified because of the justness of ends; positive law suggests the opposite, that just means guarantee just ends. This "tautological triviality"[263] is, by Benjamin's reading, the effort the law/state makes to justify violence. Benjamin notes that the "the most elementary relationship within any legal system is that of ends to means," and his essay attempts to "resolve this question" with a "more exact criterion…which would discriminate within the sphere of means themselves, without regard for the ends they serve."[264] To this end Benjamin posits a distinction between violence that founds and violence that preserves. Derrida summarizes Benjamin in three points that will be examined one at a time.

> There is, first, the distinction between two kinds of violence of law, in relation to law: the <u>founding</u> violence, the one that institutes and posits law (die rechtsetzende Gewalt) and the violence that <u>preserves</u>, the one that maintains, confirms, insures the permanence and enforceability of law (die rehctserhaltende Gewalt)…[265]

Benjamin blurs the distinction between founding and preserving violence by pointing out a double bind, which Derrida notes,

> On the one hand, it appears *easier* to criticize the violence that founds since it cannot be justified by any preexisting legality and so appears savage. But on the other hand, and this reversal makes the whole worth of this reflection, it is *more difficult*, more illegitimate to criticize this same founding violence since one cannot summon it to appear before the institution of any preexisting law: it does not recognize existing law in the moment that it founds another. [266]

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[262] Benjamin, *Zur Kritik der Gewalt/Critique of Violence*, p. 180; quoted from Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 266. "If justice is the criterion of ends, legality is that of means. Notwithstanding this antithesis, however, both schools meet in their common basic dogma: just ends can be attained by justified means, justified means used for just ends. Natural law attempts, by the justness of the ends, to "justify" the means, positive law to "guarantee" the justness of the ends through the justification of the means. This antinomy would prove insoluble if the common dogmatic assumption were false, if justified means on the one hand and just ends on the other were in irreconcilable conflict. No insight into this problem could be gained, however, until the circular argument had been broken, and mutually independent criteria both of just ends and of justified means were established."
[263] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 266.
[264] Benjamin, *Violence*, p. 277.
[265] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 264.
[266] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 274.

The distinction between founding and preserving violence is not pure, however. Following Benjamin, Derrida agrees there is a deconstruction at work, in which the distinction between founding and sustaining violence is contaminated and the distinction between the two becomes blurred.[267] So Benjamin makes a second distinction, introducing another form of violence into the text which he calls "divine:"

> Next there is the distinction between the founding violence that makes law — it is named "mythic"… and the destructive violence that annihilates law (Rechtsvernnichtend) — named "divine."[268]

Benjamin distinguishes between human justice and divine justice; between divine justice that destroys law and mythic violence that founds it.

> If mythical violence is lawmaking, divine violence is law-destroying; if the former sets boundaries, the latter boundlessly destroys them; if mythical violence brings at once guilt and retribution, divine power only expiates; if the former threatens, the latter strikes; if the former is bloody, the latter is lethal without spilling blood.[269]

The distinction between Benjamin and Derrida here is pronounced but subtle. Benjamin asserts justice is the "principle of all divine end making," while power "is the principle of all mythic lawmaking."[270] In other words, and mirroring Derrida to a large degree, justice is clearly beyond the logos of law: "For it is never reason that decides on the justification of means and the justness of ends: fate-imposed violence decides on the former, and God on the latter."[271]. The implication for divine justice is that it can never be established as human law; divine justice cannot instantiate itself in the world; it is, however, a destroyer of the mythical, of human law and power. The mythic founding of violence is idolatrous in that it claims to be

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[267] Derrida, "Force of Law," pp. 274-275.
[268] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 265.
[269] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 276.
[270] Benjamin, *Violence*, p. 295.
[271] Benjamin, *Violence*, p. 294.

divine and justified. Divine violence, for Benjamin, annihilates the idolatry of the mythical, that is, it annuls idolatry and deconstructs the 'truths' credited to God (or similarly God's kingdom*)*. For Benjamin, divine law is contentless, always only negative, destructive, *apophatic*; while mythic law is positive, constructive, *kataphatic* and, ultimately groundless.

Though strikingly similar to Derrida in many ways—even to the degree that Derrida seems to agree with his line of reasoning—the concept of justice that Benjamin forwards, is rejected by Derrida because of one important distinction: "A paradoxical perspective in Benjamin's text is that even though justice is transcendent (it is God who decides upon the justness of ends) it does not mean that human actions cannot be an expression of divine justice."[272] Though Derrida follows Benjamin's thinking, it is only to a point. In considering the "final solution" of the Nazis, Derrida recalls the caveats, the signs that Divine justice would have for Benjamin: "annihilating, expiatory and bloodless,"[273] an image Benjamin draws from the legend of Niobe from Numbers 16.

> It strikes privileged Levites, strikes them without warning, Without threat it does not stop short of annihilation. But in annihilating it also expiates, and a deep connection between the lack of bloodshed and the expiratory character of this violence is unmistakable.[274]

Derrida shudders to consider the implications of this final comment as is evident in his post-scriptum:

> *It is at this point that this text, in all its polysemic mobility and all its resources for reversal, seems to me finally to resemble too closely …the very thing against which one must act and think, do and speak. This text, like others by Benjamin, is still too Heideggarian, too messianic-Marxist or archeo-eschatological for me. I do not know whether from this nameless thing that one calls the "final solution" one can draw something that still deserves*

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[272] Signe Larsen, "Notes on the Thought of Walter Benjamin: Critique of Violence," Critical Legal Thinking - Law & the Political, (11 October 2013).
[273] "The legend of Niobe may be confronted, as an example of this violence…For blood is the symbol of mere life. The dissolution of legal violence stems, as cannot be shown in detail here, from the guilt of more natural life, which consigns the living, innocent and unhappy, to a retribution that "expiates" the guilt of mere life—and doubtless also purifies the guilty, not of guilt, however, but of law. For with mere life the rule of law over the living ceases. Mythical violence is bloody power over mere life for its own sake, divine violence pure power over all life for the sake of the living. The first demands sacrifice, the second accepts it." Benjamin, *Violence*, p. 297.
[274] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 298.

> *the name of a lesson*[enseignement]. *But if there were a lesson to be drawn, a unique lesson among the always singular lessons of murder, from even a single murder, from all the collective exterminations of history…the lesson that we could draw today—and if we can do so then we must* [et si nous le pouvons nous le devons]—*is that we must think, know, represent for ourselves, formalize, judge the possible complicity among all these discourses and the worst (here the "final solution"). In my view, this defines a task and a responsibility the them of which I have not been able to read in either Benjaminian "destruction" or Heideggerian "*Destruktion." *It is the thought of difference between these destructions on the one hand and a deconstructive affirmation on the other that has guided me tonight in this reading.*[275]

For Benjamin, it is possible the violence of divine justice might be witnessed or experienced even if only apophatically, in the negative. Derrida's concern is that Benjamin has slipped back into the very metaphysics he is trying to evade by privileging the negative in this way—an accusation Derrida also makes against apophatic/negative theology in "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials."[276] Derrida makes no case as to why Benjamin is "too Heideggarian" but perhaps Benjamin here is merely privileging the obverse of Derrida's critique of Heidegger, which is the privileging of absence in Benjamin's case or Being (*Dasein*) in the case of Heidegger. Derrida, in an earlier text, *Writing and Difference,* establishes this theme and insists the condition on which presence is based is both presence and non-presence. To demote either presence or non-presence to second-class status is to deny the constitutive power of both.

> Derrida would remark that non-being and absence, and the difference between Being and beings or the difference between presence and absence are as essential to determining presence as the simple ontological privileging of presence that Heidegger emphasizes through the ontological certitude of Being. This relegates non-Being and non-presence to something secondary, when it is, in fact, essential to determining Being and presence. Although difference determines the structurality of metaphysics, Heidegger elides this in his simple privileging of Being and presence. Derrida notes that erasure and dislocation belongs to the structure of the trace. In other words, presence is determined by the

[275] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 298.
[276]Derrida, "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials," pp. 73-136.

> deferral, spatially and temporally, of the trace which conditions and originates both presence and absence.[277]

The importance of this insight becomes clear in examining the last facet of Derrida's thought addressed here: autoimmunity. Derrida is concerned even the apophatic discourse used by Benjamin slips into discourse on many levels. He suggests "the difficulty of the 'sans (without)' spreads into what is called politics, morals, or law, which are just as threatened as promised by apophasis."[278] Derrida's indirect critique of Benjamin is, in an attempt to overcome metaphysics, Benjamin has succumbed to an "aporia-affect," which Derrida will later call *autoimmunity*.

3.7 Derrida and Autoimmunity

In an interview with Richard Kearney examining issues Derrida had addressed in his writings on *différance* and undecidability such as hospitality, justice, responsibility…, Kearney formulates a series of questions meant to cross-examine Derrida, not only seeking to clarify the concepts themselves, but wondering aloud how such concepts intersect with more practical political matters. "What is to be done?" he asks, "How do we act?" That is, after deconstruction, how can Derrida's readers move from the text into the actual realm of community, of politics, of judgement conditioned by undecidability and *différance*. Kearney wonders,

> How do we move from the text, understood in the broad sense to action…how do we make a decision on the basis of undecidability? If we take key concepts like 'law', 'truth' and 'lie', and submit them to the subtlety of 100 qualifications and close readings, how can we prevent conscience making cowards of us all?[279]

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[277] Chung Chin-Yi, "The Relation of Derrida's Deconstruction to Heidegger's Destruction," Journal of Literary Studies, (2009), vol. 1, no. 1, p. 94.
[278] Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 82.
[279] Richard Kearney, "Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility: A Dialogue with Jacques Derrida," *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*, Richard Kearney & Mark Dooley, eds., New York: Routledge, 2003, p. 65.

Derrida's extended answer reiterates what he means by text as "not distinct from action or opposed to action,"[280] claiming politics itself is impossible without texts and without discourse. But what Kearney is alluding to is the *aporia*, the undecidability at the heart of "Force of Law", and of course politics in general. Although there are many who discern, like Kearney, a political turn in Derrida's work, Derrida himself denies such a turn occurred. He states,

> there never was in the 1980s or 1990s, as has sometimes been claimed, a political turn or ethical turn in "deconstruction," at least not as I experience it. The thinking of the political has always been a thinking of différance and the thinking of différance always a thinking of the political of the contour and limits of the political, especially around the enigma or the autoimmune double bind of the democratic.[281]

Derrida addresses the *aporia* that inheres within the political most comprehensively in his writing on democracy, which for Derrida exemplifies both democracy's futurity and undecidability. Analogous to the "justice to come" developed in "Force of Law" a "true" finished and final democracy remains elusive to the present, i.e., it is always a "democracy to come." Derrida develops this concept in a number of works and introduces it as a constitutive and essential concept alongside democracy he calls "autoimmunity."[282] By examining the necessity of autoimmunity within politics, specifically democracy, a number of similar political concepts autoimmunity informs may be recognized and may be applied to a range of other political entities, such as the church, which will be the focus in subsequent chapters.

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[280] Kearney, *Dialogue with Derrida*, p. 65. Recalling what Derrida refers to as text incorporates praxis and contexts and is not merely words on a page. He states "I would include what we call 'action', or 'praxis' or 'polities' within the general space of what I call 'the trace'. Within this general space we have to distinguish between a number of determinate agencies, such as, of course, the book, the text in the narrow sense, and action." p. 66

[281] Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 39. The veracity of the 'political turn' in Derrida's work may be argued. However, it is inarguable that Derrida focused much of his latter work exclusively on politics by deploying his previously thought conceptual apparatus into explicitly political contexts. J. Hillis Miller maintains' Derrida wrote so much about politics in his last decades that it might even be possible to assert (not quite truthfully) that he became almost exclusively a political philosopher, a political theorist, or even a political scientist." Miller, *For Derrida*, p. 229.

[282] Especially *Spectres of Marx* (1993); *The Politics of Friendship* (1994); *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason* (2004).

Autoimmunity, Derrida insists, is not identical to the term *aporia* he develops in "Force of Law."[283] However, he maintains autoimmunity shares the aporetic trait of undecidability, which is not merely a contradiction or tension, but, like the aporetic relationship between justice and law, is a "nondialectizable antinomy."[284] For the purposes of speaking about any political community (or communion) Derrida's borrowed biological term "autoimmunity" is an important reality to address. First, because it "both stands-in for and re-orientates a number of Derrida's earlier 'quasi-concepts:' *aporia*, double bind, the supplement, *différance*, antinomy and so on."[285] Second, because as J. Hillis Miller states:

> any community, such as a nation-state, has a built in "unconscious" and incurable tendency to destroy itself, in a suicidal act that Derrida calls "auto-co-immunity." Just as the body may turn its immune system against its own organs, so any community or state, in an attempt to protect its borders, to achieve homeland security, and to make itself safe and sound inevitably turns its self-protective mechanisms against itself.…It applies everywhere at all times whenever human beings gather themselves into a community or state.[286]

Autoimmunity, then, is not only the condition of the possibility of democracy but of any community, including, it shall be argued, the church.

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[283] "Although *aporia*, double-bind, and autoimmune process are not exactly synonyms, what they have in common, but they are all, precisely, charged with, is, more than an internal contradiction, but indecidability, that is, the internal-external, nondialectizable antinomy that risks paralyzing and thus call for the event of the interruptive decision." Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 35.

[284] Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 35. That democracy to come and justice are intimately linked is made explicitly clear by Derrida, "it is the *ergo* or the *igitur*, the *thus* between 'democracy to come and justice'." He continues, "This gesture inscribes the necessity of the democracy to come not only into the axiomatic of the messianicity without messianism, the spectrality or hauntology that this book (Rogues) develops, but into the singular distinction between law and justice (heterogeneous but inseparable)." Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 88.

[285] Daniel Matthews, The Democracy To Come: Notes on the Thought of Jacques Derrida, Critical Legal Thinking, 16 (April 2013),http://criticallegalthinking.com/2013/04/16/the-democracy-to-come-notes-on-the-thought-of-jacques-derrida.

[286] J. Hillis Miller, *For Derrida*, New York: Fordham University Press, 2009, p. 238. Autoimmunity, as it root *munus* implies, connects to a host of relative terms, commune/community (munus - office, function, duty, gift, grace, gratuity, show…)

3.8 Autoimmunity: A biological analogy

For Derrida, the concept and practice of democracy must, like justice, always remain 'to-come.' In the same way, law must remain open to the deconstructive forces that may be exerted by justice, democracy must also be open to its self-transformation. This openness is the possibility of progress, but also the space where a community is vulnerable. Derrida transposes autoimmunity from a biological register to a socio-political one by recognizing and deploying the "general logic of auto-immunization."[287] If auto-immunity is the biological condition in which a living organism "works to destroy its own protection, to immunize itself against its own immunity,"[288] then applying this logic to a socio-political group or concept allows us to examine the ways in which a community may, in order to protect or indemnify itself against threats, behave with the same (il)logic. Derrida describes autoimmunity as a political term, borrowed from the biological, in several works: "As we know, an autoimmunitary process is that strange behavior where a living being, in quasi-suicidal fashion, itself works to destroy its own protection, to immunize itself against its own immunity."[289] This follows closely an earlier definition which Derrida offers in *Faith and Knowledge.* Alternatively, in *Specters of Marx,* Derrida writes,

> the living ego is auto-immune. To protect its life, to constitute itself as unique living ego ... it must ... take the immune defenses apparently meant for the non-ego, the enemy, the opposite, the adversary and direct them at once for itself and against itself.[290]

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[287] Derrida, *Religion*, p. 73.
[288] Derrida, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror,* Interview with Giovanna Borradori, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003. p. 94.
[289] Jacques Derrida, "Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicides — A Dialogue with Jacques Derrida," in *Philosophy in a Time of Terror*, ed. Giovanna Borradori, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003, p. 94. This follows closely an earlier definition which Derrida develops in *Faith and Knowledge* (*Foi et Savoir*, 1996) . "It is especially in the domain of biology that the lexical resources of immunity have developed their authority. The immunitary reaction protects the "indemnity" of the body proper in producing antibodies against foreign antigens. As for the process of auto-immunization, which interests us particularly here, it consists for a living organism, as is well known and in short, of protecting itself against its self-protection by destroying its own immune system" "Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of 'Religion 'at the Limits of Reason Alone," in *Religion*, Cambridge: Polity, 1998, p. 73.
[290] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, p. 177.

Also in *Rogues,* Derrida describes autoimmunity as the

> strange illogical logic by which a living being can spontaneously destroy, in an autonomous fashion, the very thing within it that is supposed to protect it against the other, to immunize it against the aggressive intrusion of the other.[291]

This means, more specifically, a political entity like democracy "must then come to resemble these enemies, to corrupt itself and threaten itself in order to protect itself against their threats."[292] Autoimmunity indicates the same structure, previously examined in justice as an aporetic movement, that both protects and destroys, that is both threat and possibility. Derrida writes, "autoimmunity haunts the community and its system of immune survival like the hyperbole of its proper possibility."[293] Michael Nass parses this difficult concept:

> Autoimmunity is not a risk that the community may or may not run but the necessity to which it must yield, the necessity that haunts all of its immune structures and strategies, a necessity that haunts it from within, from the place where its very survival is secured. This risk of autoimmunity is thus the threat of radial evil, the threat of deracination that threatens the community and its survival and yet makes that survival possible in the first place.[294]

Much like the *aporia* examined in "Force of Law", the double-bind of autoimmunity is not meant to be understood as bad news or a negative; neither is it good, but rather a constitutive part of the aporetic structure Derrida applies to the asymmetrical relation between law and justice, as well as to democracy itself. Democracy, like law, cannot maintain a static unchanging structure that is self-sure, self-aware, and closed. Democracy is always 'to-come' and must be recognized as deconstructible, so the future, towards which it must always approach, is not closed down. Auto-immunity "enables an exposure to the other, to what and

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[291] Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 123.
[292] Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 40.
[293] Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge," p. 37.
[294] Michael Nass, *Miracle and Machine: Jacques Derrida and the Two Sources of Religion Science and the Media*, New York: Fordham University Press, 2012, p. 85.

to who comes—which means that it must remain, like justice, incalculable. Without autoimmunity, with absolute immunity, nothing would ever happen or arrive."[295] Like justice's ability to destabilize and deconstruct the law, autoimmunity opens democracy to its other and to its future, again following the two part structure of *différance.* Derrida writes,

> Democracy is what it is only in the différance by which it defers itself and differs from itself. It is what it is only by spacing itself beyond being and even beyond ontological difference, it is (without being) equal and proper to itself only insofar as it is inadequate…[296]

Democracy, like justice, then must differ from itself and defer itself which together comprises the heart of *différance*. Let us examine each instance in turn. Conceptually to differ from oneself (or itself) seems to defy the laws of non-contradiction. Martin Hägglund remarks at the strangeness of this concept,

> If we follow the philosophical logic of identity, autoimmunity is inconceivable. What is indivisibly identical to itself has no need to immunize itself against itself. It may be threatened by what is other than itself, but it cannot turn against itself. Accordingly, an immune reaction is supposed to defend the body against foreign antigens. The identity of the body is necessary in order to distinguish between what is "good" and what is "bad" for the organism, what will kill it and what will enable it to survive.[297]

This is strikingly similar to the logic of law's relation to justice, which Derrida develops as related asymmetrically: Justice (if such a thing *exists*) differs from the law. Though justice informs the law, justice remains outside and other than the law. Justice's ability to destabilize and deconstruct the law disallows the law to remain static and stable and self-same as the law must remain open to its future and other. The logic of autoimmunity demands that one's identity must differ from itself, which confounds the very concept of identity.

In the second instance, *différance* reveals autoimmunity's deferral of itself as well. The

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[295] Derrida, *Negotiations*, p. 152.
[296] Derrida *Rogues*, p. 38.
[297] Hägglund, *Radical Atheism: Derrida and the Time of Life*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008, p. 15. Here Hägglund is following Aristotle's Metaphysics which asserts that "the same attribute cannot *at the same* time belong and not belong to the same subject." He, too, notes the significance of the temporary qualification.

temporal aspect of autoimmunity—'to defer' (related, of course to its twin 'to differ')—is most fundamental for recognizing the importance of this concept in thinking through the complexities of social and political identity.[298] Hägglund argues Derrida's logic of identity "proceeds from a notion of temporality informing his work from beginning to end."[299] In *Radical Atheism*, Hägglund emphasizes that,

> The concept of time plays a dual role in the history of metaphysics, which is why it is so decisive for Derrida's deconstruction. On the one hand, time is thought on the basis of the present and in conformity with the philosophical logic of identity. The presence of the present is thus the principle of identity from which all modifications of time are derived. The past is understood as what has been present, and the future as what will be present. On the other hand, time is incompatible with presence in itself. The temporal can never be in itself but is always divided between being no longer and being not yet. Thus, although "the present is that from which we believe we are able to think time," this understanding of time intact effaces "the inverse necessity: to think the present from time as *différance*."[300]

Like justice and it relation to law, autoimmunity is governed in the nondialectizable relation between opposites.[301] Two aporetic tensions lie at the heart of Derrida's understanding of the autoimmunity of democracy and may, in turn, be applied as a political concept to the church itself.

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[298] "The formalization of this autoimmune law was there carried out around the *community* as *auto-eo-immunity* (the common of community having in common the same duty or charge [munus] as the immune)…Although *aporia*, double bind, and autoimmune process are not exactly synonyms what they have in common, what they are all, precisely, charged with is, more than an internal contradiction, an indecidability, that is, an internal-external, nondialectizable antinomy that risks paralyzing and thus calls for the event of the interruptive decision." Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 35.

[299] Hägglund, *Radical Atheism*, p. 15.

[300] Hägglund, *Radical Atheism*, p. 15. Quotes from Derrida, *Of Grammatology*. Similarly: "You can't step twice into the same stream'. They called the philosopher who said that 'the obscure', but it seems as plain as daylight to me.Though, to be honest, I had to stop and think for a moment or two when his disciple added that you can't even step into the same stream once. Now that's obscure, that's really something to think about. Not even once. The moment you step into the stream, it's already different, the moment you feel something, it's already vanished, the moment you utter a word, it's no longer what you meant to say ... not even once, let alone 'twice'." From *Repetition*: A play in three acts based on the novella by Søren Kierkegaard, Adapted by George Pattison, Act I, page 1, unpublished.

[301] Autoimmunity, Derrida insists, cannot be thought of as a Platonic paradigmatic idea not the Kantian regulative Idea. Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 37.

3.9 The Undecidability of Autoimmunity

Section 2.3.1 examined the critical difference between indeterminacy and undecidability. This important distinction may now be deployed as the heart of autoimmunity. Derrida reveals within the concept of democracy the same 'impossible', and the same *aporia* explicated in "Force of Law." In this instance however, rather than merely being a conceptual apparatus like 'justice' and its asymmetrical relationship with law, democracy proves itself to possess the same structure within itself, not in a (quasi-)relationship, but within itself, a singularity. In *Rogues*, Derrida develops the idea of autoimmunity along two main tracks. First, he examines the tension between 'democracy' and 'sovereignty', and later the tension between 'equality' and 'freedom'. Derrida suggests that, in order to achieve its intended ideal, which is to rule the people (*kratos*—rule of the *demos*—people), the concept of democracy must rely on some form of sovereignty.

> Now, democracy would be precisely this, a force (*kratos*), a force in the form of a sovereign authority (sovereign, that is, *kurios* or *kuros*, having the power to decide, to be decisive, to prevail, to have reason over or win out over [*avoir raison de*] and to give the force of law, *kuroō*), and thus the power and ipseity of the people (dēmos).[302]

In the same way justice and law are contradictory partners, so too, are the concepts of sovereignty and democracy. Derrida argues democracy must have a force (*kratos*), in the form of a sovereign authority: democracy must have the power to decide, to be decisive, to prevail. Derrida takes this relationship, in the instance of democracy, and shows how the reality of this tension, and the desire to overcome or eliminate it, reveals an autoimmunity.

> The efficacy of democracy relies on sovereignty: without sovereignty, the demos would be usurped by some other power and an effective rule of the demos would never be achieved. In striving to protect itself and guarantee its dominance through a co-option of sovereignty, democracy suffers from an autoimmune self-destruction.[303]

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[302] Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 13.
[303] Matthews, *Democracy*.

In the second instance, democracy's inherent *aporia* also involves the tension between 'equality' and 'freedom' which are two necessary, but contradictory claims, that unite in democracy. 'Equality' assures that each person has equal value under the law. 'Freedom' on the other hand supposes the power to act freely, as Derrida puts it, "the sovereign power to do as one pleases."[304] This freedom, however, is balanced by a concept of equality. "The antinomy at the heart of the democratic has long been recognized." Derrida suggests,

> It is classical and canonical; it is the one between freedom and equality — that constitutive and diabolical couple of democracy. I would translate this into my own language by saying that equality tends to introduce measure and calculation (and thus conditionality) whereas freedom is by essence unconditional, indivisible, heterogeneous to calculation and measure.[305]

In other words,

> Democratic freedom only makes sense, then, if everyone within the demos is equally free. So, equality becomes an integral part of freedom and because such equality is inscribed within freedom, equality is no longer merely a question of number and calculation but itself becomes incalculable. The two concepts are intrinsically bound but in an autoimmune relation. Equality confines every singularity to a measurable unit that is infinitely substitutable. Freedom, on the other hand, exceeds this calculation and enables each singularity to be heterogeneous to others, it is a guarantee of the singularity of each individual, enabling every other to treated as (wholly) other. For democracy, these two competing factors are mutually dependent.[306]

An important highlight in these two aporetic tensions: to resolve them is to annihilate the necessary other. To do so, and the desire to do so, reveals the autoimmune logic at the heart of democracy.

> Democracy is what it is only in the différance by which it defers itself and differs from itself. It is what it is only by spacing itself beyond being and even beyond ontological difference; it is (without being) equal and proper to itself only insofar as it is inadequate and improper, at the same time behind and ahead of itself, behind and ahead of the Sameness and Oneness of itself; it is thus interminable in its incompletion beyond all determinate forms of

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[304] Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 43.
[305] Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 48. Here Derrida follows a line of thought from Jean-Luc Nancy from *The Experience of Freedom*, trans. Bridget McDonald, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993.
[306] Matthews, *Democracy.*

> incompletion, beyond all the limitations in areas as different as the right to vote (for example in its extension to women-but starting when?—to minors—but starting at what age?—or to foreigners—but which ones and on what lands?—to cite at random just a few exemplary problems from among so many other similar ones), the freedom of the press, the end of social inequalities throughout the world, the right to work, or any number of other rights. Such limitations thus involve the entire history of a right or a law (whether national or international) that is always unequal to justice, democracy seeking its place only at the unstable and unlocatable border between law and justice, that is, between the political and the ultrapolitical.[307]

According to Derrida, democracy must operate in a space best described as deprived of a static or stable, fixed or final identity. Democracy's identity can only be thought by way of the aporetic structure of *différance*, which defers and differs from itself. As it is important to avoid the idea that *différance* is merely a conceptual apparatus without practical or discernible effect on actual democracies, one must ask the same question asked by Kearney, "How do we act?"[308] What practical consequences or applications can be gleaned from Derrida's concept of autoimmunity in practicing democracies today? How does the *aporia* that lies at the heart of democracy actually affect those entities charged with maintaining the democracy itself?

3.10 Political Examples of Autoimmunity

It will be helpful to examine several instances of how autoimmunity exposes itself within democracy. In one example, Derrida highlights the Algerian electoral process which, by his account, is typical of the types of assaults, in the name of democracy, democracy must face. In postcolonial Algeria in 1992, the state interrupted a democratic electoral process in order that democracy could be "saved."

> The electoral process under way in Algeria in effect risked giving power, in accordance with perfectly legal means, to a likely majority that presented itself as essentially Islamic and Islamist and to which one attributed the

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[307] Derrida, *Rogues*, pp. 38-39.
[308] Richard Kearney, "Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility: A Dialogue with Jacques Derrida," p. 65.

> intention, no doubt with good reason, of wanting to change the constitution and abolish the normal functioning of democracy or the very democratization assumed to be in progress.[309]

Facing a controversial election, the Algerian government and citizens "thought that the electoral process under way would lead democratically to the end of democracy" and so suspended elections preferring to "put an end to it themselves."[310] Democracy was suspended, brought to an end, to protect democracy itself—"They decided in a sovereign fashion to suspend, at least provisionally, democracy *for its own good,* so as to take care of it, so as to immunize it against a much worse and very likely assault."[311] Derrida asserts this Algerian example is not merely superficial example or an anomaly within Algeria but was sown into the very fabric of its origin. That is, the "autoimmune pervertibility of democracy" was, in the Algerian case, an effect of the

> colonization and decolonization…wherein the violent imposition of a culture and political language that were supposed to be in line with a Greco-European political ideal (a postrevolutionary, constitutional monarchy at the time of colonization, then a French—and later an Algerian—republic and democracy) ended up producing exactly the opposite of democracy (French Algeria), which then helped fuel a so-called civil war, one that was really a war for independence waged in the very name of the political ideals extolled by the colonial power. The new power *itself* then had to interrupt the democratization under way; it had to interrupt a normal electoral process in order to save a democracy threatened by the sworn enemies of democracy.

In Derrida's example, it is important to note in Algeria, the origin of the conflict, whether the suspension of democracy or the displacement of the sovereignty on which democracy is dependent, does not originate from that which is opposed to democracy but from within itself: it is biologically and politically precisely, *auto*-immune. Autoimmunity, whether from within or without, has more to do with the logic that inheres within it.

In another example, Derrida points out autoimmunity not only takes place in the

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[309] Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 31.
[310] Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 33.
[311] Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 33, emphasis in the original.

instance of suspended elections but also reveals a "certain suicide of democracy" from within elections that have been allowed to take place. He reminds us "fascist and Nazi totalitarianisms came into power or ascended to power through formally normal and normally formal democratic electoral processes."[312] In the face of these examples, Derrida insists democracy must leave open the possibility there may be an opening for those who wish to put an end to "democratic freedom in the name of democracy."[313] There is no way for democracy to indemnify itself or protect itself from this possibility.

To further highlight the practical applications, Derrida intentionally chooses the democracy of the United States of America in the wake of September 11th. Derrida describes a certain sense of autoimmunity in the reduction of democratic principles for the sake of the democracy. He senses,

> an American administration, potentially followed by others in Europe and in the rest of the world, claiming that in the war it is waging against the "axis of evil," against the enemies of freedom and the assassins of democracy throughout the world, it must restrict within its own country certain so-called democratic freedoms and the exercise of certain rights by, for example, increasing the powers of police investigations and interrogations, without anyone, any democrat, being really able to oppose such measures.[314]

The autoimmune is at work in the diminution of the freedoms and rights comprising the very ideals on which the democracy is radically and originally based. Inversely, Derrida points out:

> it is perhaps because the United States has a culture and a system of law that are largely democratic that it was able to open itself up and expose its greatest vulnerability to immigrants, to, for example, pilots in training, experienced and suicidal "terrorists" who, before turning against others but also against themselves the aerial bombs that they had become, and before hurling them by hurling themselves into the two World Trade Towers, were trained on the sovereign soil of the United States, under the nose of the CIA and the FBI, perhaps not without some autoimmune consent on the part of an administration with at once more and less foresight than one tends to

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[312] Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 33.
[313] Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 34, Derrida points out that "When assured of a numerical majority, the worst enemies of democratic freedom can, by a plausible rhetorical simulacrum (and even the most fanatical Islamists do this on occasion), present themselves as staunch democrats."
[314] Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 40.

> think when it is faced with what is claimed to be a major, unforeseeable event.[315]

Derrida, in highlighting these autoimmune examples, is interested in revealing antinomies of the normative and prescriptive features and gradations of democracy which give democracy an intelligible, if not stable and static meaning. Derrida suggests democracy then, is, "a concept that is inadequate to itself, a word hollowed out at its center by a vertiginous semantic abyss that compromises all translations and opens onto all kinds of autoimmune ambivalences and antinomies."[316]

This point cannot be over emphasized. Derrida is not merely saying the perfect democracy, a full and living democracy, does not exist:

> not only has it never existed not only does it not presently exist, but, indefinitely deferred, it will always remain to come, it will never be present in the present, will never come, will remain always to come, like the impossible itself.[317]

More precisely, Derrida wishes to argue Democracy to come is not merely an "endless approach" toward an ideal but rather ontologically calls into question the very word democracy itself. In other words the "to-come" of democracy occurs not merely because it is endlessly deferred but because, like justice, it remains aporetic in its structure and therefore never present to itself.

The refusal to let democracy take on a fixed or final subjectivity demands, in some strong sense, democracy is always deferred and differs from itself. The practical implications of such a democracy that defies facile definition will also reject irenic consensus. The *present* reality of a democracy that is always *future*, always to-come, is never agreement as such but

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[315] Derrida *Rogues*, p. 40.
[316] Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 72.
[317] Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 73. "had I said or meant only that, wouldn't I have been simply reproducing, even plagiarizing, the classical discourses of political philosophy?" Derrida rightly points out that even Rosseau in *On the Social Contract* maintains that "Taking the term in the strict sense, a true democracy has never existed and never will." "On Democracy," *On the Social Contract,* trans. Donald A. Cress, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1987, p. 56.

rather an openness towards disagreement, negotiation, critique, which is in turn open towards its potential and future self. It could be said, then, that acceptance of a disunity allows for the fullest expression of demo-cracy. 'Democracy' like 'Justice' in "Force of Law" must also be structured like a future promise. The structure around which Derrida develops this notion of democracy is "as the inheritance of a promise" as well as the structure of the im-possible.

3.11 Conclusion: A "spurious infinity"?

In considering an analogous concept such as the *Kingdom of God* through the work of Moltmann and Pannenberg in the next section, it serves to dwell on Derrida's notion of the 'im-possible'. For Derrida, concepts like justice and democracy, along with friendship, forgiveness, gift…, are 'impossible' in the sense their conceptualization in the present are unable to determine the content of their future and deferred presence. Derrida's *différance* is not merely a bad infinity or "spurious infinity," which could be defined as an infinite regression as Hegel wishes to describe it (contra Kant): "Something becomes an other; this other is itself somewhat; therefore it likewise becomes an other, and so on ad infinitum."[318] Derrida's categorization of 'the impossible' is not what is infinitely deferred. Rather, the impossible is what conditions the possible. It does so in ways the present cannot predict or conceive, but also in ways experienced in a nonvirtualizable way. The experience of the impossible inspires Derrida to make the following description, which is, as shall be shown in the next chapter, remarkably like Moltmann's concepts of *Adventus*:

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[318] Hegel, G.W.F., *Logic: Part One of the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 137, Hegel's definition: "This Infinity is the wrong or negative infinity: it is only a negation of a finite: but the finite rises again the same as ever, and is never got rid of and absorbed. In other words, this infinite only expresses the ought- to-be elimination of the finite. The progression to infinity never gets further than a statement of the contradiction involved in the finite, viz. that it is somewhat as well as somewhat else. It sets up with endless iteration the alteration between these two terms, each of which calls up the other."

> This im-possible is not privative. It is not the inaccessible, and it is not what I can indefinitely differ: it announces itself; it precedes me, swoops down upon and seizes me here and now in a *nonvirtualizable way*, in actuality and not potentiality. It comes upon me from on high, in the form of an injunction that does not simply wait on the horizon, that I do not see coming, that never leaves me in peace and never lets me put it off until later… It is what is most undeniably real… like the other. Like the irreducible and non-appropriable différance of the other.[319]

For Derrida the impossibility of 'Justice' or 'Democracy' in the present means that such quasi-concepts defy incorporation into the philosophical as a logical opposition or even as a pure object of cognition. Derrida wishes to highlight that the content of certain quasi-transcendental concepts, such as justice, democracy, gift, friendship, messiah…, must be conceived of only in the

> spacing before any determination and any possible reappropriation by a theologico-political history or revelation, and even before a negative theology, which is always fundamentally related to some historical, and especially Christian, revelation. The democracy to come would be like the khōra of the political.[320]

By analogy, the *Kingdom of God,* is the *khōra* of the ecclesial. In a narrow sense of the term, the asymmetrical relationship between democracy and sovereignty undergirding democracy, and without which democracy is ineffective, is analogous to a conceptualization of the *Kingdom of God* which is, in essence both a reign and a realm, that is, a sovereignty. This conceptualization of God's sovereignty is one Derrida recognizes,

> In speaking of an ontotheology of sovereignty, I am referring here, under the name of God, this One and Only God, to the determination of a sovereign, and thus indivisible, omnipotence. For wherever the name of God would allow us to think something else, for example a vulnerable nonsovereignty, one that suffers and is divisible, one that is mortal even, capable of

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[319] Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 84

[320] Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 82, khōra (χώρα) appears as a concept in Plato's *Timaeus.* Originally meaning the the area outside the polis, or city. Plato designates the *khōra* as a "third kind" (*triton genos*), a space or interval which, in Plato's designation is neither being nor nonbeing. Caputo writes "Khora is neither present nor absent, active nor passive, the Good nor evil, living nor nonliving." (*Timaeus*, 50 C) Neither theomorphic nor anthropomorphic — but rather atheological and non-human—khora is not even a receptacle." Caputo claims Plato's treatment of the *khōra* serves Derrida as a "sur-name" for *différance*, that is, a kind of "allegory" of différance. For *khōra* exposes a certain "impurity" and intractability at the very core of philosophical concepts…right there in Plato, who is the very paradigm of what we mean by philosophy." Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, p. 75.

> contradicting itself or of repenting (a thought that is neither impossible nor without example), it would be a completely different story, perhaps even the story of a god who deconstructs himself in his ipseity.[321]

Perhaps this alternate story, this "completely different story" Derrida presents, has already been thought in nascent form. Through Moltmann and Pannenberg one may have met just such a conceptualization, that is, an articulation of the church vis-a-vis *The Kingdom of God* that is not protected in a closed off or overly determined way, but rather open, something future, something coming. *The Kingdom of God,* viewed from the work of both Moltmann and Pannenberg, is always in a state of "contradicting itself or of repenting," that is, a church open to its future; a Church which must account for the aporetic and impossible origins as grounded in, but distinct from, *The Kingdom of God*. A Church open to this reality will be contemptuous of the sort of religion which presents itself as holy, if holiness is defined as the "pure, non-contaminated, untouched, the sacred,"[322] divorced from any historicity. The realities of *différance* and autoimmunity, when applied to the church are analogous. Any religious body, church, or faith community wishing to maintain an original identity, one sacred in the sense of holy, unscathed, and without change or amendment, without addition or deletion, may try to immunize itself from the adultery of the other, which would threaten the very identity that wishes to be protected. Derrida insists,

> all self protection of the unscathed, of the safe and sound, of the sacred (heilig, holy) must protect itself against its own protection, its own police, its own

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[321] Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 157.

[322] Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge," p. 61. Important to note that autoimmunity is often not an attack on the whole but of a constituent part. "Religions never fully coincide with the unscathed, for their purity is always corrupted. But in Derrida's account every part of religion nevertheless aims towards this purity. That is, any part of religion is rightly seen as a part of its defense, since religion is centrally oriented towards the protection of the sacred, the maintaining-sacred of the sacred. Effectively, Derrida is presenting religion as defense. In this way Derrida can argue both that auto-immunity protects against the self's own defense systems, and that auto-immunity protects against the self as a whole—for the entirety of this whole is involved in defense. This is not to say that the operation of auto-immunity destroys all of the defense systems at once. If this were the case, religion would annihilate itself without remainder, and there would be no survival of which to speak. Such a situation might better be called 'auto-destruction', which, while being a valid term to use in other discussions, does not pick out the specificity of the phenomenon that Derrida here wants to describe. Auto-immunity is a process of a localized putting-to-death, even while any part of the whole has the potential of being attacked. It is through this process of a limited putting-to-death that the greater whole lives on." Samir Haddad, "Derrida and Democracy at Risk," Contretemps 4, (September 2004), p. 32.

> power of rejection, in short against its own, which is to say, against its own immunity. It is this terrifying but fatal logic of the auto-immunity of the unscathed.[323]

Derrida is not the only thinker who laments religion is too often "immediately transmitted, massively 'marketed' and available on CD-ROM."[324] Both Moltmann and Pannenberg attempt to situate the church as an entity which calls into question its own identity, of which Derrida's autoimmunity is a powerful ally. In "Violence and Metaphysics," Derrida develops a concept of community which he refers to as the "community of the question."[325] It can be argued that Moltmann and Pannenberg begin to develop, albeit with a different vocabulary, just such an ecclesia. A "Community of the Question" will be a community open to a reiteration of its identity in relation to the other and the Other.[326] However, the theology of Moltmann and Pannenberg does not create a perfect analogy without remainder. To the contrary, it will be argued the implications of Moltmann's and Pannenberg's work are brought to light through the lens of Derrida, contributing invaluable insights unacknowledged within their respective theologies. When brought alongside the conceptualization of the church, Derrida's thought confounds any facile understanding of *Kingdom* which may be neatly separated into categories of friend or foe, holy or profane.[327] The community Derrida articulates, and the one aligned with (and allowed to critique) Moltmann and Pannenberg is

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[323] Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge," p. 79-80.
[324] Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge," p. 62.
[325] Derrida, "Violence and Metaphysics," in *Writing and Difference*, p. 80. cf. also *Margins of Philosophy*, "The Ends of Man," p. 109. Derrida evoked a" community of the question" when he called for a fundamental decentering and nonidentity of the "we," especially in the west. Commentary on this idea can also be found in: Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, Edited by Peter Connor, Theory and History of Literature, Volume 76, Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press 1991; and Maurice Blanchot, *The Unallowable Community*, Barrytown: Station Hill Press, 2006.
[326] There is certainly a prominent strand of Levinas' thought in Derrida's description of the other-ness of justice and democracy. He writes, "Levinas, who not only never gave in to a democratizing rhetoric but actually subjected or subordinated freedom in accordance with a responsibility that makes me the hostage of the other in an experience of absolute heteronomy." p. 42.
[327] Derrida rejects that an axiomatic distinction between friend and enemy can be absolutely made. Contra Carl Schmitt's assertion that "The specific political distinction, to which political actions and notions can be reduced, is the distinction between friend and enemy." *The Concept of the Political,*Tr. George Schwab, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1976, p. 26.

articulated thus:

> Community as *com-mon auto-immunity*: no community <is possible> that would not cultivate its own auto-immunity, a principle of sacrificial self-destruction ruining the principle of self-protection (that of maintaining its self-integrity intact)…This self-contesting attestation keeps the auto-immune community alive, which is to say, open to something other and more than itself: the other, the future, death, freedom, the coming of the love of the other, the space and time of a spectralizing messianicity beyond all messianism. It is there that the possibility of religion persists: the *religious* bond (scrupulous, respectful, modest, reticent, inhibited) between the value of life, its absolute "dignity," and the theological machine, the "machine for making gods."[328]

As shall be argued in the subsequent two chapters, both Moltmann and Pannenberg attempt to address the need of the *Kingdom of God* to defer itself in relation to the historic Church as well as to allow the two, even as they are related, to differ, to be other. This thesis contends that the work of both theologians, seen through the Derridean concepts addressed here, is enriched by the rapprochement of these great thinkers—all adamant that at the heart of politics, including ecclesiology, lies an irreducible *aporia*.

[328] Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge", p. 87.

SECTION TWO

Moltmann, Pannenberg, and The Kingdom of God

CHAPTER FOUR *The Kingdom of God* in Moltmann

"From first to last, and not merely in the epilogue, Christianity is eschatology, is hope, forward looking and forward moving, and therefore also revolutionizing and transforming the present."[329]
-Jürgen Moltmann

4.1 Intro: Law is to justice…

Before attempting to introduce the Derridean concepts explicated in Section One into the landscape of ecclesiology (which shall be the focus in Chapters Six and Seven) it is first necessary to reveal a striking structural similarity that may be found within current theological literature. It shall be argued the asymmetrical relationship Derrida develops between justice and law, which he calls *différance*, is analogous to, and thus profitable for, the church in relation to the *Kingdom of God*. Such an analogy, which bears repeating at this juncture might be represented,

law : justice :: church : Kingdom of God

Law is to justice what church is to *Kingdom of God.* The latter part of this analogous relationship will be developed by drawing upon two prominent theologians, Jürgen Moltmann (1926-2024) and Wolfhart Pannenberg (1928-2014), who have both consistently addressed the church's tendential connection with the *Kingdom of God,* and whose work is a popular ecclesiological reference.[330] Before proceeding with the main argument this chapter

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[329] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 16.
[330] Kim, Van Nam, *A church of hope : a study of the eschatological ecclesiology of Jürgen Moltmann*, Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2005; Moltmann, Jürgen, *Kirche in der Kraft des Geistes*, Kaiser Verlag, Munich, 1975; *The Church in the Power of the Spirit:A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology*, New York: Fortress Press, 1993, 2nd ed.; Moltmann, Jürgen & Meeks, M. Douglas, *The open church: invitation to a messianic lifestyle*, London: SCM Press, 1978; Kärkkäinen, Veli-Matti, *Introduction to ecclesiology: ecumenical, historical & global perspectives*, Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2002; Stanley James Grenz, *Reason for Hope: The Systematic Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg*, Cambridge: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005; Wolfhart Pannenberg, *By The Church*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983; Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematische Theologie*, band 3, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, Germany, 1993, *Systematic Theology*, Volume III, especially chapters 12-13, London: T&T Clark, 2004.

will introduce three necessary concerns which will act as historic background as well as a foundation and structure from which to proceed. The history and context of the *Kingdom of God* and eschatology will be examined (4.1 Does the Kingdom of God have a history?), as well as addressing why Moltmann and Pannenberg are particularly well suited for this study (4.1.3 Why Moltmann and Pannenberg?). Finally, after determining the structure of how the chapter is organized (4.1.4 Following Derrida's Structure), the examination of the work of Moltmann and Pannenberg will be examined in light of Derridean *différance*. The goal of this chapter shall be to highlight certain features of the work of both Moltmann and Pannenberg in order correlate them with Derrida's *différance,* the concept of justice that exemplifies it, and the way in which autoimmunity is a helpful, even necessary concept within that framework. This project does not aim to bring together Moltmann and Pannenberg conceptually, as there are significant differences between the two. Nor does this project provide an overview or synthesis of their respective work except in the narrowest of senses, which is to focus on how they both articulate the *Kingdom of God,* as those particular aspects, I will argue, are analogous to Derrida.

4.1.1 Does *The Kingdom of God* have a History?

Norman Perrin, who has concentrated much of his scholarship around the *Kingdom of God* writes, "In the whole realm of New Testament hermeneutics there is no more intractable problem than that of the interpretation of the symbol 'Kingdom of God' in the message of Jesus."[331] If, as has been previously suggested, the *Kingdom of God* is the *sine qua non* of Christianity, then the implications for ecclesiology are evident; exploring the relationship between the Church and *Kingdom of God* is of ultimate importance. However, the definition of

[331] Norman Perrin, *Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom, Symbol and Metaphor in New Testament Interpretation*, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1976, p. 15.

terms, and the nuance of translations, of *βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ* [332]—and its Hebrew equivalence מלכות השמים- *Malkuth haShamayim*[333]— brings to the fore the seeming impossibility of finding agreement amongst scholars about what, precisely, the *Kingdom of God* is and, more importantly for this project, how it might inform ecclesial decisions. There have been times when the imagination of the church has gravitated toward the term, but also long stretches where the concept was not addressed at all. Kevin Hart and Barbara Eileen Wall offer a concise history of the *Kingdom of God*, asserting that even the Church Fathers never managed to agree on a final meaning.

> Irenaeus and Justin, argue for an earthly reign of a thousand years while others, like Clement and Origen, for a heavenly kingdom. Eusebius believes that the basileia is to be identified with monarchia, while Augustine holds that the church and the basileia will become one, though not yet. In the Middle Ages the basileia either fuels intense eschatological hope as with Joachim of Fiore, or—perhaps because of the ecclesial suspicions that follow this spiritual ferment—is not discussed at all. Thomas Aquinas, for example, does not consider it.[334]

Βασιλεία as a theological theme seems to have spent much time" underground" since then. Although the *Kingdom of God* appears as a topic in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the writing of Martin Bucer (1491-1551),[335] and, centrally in Johannes Cocceius (1603-1669),[336] respectively, it is not a significant topic of study until it is treated by Hermann

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332 Matt. 6:33, 12:28, 19:24, 21:43; Mark 1:14-15, 4:11, 4:26, 4:30, 9:1, 9:7, 10:14-15, 10:23-25, 12:34, 14:25, 15:43, Luke 4:43, 6:20, 7:28, 8:1, 8:10, 9:2, 9:11, 9:27, 9:60, 9:62, 10:9, 10:11..., Acts 1:3, 1:6, 8:12, 14:22, 19:8, 20:25, 28:23, 28:31, Rom 14:17, 1Cor 4:20, 1Cor 6:9-10, 1 Cor 15:50; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5; Col 1:13; 1 Th 1:5; 2 Tim 1:15, 4:18; Rev. 1:9, 12:10. The Gospel of Matthew renders this *Kingdom of Heaven* (βασιλεία τῶν Οὐρανῶν) Mat. 3:2, 4:7, 4:23, 5:3, 5:10, 5:19-20, 6:13, 7:21, 8:11, 8:12, 9:35, 10:7, 11:11-12, 13:11, 13:19, 13:24, 13:31, 13:33, 13:38, 13:43, 13:44-45, 13:47, 13:52, 16:19, 18:1, 18:3-4, 18:23, 19:14, 19:23, 20:1, 22:2, 23:13, 25:1, 25:14, 25:34.

333 Although the term *Kingdom of God* is not directly found in the Hebrew Scriptures the reign of God is a common theme in the prophetic and wisdom literature literature. Psalm 95:3, For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. Similar expressions may be found in other similar images: King/ ruler over all nations Ps. 22:28; Ps 97, Ps 99; :1; Jer. 46:18; 48:15; 51:57; Dan 2:37; 4:17; 5:21; 1 Kg 22:19; Ps 103:19; Ezek 1:26–28; Ps 33:13,14; Ps 47:2,7; 2 Kg 19:15;1 Chr 29:11. As eternal king Ps 145:13; Ps 74:12; 93:2; Dan 4:3,4; Isa 24:23; Zech 14:9-17; Mic 4:6–10;). God reigns particularly over Israel (Isa 43:15; Deut 33:5; Num 23:21; Deut 33:5; Isa 33:22; Ps 24:10; Zech 14:16–17; 1 Sam 12:12), and Israel is his kingdom (Ex 19:6; 1 Chr 17:14; 28:5; 2 Chr 13:8). Yahweh rules from Jerusalem (Jer 8:19; Ps 48:2; 99:1), sovereignty in delivering Israel from her enemies (Isa 34:12; 44:6; Zeph 3:15); in returning to their homeland exiles in foreign captivity (Isa 52:7; Ezek 20:33–38); in establishing an everlasting rule in Zion and reigning over the world's nations (Isa 24:23; Zech 14:9-17; Mic 4:6–10).

334 Hart & Wall, *The Experience of God: A Postmodern Response*, p. 84.

335 M. Bucer, *De regno Christi* (1557), 1:15.

336 Johannes Cocceius, *Summa doctrina de Foedere et Testimento Dei* (1660).

Samuel Reimarus (1694-1768) and Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), albeit in opposite directions. Reimarus develops the *kingdom* as a political, rather than as a spiritual reality, while Kant was "refiguring the basileia by way of the kingdom of ends."[337] Although it could be argued that nobody in modern theology has done more to move the *Kingdom of God* to the forefront of theological attention than Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768–1834), for whom it was a central focus, the modern concept of the *Kingdom of God* begins with Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965) as it was Schweitzer's work, though derivative of Johannes Weiss (1863-1914), which popularized the notion that the God's *Kingdom* is, at its core, eschatological.[338]

Weiss and Schweitzer both argue the *Kingdom of God* is to be understood eschatologically, conferring on the *kingdom* an exclusively future orientation. This was in distinct contrast to the then popular idea that the *Kingdom* referred to 'heaven', which could be experienced only in death, or that *Kingdom of God* should be oriented exclusively to "social improvement on earth" which had been the "dominant understanding...deeply embedded in the theology and preaching of the period."[339] Subsequent debates around the eschatological reality of the *Kingdom of God* largely revolve around this distinction. Géza Vermès, explicating Jesus's own religious foundations, points to instances the *Kingdom of God* is a central focus around which much scholarship has been recently published.

> [T]he very first sentence of the opening chapter of Rudolf Bultmann's *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (p. 3) introduces the 'Kingdom of God' as the dominant concept ('der beherrschende Begriff') of the preaching of Jesus.

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[337] Hart & Wall, *The Experience of God: A Postmodern Response*, pp. 84-85.
[338] The *Consequente Eschatologie* put forth by Weiss and Schweitzer was eschatological certainly, but also deemed as somewhat tragic in understanding Jesus attempts to force God's hand at the crucifixion to bring the kingdom, see Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede*, London: A and C Black, 1954 3rd Ed. pp. 368-369; see also. *Jesus, Justice, and the Reign of God: A Ministry of Liberation*, William R. Herzog, p. 5; Larry R. Helye, *The Witness of Jesus, Paul and John: An Exploration in Biblical Theology*, p. 134; John Dominic Crossan, *Birth of Christianity*, p. 275.
[339] Chilton, *Pure Kingdom*, p. 2.

> Christopher Rowland sees in it 'a central pillar' (*Christian Origins*, 133) and Norman Perrin, 'the central aspect' of the teaching of Jesus (*Rediscovering*, 54). For E. P. Saunders, it is one of the 'most discussed' New Testament topics (*Jesus and Jerusalem*, 123). In turn, Anthony Harvey (*Constraints*, 86) echoing Joachim Jeremias (*NT Theology*, 32-34), emphasizes the unparalleled nature of the idioms referring to it.[340]

4.1.2 βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ as eschatology

So radically transformative was Schweitzer's articulation of the *Kingdom of God* that current scholars, even as they might not agree on every point, seem not to question the general eschatological premise.[341] Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, attempting to briefly describe the contemporary landscape of *βασιλεία* studies, suggests that the *Kingdom of God* is a confusing concept.

> It is, of course, difficult to determine exactly what Jesus meant by the *Kingdom of God*. Not only is it a religious symbol about something *transcendent* and *eschatological*, but also Jesus' teaching about it in parables and figures of speech does not yield precise conceptual formula.[342]

Amid contention about precisely what the *Kingdom* is, Fiorenza does not see the need to question either the *transcendental* nor *eschatological* aspect at all; they are both assumed. Although eschatology could be defined with greater precision, arguing for an eschatology which is oriented around futurity rather than finality, connecting any transcendent or eschatological reality with current history and with present reality is a main concern for this

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[340] Géza Vermès, *The Religion of Jesus the Jew,* Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1993, p. 120. For an exhaustive theological and historical study of the Kingdom of God from Schweitzer, see George Eldon Ladd, *The Presence of the Future: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism*, New York: Harper & Row, 1974.

[341] Although an argument could be made that there are indeed scholars who suggest a non-eschatological framework of Jesus teaching about the *Kingdom of God* like Norman Perrin, *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus*, 1963, John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*, 1991, Marcus Borg, they largely are rejecting a popular eschatology of the end-of-the-word variety. "The increased attention to the socio-political setting increasingly suggests he intended the transformation of Israel, not the preparation of a community ready for the imminent end of the world." Borg, "An Orthodoxy Reconsidered: The 'End-of-the-World Jesus'", *The Glory of Christ in the New Testament*, eds. L. D. Hurst and N. T. Wright, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 210-211. As I am arguing a definition of eschatology, as articulated by Moltmann and Pannenberg, which is understood as forward looking and future rather than final or catastrophic and world-ending, I will not engage the non-eschatological Jesus and *Kingdom of God* developed by these authors.

[342] Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives*, Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2011, p. 423, emphasis added.

thesis. The problem is how to conceive of the transcendental/eschatological aspects of the *Kingdom of God* in such a way that two pitfalls are avoided: on one hand, relegating the *Kingdom of God* into an eternally transcendent reality, thereby making it unknowable and unusable for ecclesial matters; on the other hand, conflating the *Kingdom of God* with the church in such a final way that the structure of the current church is deemed as its ultimate expression. Like the asymmetrical relationship between law and justice, the relationship between the *Kingdom* may not be conceived as coterminous to the church nor mutually exclusive. This study argues for the *Kingdom of God* that avoids these extremes while still arguing that the *Kingdom of God*, like the relationship of justice to law articulated by Derrida, is related. This relationship, albeit asymmetrical, is not however without some difficult tensions which will be explored explore through the work of these two *Kingdom* scholars: Jürgen Moltmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg.

4.1.3 Why Moltmann and Pannenberg?

This chapter focuses on Jürgen Moltmann (8 April 1926 - 3 June 2024) and Wolfhart Pannenberg (October 2, 1928 - September 5, 2014), whose work concentrates on the *Kingdom of God*, in order to argue that Derridean concepts of *différance* and undecidability are structurally similar, and therefore helpful, even necessary additions to the landscape of studies concerned with the *Kingdom of God* and ecclesiology. Though the language and context of both Moltmann and Pannenberg are theological and biblical, certain features of each theologian may be successfully transposed into a Derridean register which would then claim Derrida's political insights for theology as well as ecclesiology.[343] The identification of *Kingdom of God*

[343] Although beyond the scope of this thesis, a concomitant argument could be made that the structure of *différance* might be cross-examined as the secularization of a theological pattern. Several studies have previously made this connection. See: Theodore W. Jennings *Reading Derrida/thinking Paul: On Justice*, John Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida*, Ethan Kleinberg, "To Atone and To Forgive," Chapter 9 in *Vladimir Jankélévitch and the Question of Forgiveness,* edited by Alan Udoff.

and its "not yet" aspect, in other words its futurity, and subsequently, its relation to history and time will be a particular focus. Moltmann and Pannenberg are particularly well suited for this project for several reasons. First, both theologians extensively develop their thought in relation to the *Kingdom of* God; although it would be more accurate to claim for each theologian the *Kingdom of God* is the *ultimate end of* theology and subsequently a central feature of ecclesiology. Pannenberg maintains it is the starting point of theology and the only way to "understand man and his history."[344] This point, of course, carries over to ecclesiology as Pannenberg concludes the "Kingdom must be the central concern of the Church if the Church is to remain faithful to the message of Jesus."[345] Similarly, Moltmann insists if "theology takes the church seriously, then it—like the church itself—must become a function of the kingdom of God in the world."[346]

Second, both theologians critically engage current philosophical thinkers. There are certainly other theologians who might have been used for this study, including Karl Barth. However, unlike Moltmann and Pannenberg, Barth spends little energy addressing his philosophical contemporaries or their discourse.[347] In contrast, Moltmann and Pannenberg address many of the same philosophers encountered in Derrida: Martin Heidegger, Georg Hegel, Edmund Husserl, Ernst Bloch, Wilhelm Dilthey, Walter Benjamin. M. Douglas Meeks contends,

> The Origins of Moltmann's theology lie largely in those thinkers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who have entered into a radical criticism of Enlightenment critiques and sciences, of positivism, and of subjective attempts to rehabilitate the classic concept of tradition.[348]

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[344] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, p. 53.
[345] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, p. 73.
[346] Moltmann, *A Passion for God's Reign*, p. 51.
[347] Graham Ward points out that although "Barth's work was executed within the context of a major philosophical reorientation towards the problem of language," he is hesitant to argue that "Barth was familiar with the extent of the debate and the details of various philosophies of language," Ward, *Barth, Derrida and the language of theology*, pp. 2,4.
[348] M. Douglas Meeks, *Origins of the Theology of Hope*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974, p. 11.

The same comment could well have been made in regard to Pannenberg. Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to compare all interaction with common strands of thought, areas in which they converge should be noted. One area is the work each has done in questioning Greek *logos.* Derrida attempts to expose *logos* in *Plato's Pharmacy;* Moltmann describes the future *promissio Dei* as that which "has always worked as a ferment of destruction of the Greek logos."[349]

Third, the structure from which both Moltmann and Pannenberg articulate how the *Kingdom of God* relates to history is contrasted with a theologian like Barth who, along with Bultmann and Althaus, is accused—specifically by Moltmann—of transposing the *Kingdom of God* into eternity where it is unreachable by just the sort of historicity for which Moltmann and Pannenberg (and Derrida) argue.[350] Attention instead will focus on the structure on which they rely in order to think about the tensions and *aporia* of integrating historicity and eternity by situating them within a deferred future. Both Moltmann and Pannenberg develop the *Kingdom of God* by proposing an eschatological ontology which, reminiscent of Derrida's *différance*, is structured like a future promise; that is, it must defer/differ any pure presence of the reign of God's *Kingdom* into the future. Derrida purposely uses abstract and spectral language of haunting and phantoms, claiming one "cannot speak directly about justice"; that is, one should not "thematize or objectify justice." Similarly, Moltmann and Pannenberg also take pains to develop the *Kingdom of God* in ways every bit as oblique and elliptical as Derrida: both address the inability of the *Kingdom* to be fully and finally instantiated within history; both understand the eschatological significance of the *Kingdom* as radical other, even as they attempt to avoid the two opposite pitfalls into which they accuse other theologians of falling,

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[349] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 89.
[350] Moltmann, *The Coming of God, pp. 13-22*

namely, avoiding collapsing eschatology into time and history, while simultaneously avoiding eschatology floating away into eternity.[351]

Fourth, arguing the structure of Derrida's *différance* is correlative to theology and ecclesiology, proceeds with the presumption that it is only necessary to show his applicability to particular theologians whose work is sympathetic, albeit unknowingly, rather than arguing his work is theology of the negative/apophatic variety (Crossan, Hart) or offers an alternative to the binary constrains of theism/atheism (Steven Shakespeare) or structured like a religion (John Caputo).

Fifth, Moltmann and Pannenberg, more than many other theologians, have oriented their work around eschatology and the future in a way that, will be argued, correlates with Derrida's own concept of futurity and messianicity, through which he articulates deferred quasi-transcendent realities like 'democracy' or 'justice' which are always 'to come'. Not only is there common ground around futurity—apocalypse, eschatology, messianicity—but there are also equivalent ways to overcome a future solely dependent on the past-present for its formation. For Derrida, following Levinas, this is the 'other' of the future. For Moltmann, the distinction is between a future which is latent in the past (*futurum*) and one that is utterly new (*Novum*) or unexpected, impossible (*Adventus*).

Finally, Derrida, Moltmann, and Pannenberg are contemporaries whose work has shared a common backdrop of thinkers and world events. This contemporaneity is evident in the current events to which they turn their attention in order to deploy their respective thought: Marxism, capital punishment, and European immigration, among others. Some of

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[351] Another theologian who addresses the *Kingdom of God* from this particular angle is Norman Perrin, who, like Moltmann and Pannenberg, attempts to describe its non-chronological attributes. Perrin achieves this by distinguishing between steno-symbols and tensive symbols, the former "referring specifically to one concrete event to be exhausted as a specific date in chronological time," and the latter which cannot. See Perrin, *Jesus and Language*, p. 78.

the features of their respective 'political' thought will come to bear as the ecclesiological significance of *différance*, justice, and the *Kingdom of God*.

4.1.4 Following Derrida's Structure

Derrida's concept of *différance* is his neologism designating the condition of possibility of meaning through the simultaneous acts of *differing* (synchronic, emphasizing the spatial), and *deferring* (diachronic, emphasizing the temporal), and its effect, which Derrida calls undecidability. The work of Moltmann and Pannenberg will be brought alongside these concepts allowing Derrida's *différance* to determine the structure of the argument. For the diachronic-temporal, I shall examine Moltmann's concept of futurity (Chapter 4) and for the synchronic-spatial I shall examine Pannenberg's Christology vis-à-vis the *Kingdom of God* (Chapter 5).

The first area of explication will address the *Kingdom of God's* relationship between history and time, particularly futurity: the 'not yet' of the *kingdom* which Moltmann develops by distinguishing two temporal forms of futuricity: *futurum* and *adventus,* that he uses to describe "two different conceptions of time."[352] The first, *futurum*, is a purely chronological conception, understood as mechanical and predictable; while the second, *adventus*, is, in contrast, unexpected, unable to be predicted, impossible. The latter conception, which Moltmann argues is a necessary break from the finitude of *futurum*, rescues the future from merely being an extension of the past and present, and aligns well with Derrida's own conception of time as regards the necessary otherness of the future. Moltmann would agree with Derrida the future, in order to be future, must be radically open in ways the present is

[352] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Coming of God, p. 25.*

not able to predict or program, and any conception of the future must be somewhat "out of joint" in regard to the present.[353]

The second area of focus will address the synchronic/spatial, which focuses on the relationship between the *Kingdom of God* and the person of Christ, specifically the question: "Is the Kingdom evident only in Jesus 'announcement or is Jesus' person a constructive reality of the *kingdom* and thus synonymous with it?" Pannenberg develops carefully how the historic person of Jesus and the interrelated content of his Messiahship relate to the announcement or instantiation of the eternal *βασιλεία*. Of primary interest to this project is the way Pannenberg emphasizes the *Kingdom of God* embodied by Jesus, and yet distinct and *other* from him. While Moltmann generally conflates the *Kingdom of God* with the person of Jesus Christ, Pannenberg, in contrast, claims that the efficacy of Jesus' *Kingdom* proclamation is dependent on the fidelity to God's future *Kingdom* which remains other and heterogeneous to the person of Jesus. Pannenberg's concept of the *Kingdom of God*, and its inability to be fully instantiated even in the person of Jesus, is clearly mindful of the problems of claiming the *Kingdom* is historically present in any pure form, yet must also be able to inform the present, however obliquely. This is consonant with Derrida's insistence that justice, if such a thing exists, is never fully present. Like Derrida's ghostly justice, the absent/presence of the *Kingdom of God* is significant for understanding the eschatological aspect of Pannenberg's thought. Pannenberg develops the argument of the *Kingdom's* future orientation to its consistent conclusion, which is that God's rule, as *Kingdom*, cannot be separated from God's being. The radical implication for Pannenberg is, God cannot be said to exist. Such existence is relegated to the future. It can be argued Derrida would prefer Pannenberg's concept of relation of the *Kingdom* to the person of

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[353] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, p. 49

Jesus Christ over Moltmann's, as Derrida is consistently reticent to allow the content of justice to rest complete in any decision or any person: "at no time can one say presently that a decision is just...or that someone is just, and even less, 'I am just.'"[354] Derrida would surely agree the *Kingdom of God* (if such a thing exists) must be coming and not fully present, in the same way justice is never fully present. Using Pannenberg's argument, it is not possible to determine the presence of the *kingdom,* nor the presence of God, which exists only in the future—it is coming. Derrida would be sympathetic to the inability to finally decide on the content of this kingdom or reveal the very presence of the *Kingdom of God* in the same way he contends justice is absent even as it is present. Perhaps this is why the quasi-present-quasi-transcendent *Kingdom*, like the haunting of justice, is only ever described by Jesus as "at hand," "has come near," or "not far."

4.2 Jürgen Moltmann

This section shall examine two facets of the work of Jürgen Moltmann that, it will be argued, are analogous with certain aspects of Derrida's latter political thought explicated above. The first area of examination is the *aporia* around which Moltmann's eschatology is structured (sec. 4.2.1 - Eschato - *logic*), and second, following from this, how he describes both time and history in light of this concept (sec. 4.2.2 - Futurum and Adventus). In *The Coming God,* Moltmann commences by lamenting the nineteenth century as the Christian era, where he points out the frequency with which a certain Christian millenarianism is advanced on multiple fronts as a "universal interpretive historical framework."[355] Moltmann's objection is that "The millenarian hope transported what was eschatological into history and imbued

[354] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 237.
[355] Moltmann, *Coming of God*, p. 3.

what was historical with a messianic passion."[356] In order to rectify this situation in which eschatology has been transposed, without remainder, into time, Moltmann is careful to simultaneously avoid an opposing hazard, which is the "transposition of eschatology into eternity."[357] In navigating this path, Moltmann is forced to come to terms with the aporetic reality which shares structurally significant features with Derrida's *différance,* not only in its refusal to decide between the differential pattern eschatology reveals, but also because, reminiscent of *différance*, eschatology alone provides the condition of possibility of Christian theology in regards the *Kingdom of God*.

Following from this, futurity as it relates to this aporetic eschatology will be analyzed. Moltmann maintains there is "only one real problem in Christian theology…the problem of the future."[358] How Moltmann deals with the problem of the future, which is how to understand the futurity of the *Kingdom of God* in light of the structure of the current church shall also be examined. In other words, how does Moltmann articulate a coming future without over-determining its content while simultaneously ensuring that although the future is 'other', it is allowed to inform present reality? Both Moltmann and Derrida insist at least some aspect of the future is 'impossible', and 'impossible' is a constituent feature of the future, although they rely on different vocabularies to describe it. For Moltmann this is the 'eschatological' and for Derrida it is the 'mystical', or perhaps quasi-eschatological, but both attempt make room for a future which is radically open.[359] In order to begin this examination it is critical we understand precisely what Moltmann means by the term eschatology.

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[356] Moltmann, *Coming of God*, p. 4.
[357] Moltmann, *Coming of God*, p. 13.
[358] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 16.
[359] Recall the lack of distinction from Sec. 1 in which Christopher Rowland contends there is no substantive difference between the terms apocalyptic and mysticism, Rowland, *The Mystery of God*, p. 123, following Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: studies in their encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period*, SCM Press, 1974, p. 209.

4.2.1 Eschato-*logic*

The *Oxford Handbook of Eschatology* begins with the following sentence: "The most widely influential Christian theological work on eschatology in the later part of the twentieth century was undoubtedly that of Jürgen Moltmann."[360] Moltmann decries the modern use of the term eschatology because it has come to mean *last* things and not *future* things. A brief glance through Christian reference material on eschatology corroborates this concern. *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology* defines eschatology as comprising "all views and tenets of faith associated with the so-called 'last things' (*ta eschata* in Greek)." *The [Oxford] Dictionary of the Christian Church* defines eschatology as simply "the doctrine of last things, that is the ultimate destiny both of the individual soul and the whole created order."[361] For Moltmann, in contrast, eschatology is the beginning of theology and not its end.[362] Moltmann's use of the term eschatology advances its use beyond the original usage of last things or final things which appeared in the German language in early 1800s, beyond the historicist usage which assumed progression "towards some kind of a goal whether that of Hegel orTeilhard de Chardin,"[363] past the conflation of the term with apocalypse pace Schweitzer, picking up the multiple critiques of Schweitzer by Dodd, Bultmann, and Barth, to mean something like a "new thing," which is future but also related to the expectation and experience of the past and present. Furthermore, he maintains the *logos* of eschato-*logy* is not a helpful term. "The

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[360] Richard Bauckham, "Conclusion: Emerging Issues in Eschatology in the Twenty-First Century," Jerry L. Walls (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 671.
[361] *Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Eds. F. L. Cross & E. A. Livingstone, Formerly *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 560.
[362] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 16, "Eschatology should not be its (theology) end, but its beginning."
[363] N. T. Wright, *History and Eschatology: Jesus and the Promise of Natural Theology, The 2018 Gifford Lectures*, Waco Texas, Baylor University Press, 2019, p. 131. Wright chronicles the development of the term eschatology in several ways culminating in the recovery of a more Jewish apocalyptic notion with Jesus as an "eschatological prophet." Wright's differing usages include seven articulation:1) last things: death judgment, heaven and hell; 2) Forms of 'historicism'; 3)'end of world (Schweitzer); 4) 'realized eschatology', or at least 'in process of realization' (Dodd, Jeremias); 5) Existential experience (Bultmann); 6) Jewish 'two ages' ('present age' and 'age to come') 7) Inaugurated 'age to come,' see Chapter 4, pp.129-152. Following George Caird's work in *The Language and Imagery of the Bible*, London, Duckworth, 1980, especially "The language of Eschatology," pp. 253ff.

term 'eschato-logy' is wrong." he complains. Recall Derrida, agreeing with Levinas' thought, "summons us to a dislocation of the Greek logos"[364] in the 'other'. Arguing the impossibility of a doctrine of last things which may be "understood on the basis of experiences that constantly recur and are open to anyone….there can be no logos of the future, unless the future is the continuation or regular recurrence of the present."[365] If the future is to be regarded as radically new, unexpected, or totally other, then one cannot simply deploy the past and present in order to understand the future as an object of cognition, as *logos*.

> Hope's statements of promise…must stand in contradiction to the reality which can at present be experienced. They do not result from experiences, but are the condition for the possibility of new experiences. They do not seek to eliminate the reality which exists, but the reality which is coming.[366]

For Moltmann, there is a contradiction at the heart of eschatology in which the future and the past-present create a conflict between history—the reality which exists— and hope—the reality that is coming. One might understand this as being similar to the tension existing between the Church and the *Kingdom of God*. Moltmann also maintains that a view of eschatology must take history seriously, along with an entire continuum of concomitant historical attributes: social, political, economic, legal.[367] This means for Moltmann, any attempt to reduce the meaning of eschatology to either the individual soul or to banish it to a transcendent eternity must be resisted. Reducing eschatology to the individual and the soul, an accusation directed at Von Harnack, does so at the expense of a more robust social and

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[364] Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, p. 82, it is important to remember, later in the same argument, Derrida also suggests that "Nothing can so profoundly solicit the Greek logos—philosophy—than this irruption of the totally-other; and nothing can to such an event reawaken the logos to its origin as to its mortality, its other," *Writing and Difference*, p. 152.
[365] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 17.
[366] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 18.
[367] "As we have seen, the eschatological problem of the present day is not merely theological; it is political too. It is the problem of history itself." Moltmann, *Coming of God, p. 5*

communal understanding.[368] Moltmann insists, "No one possesses, or is given, eternal life for himself or herself alone, without fellowship with other people, and without community with the whole creation."[369] Moltmann describes" The Apocalypse of History" by first suggesting all eschatology is inherently political, whether focused on eternity or the end of this world: "all eschatologies of world history have grown out of political experiences and intentions."[370]

If, as Moltmann argues, eschatology is historical, then any narrative of eschatology must account for history's temporality while simultaneously allowing the eschaton to inform history without crushing it, that is, without reducing the future to merely a confirmation or continuation of the past-present. Moltmann traces a line through recent eschatological thought, pointing out the foibles of earlier attempts by Troeltsch, Overbeck, Weiss and, especially Schweitzer.[371] He acknowledges the achievements of these thinkers in recognizing the otherness of the *Kingdom* and the "foreignness of Jesus,"[372] while also arguing the over-realized eschatology is the shortfall of the liberal Jesus of the nineteenth century. However, Moltmann also offers criticism in a number of ways. Schweitzer's Jesus is criticized as not being eschatological at all, focused as he was on "the final conquest and annihilation of what he considered an illusionary eschatologism."[373] Further, Schweitzer's Jesus was not concerned with society or politics. Schweitzer understands Jesus as inspiring "inner perfection" and "nothing to do with the achievement of anything in the world."[374] Paramount in Moltmann's critique is the concept of time which lies at the heart of

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[368]" The kingdom of God comes by coming to the individual, by entering into his soul and laying hold of it... it is the rule of the holy God in the hearts of individuals...It is not a question of angels and devils, thrones and principalities, but of God and the soul, the soul and its God." Von Harnack, *Liberal Theology at Its Height*, London: Collins, 1989, p. 139, one might also deploy this particular criticism of Moltmann against Schleiermacher.
[369] Moltmann, *Coming of God*, p. 131.
[370] Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, p. 133.
[371] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, See Chapter I, p. 37-39.
[372] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 38.
[373] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 39.
[374] Albert Schweitzer, *The Kingdom of God and Primitive Christianity*, London: A &C Black, 1968 p. 98.

Schweitzer's eschatological model; instead of ushering in eschatological conditions, he has destroyed them, setting in motion Jesus' sacrifice as only the "eternal recurrence of the same cycle."[375]

Following on his critique of Schweitzer, Moltmann critiques Barth who "condemned to ineffectiveness" eschatology, even as he appears to uphold the eschatological character of Christianity. Regarding the *Epistle to the Romans*, Moltmann points out, Barth could not be clearer when he describes the importance of eschatology for Christianity: "Christianity **t**hat is not entirely and altogether eschatology has entirely and altogether nothing to do with Christ."[376] Moltmann recognizes this eschatological reality—even agrees with it—but asks:

> Yet what is the meaning of 'eschatology' here? It is not history, moving silently and interminably onwards, that brings a crisis upon men's eschatological hopes of the future, as Albert Schweitzer said, but on the contrary it is now the eschaton, breaking transcendentally into history, that brings all human history to its final crisis.[377]

Moltmann sees Barth's understanding of transcendence as "unhistorical, supra-historical, or 'proto-historical'"[378] and protests that it was precisely this eschatological view "that prevented the break-through of eschatological dimensions in dogmatics."[379] However, though the two might seem to agree on the importance of an eschatological framework for Christianity, the agreement seems to be superficial, as Moltmann recognizes an irreducible feature of eschatology he finds lacking in previous articulations which, he emphasizes, is the tension between present reality and thinking about the *Kingdom of God* in the future:

> If as category for 'the Last Things 'we take present and future time, the category becomes difficult to maintain in the face of time's transience. If we take eternity as category for 'the Last Things', it is difficult to relate the category specifically to the

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[375] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 39, Moltmann's temporal concepts, *futurum* and *adventus* are examined below at length.
[376] Moltmann quoting Karl Barth, *Der Römerbrief*, 2nd ed. 1922, p, 298; English Translation by E. C. Hoskyns: *The Epistle to the Romans*, 1933, p. 314.
[377] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 39.
[378] Moltmann, T*heology of Hope*, p. 40.
[379] Moltmann, T*heology of Hope*, p. 40.

> present and the future, since eternity is simultaneous to all times, and is equally indifferent towards them.[380]

Moltmann's distinction between historical and eschatological apocalypticism is critical in understanding the *Kingdom of God* he has in mind, not merely as history's future progression from the past and present, but as something radically open, unknowable and therefore unrepresentable in the present. The concept he uses to articulate this unrepresentable future *Kingdom*, reminiscent of the way in which some commentators have approached Derrida's own work, is the promise.[381]

In developing the eschatological and promissory structure in *Theology of Hope*, Moltmann maintains that there is no "unequivocal *concept* of revelation" around which the New Testament is structured; instead the scriptures are structured around a promise. Moltmann suggests that "any revelation of God in Christ is thus in danger of being incomplete and of collapsing altogether, if we fail to notice the dimension of promise in it."[382] The promise of which Moltmann speaks is not empty of content but emerges, somewhat, out of the present context itself. However, this context should not be confused with mere history. Moltmann wishes to distinguish between historical and eschatological apocalypticism:

> The modern apocalyptic interpretations of human end-times are secularizations of biblical apocalyptic, and now have in common with it only the catastrophe, no longer the hope. They talk about the end without a beginning, and about judgement without a kingdom...Apocalypticism belongs to eschatology, not to history.[383]

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[380] Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, p. 6.
[381] See Paul Patton in *Understanding Derrida*, edited by Jack Reynolds, Jonathan Roffe, p. 34, Denise Egéa-Kuehne, *Deconstructing Derrida: Tasks for the New Humanities*, edited by Peter Pericles Trifonas, Michael A. Peters, p. 47, but especially John Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, p. 164-165 and *Prayers and Tears*, p. 28-31, "the promise takes on a 'messianic' look, prying the present open, '[t]he condition of the possibility and impossibility of eschatology, the ironic allegory of messianism', p.145.
[382] Moltmann, *Theology*, pp. 139-140.
[383] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Coming of God,* pp. 226-227, Moltmann develops this idea by distinguishing between the political apocalypses in Daniel (Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Dan. 2) and the Cosmic apocalypses found in Enoch 1:7; II Peter 3:10; and Matt. 24:29. The political apocalypses deal with the empires of the world whereas cosmic apocalypses refer to the dawn of a new creation, see pp. 226-235.

Moltmann quotes Karl Löwith, the" modern philosophy of history originates with the Hebrew and Christian faith in a fulfillment and...ends with the secularization of its eschatological pattern,"[384] but contends Löwith's thesis is "one-sided because it only took up the inner-worldly hope, the teleological nature of the kingdom..."[385] Disapproving of a future promise regulated in such a manner, Moltmann wishes to distinguish the future promise by contrasting two forms of millenarianism, ensuring a particular sort of millenarianism is deeply embedded in eschatology.

> I am distinguishing between historical millenarianism and eschatological millenarianism. Historical millenarianism is the millenarian interpretation of the present political or ecclesiastical aspect, or the context of universal history. Eschatological millenarianism is an expectation of the future and the eschatological context of the end, and the new creation of the world. Historical millenarianism, as we have seen, is a religious theory used to legitimate political or ecclesiastical power, that is exposed to acts of messianic violence and the disappointments of history. Eschatological millenarianism, on the other hand, is a necessary picture of hope and resistance, in suffering, and in the exiles of this world.[386]

Eschatology of the historical type is condemned by Moltmann as merely the consolidation of power with the thin veneer of religiosity.

> Those who proclaim that their own political or ecclesiastical present is Christ's Thousand Years 'empire cannot put up with any hope for alternative kingdom of Christ besides, but are bound to feel profoundly disquieted and called in question by any such hope.[387]

Moltmann adamantly critiques the type of millenarianism which sees the future only through "l'espirit de la géométrie," what he also calls the" decipherment of nature" which, through the modern sciences, only allows the future to be "calculable." Recall Derrida refuses the idea that justice allows calculability or programability which points to the reality that justice must

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[384] Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949, quoted in Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope, p. 133.*
[385] Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope, p. 134.*
[386] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Coming of God, p. 192.*
[387] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Coming of God, p. 193-194.*

be construed differently—as the impossible and unable to be calculated. The domination of the future by the present and past ascribes to human reason the "annihilation of chance."[388] He offers an alternative to the future being only epilogue to the past by offering what he refers to as a "creative passion for the impossible."[389]

4.2.2 Futurity and Impossibility

Richard Bauckham, one of the foremost scholars on the work of Jürgen Moltmann, contrasts Moltmann to Bloch, to whom Moltmann's work is considerably indebted, in order to make the point that Moltmann's *Theology of Hope* succeeds in orienting itself around the impossible in a way that Bloch does not and cannot. Bauckham highlights Bloch's thought by suggesting that the *The Principle of Hope* intended to "inherit biblical eschatology in a non-religious form, taking the biblical God of hope to be a symbol of hope."[390] Bauckham sums up the difference between Bloch and Moltmann by pointing to Bloch's catchphase—"transcending without transcendence."[391] At one level this inversion would seem to parallel a similar trope found repeatedly in Derrida—religion without religion, messianicity without messianism—but as Bauckham continues his argument it becomes apparent it is Moltmann, not Bloch, who is much closer to Derrida at this point. As Derrida insists on "Messianicity without Messianism", that is, without a predetermined content and without the future being limited by the past-present, so too Moltmann develops hope in a way Bloch cannot, which is

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[388] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Coming of God, p. 191.* Moltmann also contrasts his future with the Hellenistic mystery religions that God is "fundamentally different from the knowledge of the θεὸς ἐπιφανής (God manifest) in the surrounding world of the epiphany religions, of the Hellenistic mystery religions and finally of Greek metaphysics...The life, work, death and resurrection of Jesus are therefore not described after the pattern of the appearance of epiphany gods, but in the categories of expectation that are appropriate to the God of promise." Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 143.
[389] Moltmann, *God for a Secular Society*, p.159.
[390] Bauckham, *Moltmann*, p. 44.
[391] Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, Volume 1, London: Blackwell, 1986, p. 210.

radically open orientation towards the future. Bauckham questions whether Bloch has inadvertently reduced the future into merely an extension of the past-present allowing for nothing radically new. He wonders "whether hope has sufficient ground within itself and in the immanent possibilities of the world, or whether it needs a foundation of trust in a transcendent Creator of the future?"[392] Setting aside Bauckhams's theistic framework, what needs to be highlighted in Moltmann's concept of futurity is the tension existing between his willingness to both accept and refuse the definitive content of the coming *kingdom*.

Bauckham points out the content of Moltmann's hope is based on the "power of hope to overcome the power of the negative in history…the negation of the negative,"[393] that is, the Hegelian "abyss of nothingness into which all being sinks." Moltmann, Bauckham argues, places eschatology "precisely at the point where immanent possibilities of hope run out, as hope in the God who creates out of nothing and gives life to the dead."[394] Bauckham argues at this point Bloch's "principle of hope cannot reach," following Hegel, it affords no negation, and thus no hope, with regard to death, the absolute negative. "Death has no seeds of resurrection within itself."[395] This is, Bauckham argues, specifically where Christian hope finds it footing—at the point of an impossible resurrection exposing the limit of the Hegelian dialectic, i.e., the impossible, the something from nothing, the *ex nihilo* out of which creation is called. Moltmann argues, in assuming Hegel's dialectical process Bloch cannot answer for absolute non-being—"nothingness itself"—"the enormous power of the negative"—is

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[392] Bauckham, *Moltmann*, p. 44.
[393] Bauckham, *Moltmann*, p. 44.
[394] Bauckham, *Moltmann*, p. 45.
[395] Bauckham, *Moltmann*, p. 45. Bauckham here is following a "leftist" reading of Hegel with which this project is sympathetic. Specifically, the reading of Hegel in which the other is always reduced to the same and "fails to offer up a space within which otherness exists in terms of itself as other and so finally folds into the logic of the same. There are three seminal twentieth-century philosophers who represent this stance: Emmanuel Levinas, as seen in his extraordinary book, *Totality and Infinity*; Jacques Derrida primarily in *Glas*, and Jean-Francois Lyotard in his analysis of T*he Postmodern Condition*." Clayton Crocket and Creston Davis, *Hegel and the Infinite*, Slavoj Žižek,, Clayton Crocket and Creston Davis, ed., New York: Columbia University Press, 2011, p. 3.

ontologized into "not-yet." The hope that Bloch espouses, then, is the movement from the "not-having and rejoices in becoming."[396] Moltmann continues,

> The biblical stories speak of the spirit of hope which is placed in God, and which, therefore, even in the midst of nothingness, put its trust in the power of the *creator ex nihilo*… God's creative that takes place in that which is without form and void and in the darkness over the abyss. The Spirit of the Lord brings Ezekiel the promise of life as he stands in the valley of death (Ezekiel 37). The creative power of God is seen in Isaac's sacrifice, in the abandonment of Job, in Christ crucified, in nothingness and in the total annihilation of all hope…Even where the force of the negative puts an end to all possibilities of man and nature, trust is placed in God, for God is the power of a future which proves itself creative over against total nothingness. This power is not identical with the power of present reality or of the future's open possibility. It is believed and hoped in at that precise point where people come face to face with the negative.[397]

Contrasting Bloch and Moltmann illustrates the insistence God works from the place without form and void to produce what *is* as well as what is possible. Congruent to Derrida's *différance*, the impossible becomes the condition for the possibility of the possible. John Caputo recognizes this structure while developing a similar connection vis-a-vis Derrida and theology by suggesting "deconstruction itself is structured like a religion—it lives and breathes a religious and messianic air; like religion it turns on a faith, a hope, even a prayer for the possibility of the impossible."[398] Christian hope in the *Kingdom of God* can then come, Moltmann argues, not merely from the extant and possible but from the negative and impossible.

This is a significant feature of Moltmann's hope, which undergirds the way the *Kingdom of God* may and may not be thought of conceptually. If the future *Kingdom of God* comes from both the possible and impossible, from within the past-present and a future which is radically open, then the *Kingdom* itself is, to borrow the concept from Derrida,

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[396] Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope*, p. 35.
[397] Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope*, p. 35.
[398] "Loosening Philosophy's Tongue: A Conversation with Jack Caputo," with Carl Raschke, Journal of Cultural and Religious Theory, Vol. 3, No. 2, (April, 2002).

"undecidable." At the heart of this undecidability for Moltmann is the fact the eschatological promise around which his theology revolves, necessarily regards the future as open and other, which is to say the past/present is not incongruous to the concept of *ex nihilo*. On the other hand, the future promise of which Moltmann speaks will be brought to bear on our current socio-, politico-, economic- context. This is precisely what Derrida trys to describe by affirming messianicity without messianism, or the aporetic structure around which "Force of Law" operates.

Recall Derrida is "hesitant to assimilate too quickly this 'idea of justice' to a regulative idea—in the Kantian sense—to a messianic promise or to other horizons *of the same type.*"[399] Recall also that for Derrida a messianic promise is reliant upon the content of the past-present as the chief feature of the future. The following section will establish that this is clearly not what Moltmann is suggesting, nor does Derrida reject all forms of messianism:[400]

> It is true that I interrogate the idea of an eschaton or telos in the absolute formulations of classical philosophy. But that does not mean I dismiss all forms of Messianic or prophetic eschatology. I think that all genuine questioning is summoned by a certain type of eschatology, though it is impossible to define this eschatology in philosophical terms. The search for objective or absolute criteria is, to be sure, an essentially philosophical gesture…The prophetic word is its own criterion and refuses to submit to an external tribunal which would judge or evaluate it in an objective and neutral fashion.[401]

The prophetic and eschatological in Derrida's deployment of the terms align with Moltmann. Notice in both how the chief feature is the displacing of the logos as the defining feature of eschatology. For Moltmann, as for Derrida, the future must be preserved as

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[399] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 25. It is important to remember that by messianic Derrida is explicitly considering a "conventional interpretation" which is understood as a "horizon" which is the "opening and the limit that defines an infinite progress or a period of waiting." But, like the quality of the *Kingdom of God* I am advocating here, Derrida adds, "justice", however unrepresentable it may be, doesn't wait."

[400] Derrida, *Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers: The Phenomenological,* Richard Kearney, Paul Ricœur, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984, p. 119.

[401] Derrida, *Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers: The Phenomenological* By Richard Kearney, Paul Ricœur, Manchester University Press, 1984, p. 119.

radically open, or it fails to be a future which may overcome the past/present. Chapter Three concentrated on the fact that, for Derrida, a just decision may never be considered to be final or finished.

> There is apparently no moment in which a decision can be presently and fully just: either it has not yet been made according to a rule, and nothing allows it to be called just, or it has already followed a rule—whether received, confirmed, conserved or reinvented—which in its turn is not absolutely guaranteed by anything; and, moreover, if it were guaranteed, the decision would be reduced to calculation and we couldn't call it just.[402]

In the same way, were Derrida's argument transposed into Moltmann's register, it becomes clear how the asymmetrical structure of justice and law is analogous with the inability to anticipate the future promise of the *Kingdom of God* in any present moment of history, including ecclesial structure.

If the *Kingdom of God* never consists simply in its final form, that is, caught between present reality and the reality of the *coming Kingdom*, then every decision in the church must be made recognizing an inescapable undecidability—every decision must go through the "ordeal of the undecidable." If the future *Kingdom of God* is to have any bearing on current ecclesial matters, and if present decisions undertaken by a church, whether a Global communion or local community, are to connect with this future reality, then how must the church regard in the present the coming and future *Kingdom* which must both preserve and suspend current ecclesial structure? The attempt to remove the church from this "dilemma," to protect it, would be to fall victim to the autoimmunity function which Derrida describes above—certainly a constituent part of the church and ultimately unavoidable but may be made more pronounced in the attempt to eliminate it. In order to think through this problem, Moltmann suggests some alternative ways to think about the future, which allow for the 'other' and impossible to which we now turn our attention.

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[402] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. ??

4.2.3 Futurum and Adventus

In much the same way Derrida resists a concept of time that is merely chronological and mechanical, Moltmann also must make room for a future that can destabilize or overcome the past-present—a temporal other. Similarly, Moltmann wishes to describe a future with an alternative vision to a merely mechanic chronology that would compress and predict the content of the future. Moltmann posits two distinct lenses through which to comprehend time: *futurum* and *adventus*. The former, which "develops out of the past," is a future in which the past lies dormant or latent within; the latter suggests that which would not be expected, the impossible, the new or *novum*. Even though both concepts indicate future, *futurum* refers to a future that is predictable, an extension of the past-present through time, which is, from the perspective of the present, merely unrealized or unfulfilled. It is a future very much tied and dependent on the present and past from which it has its origins. Moltmann relegated the term "optimism" to this particular future. *Adventus*, in contrast, is hope: Hope for the impossible and the completely other—a future beyond human conception or conceiving, something which by "the standard of present experience appears impossible."[403] Recall Derrida claims the least bad definition of deconstruction is the "experience of the impossible."[404] Further, Derrida also rejects the "regulative Idea in the Kantian sense" because it "remains on the order of the possible,"[405] and remains a chronological notion. Addressing the same structure with regard to democracy to come,

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[403] Moltmann, *Theology*, p. 103, Moltmann adds "For what follows cf. the definitions of promise by W. Zimmerli, 'Verheissung und Erfullung,'" EvTh 12, (1952), pp. 38 ff.
[404] *Psyche: Inventions of the Other*, Vol. 1, trans. Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007, 15.
[405] Derrida, *Live Theory,* p. 111. Derrida's critique of the Kantian regulative idea is that it "remains a chronological notion." Derrida insists, "all the figures I place under the title of the im-possible, of what must remain (in a nonnegative fashion) foreign to the order of my possibilities, to the order of the 'I can', of ipseity, of the theoretical, the descriptive, the constative, and the performative (…the eventfulness of the to-come exceeds this sphere of the performative)." Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 84.

Derrida maintains "the democracy to come is heterogeneous to chronology and thus cannot be understood on the register of the possible. This is why I have suggested that it must be thought under the rubric of the 'im-possible.'"[406]

4.2.3.1 Adventus as correction

Many scholars, like Bauckham above, applaud Moltmann's *adventus* as a helpful correction to a future and a promise that merely develops out of the past, unable to convey the impossible occurrences to which scripture attests. Miroslav Wolf points to examples of *adventus* in the following:

> God brings about "a new thing"—aged Sarah, barren of womb, gives birth to a son (Genesis 21:1-2; Romans 4:18-21); the crucified Jesus Christ is raised from the dead (Acts 2:22-36); a mighty Babylon falls and a New Jerusalem comes down from heaven (Revelation 18:1-24; 21:1-5), more generally, the good that seemed impossible becomes not just possible but real.[407]

It is critical, however, to contemplate this reality through the lens of ecclesiology—and not only the ecclesial anticipation of the new but also the church's participation in it. Certainly any new 'thing'—idea, concept, practice, promise—would have repercussions on current ecclesial practice and structure. It is important to notice how these 'new things', as highlighted by Wolf, emphasize only God's work without conferring at least some discernment or action on the part of a community, as he goes on to confirm, "The expectation of good things that come as a *gift from God*—that is hope."[408] If the only way the *Kingdom of God* is ever made manifest is purely external to the decisions of the practicing community called church, have we not eternalized eschatology in precisely the way Moltmann accuses Barth. Wolf is, of course, not naive about these problems as he later points

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[406] Smith, *Live Theory*, p. 111.
[407] Miroslav Volf, 'Human Flourishing', in *Created and Led by the Spirit: Planting Missional Congregations,* p.192.
[408] Miroslav Volf, "Human Flourishing," p.192, emphasis added.

out:

> We need to explicate God's relation to human flourishing with regard to many concrete issues we are facing today—from poverty to environmental degradation, from bioethical issues to international relations, from sex to governing. Without showing how Christian notions of God and human flourishing apply to concrete issues, these notions will remain vague and inert, with little impact on the way we actually live.[409]

"Aye, there's the rub."[410] It would seem that either the church accept the "gift from God" which transcends the human capacity to participate; or else "explicate God's relation to human flourishing with regard to many concrete issues we are facing today"—which is left frustratingly undeveloped due to the same aporetic difficulties addressed herein.[411] The question Wolf does not pursue is, how, given the future divine promise of a new thing, does any community address human flourishing actively in the present without diminishing the ability to be open to the radically otherness of the future *adventus* would suggest? For Moltmann, this promise is not about human flourishing, *per se*, but must always be an "outstanding fulfilment," that is, with internal tension between the uttering and the redeeming."[412] When the contours of Moltmann's thought are understood in the light of Derrida, those insights help critique the promise of the *Kingdom of God* as merely a passive waiting on the part of the church. Derrida's Third *Aporia*: "The Urgency That Obstructs the Horizon of Knowledge" painfully illustrates the implications of the aporetic structure many scholars overlook in Moltmann's work.

For Derrida, "justice, however unrepresentable it remains, does not wait….a just

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[409] Miroslav Volf, "Human Flourishing," p. 43.
[410] William Shakespeare, "The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark," Act III, Scene I, *The Riverside Shakespeare*, Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974, p. 1160.
[411] It is important to again stress that for Moltmann the radically other future is not without analogy of at least some sort. Just as the raised Christ does not develop out of the crucified and dead Christ, the *novum ultimum*—the ultimate new thing—does not *issue* from the history of the old...Yet even the eschatological 'new thing 'is not without analogy. If it were completely incomparable, as Marcion said, it would be impossible to say anything about it at all." Jürgen Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, p. 28.
[412] Moltmann, *Theology*, p. 104.

decision is always required immediately, right away, as quickly as possible." Derrida maintains that even though no decision can "provide itself with the infinite information and the unlimited knowledge of conditions, rules, or hypothetical imperatives,"[413] justice cannot wait. Like Kierkegaard's decision is an act of madness, any just decision marks the "interruption of the juridico-, ethico-, or politico-cognitive deliberation that precedes it." The just decision "must rend time and defy dialectics."[414] On the other hand, Derrida, speaking about the democracy to-come that must always be structured around a future promise, "will always keep within it, and it must do so, this absolute undetermined messianic hope at its heart, this eschatological relation to the to-come of an event and of a singularity, of an alterity that cannot be anticipated."[415]

Scholars who utilize Moltmann's eschatological, future oriented hope-promise-kingdom without recognizing the structure of the *aporia* extending to the decisions of the church have abandoned the church to a passive existence devoid of any ecclesial connection to the *Kingdom of God.* They find themselves in a familiar quandary: Moltmann's accusation directed towards those who relegated the kingdom into eternity, namely Barth, Bultmann, and Paul Althus.[416]

4.2.3.2 Ecclesial Implications of Adventus

Another recent scholar has focused attention on the ways in which Moltmann's distinct concepts of *futurum* and *adventus* combat a closing down of the unexpected and unprogramable future while also failing to recognize the ecclesial implications of this insight. Jeremy J. Wynne explains, "Moltmann believes that the future of history must be kept *open* as

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[413] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 255.
[414] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 255.
[415] Derrida, *Specters*, p. 81.
[416] Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, pp. 13-22.

the field of God's mysterious and unpredictable works. *Cause and effect* thinking simply does not allow this."[417] The above is a clear articulation of Moltmann's eschatological thought, but the implications of this open future do not seem to have any bearing on either the interpretation of present action or informing present decision, as the following comments reveal. Moltmann's contribution to theology is lauded as "the hope available to human beings as we *wait* for the 'new thing' which God has promised."[418] Further, we are told that Moltmann's "iconoclastic approach…challenges the church to find hope in God's new, in-breaking work as the source of an open future."

These brief passages underscore precisely the church's passivity in relation to the future, and construes "hope" as an emotive lens through which to justify the past-present without allowing the openness of the coming future to call into question present structure. The radically open future does not inform present ecclesial decisions, precisely the critique Moltmann makes of any concept of *kingdom* which is so transcendentalized or eternalized it is unhelpful for present ecclesial action; again, the chief criticism directed at Barth.[419] Moltmann carefully constructs the relation of future promise to present reality, and it bears striking resemblance to Derrida:

> [The] peculiar fact of the promise that goes on beyond experiences of fulfilment could also be illustrated by the traces the promise leaves in the hopes and desires of men…hopes and longings and desires once awakened by specific promises, stretch further than any fulfilment that can be conceived or experienced."[420]

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[417] Jeremy J Wynne, "Serving the Coming God: The Insights of Jürgen Moltmann's Eschatology for Contemporary Theology of Mission," Missiology: An International Review, Vol. XXXV, no. 4, (October), p. 439.

[418] Wynne, "Serving the Coming God," p. 438, emphasis added. Here quoting "Isa43:18" [sic] without recognizing Isaiah 43:18-19 is a hymn of praise affirming not just a passive response to God's action but rather in explicit participation in order that the new thing may be recognized, i.e., "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you." Isaiah 43:2.

[419] See *Theology of Hope* p. 39-40 where Barth's eschatology is explicitly accused of an overly transcendental eschatology which is "unhistorical, supra-historical" and involves no consequence to the present church.

[420] Moltmann, *Theology*, p. 105

For Derrida, the impossibility at the heart of concepts like justice and democracy are beyond any horizon of expectation. As such, the im-possible "precedes me, swoops down upon and seizes me here and now in a nonvirtualizable way…It comes upon me from on high, in the form of an injunction that does not simply wait on the horizon, that I do not see coming," In the same way that Moltmann insists that the adventus cannot be foreseen or predicted, Derrida insists that the "—venir" is, first of all, unforeseeable. "A foreseen event is already present, already presentable; it has already arrived or happened and is thus neutralized in its irruption."[421] The critical point here is that an ecclesiological examination of Moltmann's *adventus* often results in a future which, although rescued from the predictability of cause and effect, removes any eschatological pattern from history altogether; relegating it to a future beyond time and thus beyond the realm of the church's consideration.

This is one of Moltmann's chief considerations in Chapter Four of *The Coming of God,* where he examines creation and cosmos in light of eschatology. He questions how *kingdom* relates to history and whether a new heaven and new earth mean the annihilation of the world, its consummation, or its deification.[422] Moltmann develops his thought by contrasting the concepts of a*nnihilation, transformation and deification* in past theology while admitting "the difficulties about not just *hoping* this but *thinking* it too are considerable."[423] Transformation of the world, which he points out is unanimously held "from Irenaeus...by way of Augustine and Gregory the Great, Aquinas and the whole of mediaeval theology, down to present-day Catholic dogmatics" prioritizes "*God's steadfast faithfulness* to his creation and laws" as opposed

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[421] Derrida, *Rogues*, 143, "Everywhere there is a horizon and where we can see something coming from out of some teleology or ideal horizon, some horizon of an idea, that is from out of the seeing [*voir*] or the knowing [*savoir*] of an *eidos*, everywhere that ideality is possible (and there is neither science nor language nor technique nor, and we must recognize this, experience in general, without the production of some ideality), this horizontal ideality, the horizon of this ideality, will have neutralized in advance the event, along with everything that, in any historicity worthy of this name, requires the eventfullness of the event."
[422] Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, pp. 268-275.
[423] Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, p. 260.

to the Lutheran orthodox understanding—developed out of the second eucharist dispute—of "*God's total freedom.*"[424] Moltmann carefully explicates these contrasting historical concepts, along with two additions of what he terms ecofeminism (Ruether) and the eschatological ecology (Beck).[425] Pertinent for this argument is Moltmann's reliance on an articulation of the future, which hinges on the relationship between reality on the one hand and possibility on the other. Moltmann develops these modes as "experiences" and "expectations:"

> Experiences are collected, expectations are projected. Experience and expectation extend to different modes of being—here to reality, there to possibility—and are hence *asymmetrical* to one another. Instead of a space of expectation, it is useful to talk about a horizon of expectation.[426]

Moltmann wants to ensure expectations of the future are neither derived entirely from the experiences of the present, nor devoid of the same experiences. The double-handed gesture ensures a relationship between the past/present and future, but also the relationship is asymmetrical, and the relationship between past/present and future remains unstable:

> [We] cannot derive our expectations entirely from our experiences. If we could, there would be nothing new under the sun, and thus nothing more to be expected either. Yet we cannot, either, draw up the project of our expectations without any relation to experiences. If we did, all that would emerge would be utopias…The feedback which connects expectations with experience is a necessary part of the hermeneutical process of tradition and innovation which constitutes historical time.[427]

In the same way that Derrida develops the asymmetrical relationship between justice and law, Moltmann posits the relationship between experience and expectation remains, quoting Bloch, "in a state of flux."[428]

4.2.3.3 Preserve and Suspend

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[424] Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, pp. 375-376.
[425] Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, pp. 267.
[426] Moltmann, *Theology*, pp. 288-289, emphasis added.
[427] Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, p. 289.
[428] Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, p. 290.

At the heart of this tension for Moltmann is the inability to resolve the same *aporia* that is at the heart of "Force of Law," which must both "preserve and suspend" while recognizing a certain undecidability at the heart of any decision or interpretation.[429] *Adventus* requires a "horizon of openness towards reality," and cannot be a closed system. Here Moltmann adopts the term 'horizon' "as developed in the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl."[430] This reliance on Husserl not only exposes a common, albeit contested, phenomenological thread in both the work of Moltmann and Derrida, but is also the cornerstone of understanding the structure through which both understand the future and experience in general.[431] Recalling from the above that for Derrida the messianic horizon, the promise, both is/is not free of content. Derrida invokes a "formal structure of promise," which is the

> messianism without religion, a messianism without messianism, an idea of justice—which we distinguish from law or right and even from human rights—and an idea of democracy—which we distinguish from its current concept and from its determined predicates today…[432]

Derrida also insists, however, the "promise must promise to be kept, that is, not to remain 'spiritual' or 'abstract,' but to produce events, new effective forms of action, practice,

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[429] This line of thought might well be continued as regards Moltmann's doctrine of creation which is critiqued in Brian Walsh's "Theology of Hope and the Doctrine of Creation: An Appraisal of Theology and Ethics in Jürgen Moltmann," Calvin Theological Journal 22, (1987), p. 43, and Miroslav Volf, "After Moltmann: Reflections on the Future of Eschatology," in *God will be All in All: The Eschatology of Jürgen Motlmann*, ed. Richard Bauckham, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999, pp. 233-258, who argues it is through "redemption" and not "completion" that the future is best understood theologically and that the former "cannot be subsumed" by the latter.

[430] Moltmann, *Theology*, see footnote 1, p. 191 which refers to both E. Husserl, Erfahrung und Urteil, 1939.pp26ff; L. Landgrebe, Der Weg der Phänomenologie, 1963, pp181ff; and H. G. Gadamer, Wahrheit und Methode, 1960, pp. 286ff., 356ff.

[431] Derrida seems to reject horizons in "Force of Law" by maintaining that he would be hesitant to "assimilate too quickly this 'idea of justice' to a regulative idea (in the Kantian sense), to a messianic promise or to other horizons of the same type." Caputo points out he rejects the horizon for it "sets limits and defines expectations in advance…anticipate[s] the other." *Prayers and Tears*, p. 117; yet later amends the messianic to include only "every messianicity" that is, messianic that offers distinct content. I choose to follow James K. A. Smith in this regard. Derrida also subscribes to the appearanceof the wholly other, "otherwise it would never appear for us at all." Smith, *Determined Hope*, p. 223. cf. Derrida, *Writing and Difference* where he attends closely to the appearance of the other in both Levinas and Husserl. The other appears in Husserl as "analogical appresentation,"*Writing and Difference*, p. 1.

[432] Derrida, *Marx*, 59, referencing both "Force of Law" and *The Other Heading.*

organization, and so forth."[433] This is an important and frequently overlooked aspect of Derrida's thought. Derrida is not saying there is no predetermined content, but rather the very concept of democracy and justice relies on a promise that "can only arise in such a diastema (failure, inadequation, disjunction, disadjustment, being 'out of joint')."[434] Likewise, for Moltmann, horizons must be kept radically free of predetermined or anticipatory content, yet at the same time they must come from tradition. For instance, resurrection narratives rely on the continuity with the past:

> In the resurrection narratives experience and judgement manifestly take place within a decidedly eschatological horizon of expectations hopes and questions about the promised future. The very designations 'raising', 'resurrection', etc., contain a whole world of memories and hopes.[435]

To return briefly to the similarities of the future promise so evident in both Moltmann's and Derrida's work, this chapter closes with a final comparison of their thought on the openness upon which the structure of promise depends. Like Moltmann, Derrida is at pains to distinguish the chronological future with some alternative he calls the "a-venir," the "to come,"[436] which must "exceed all teleological idealism and elude the ruses by which teleological reason conceals from itself what might come or happen to it."[437]

> The future loses the openness, the coming of the other (who comes), without which there is no justice; and the future can always reproduce the present, announce itself or present itself as a future present in the modified form of the present.[438]

Mirroring Derrida here, Caputo puts it in his own words:

> As soon as you address the other, as soon as you are open to the future, as soon as you have a temporal experience of waiting for the future, of waiting for someone to come: that is the opening of the experience. Someone is to come, is now to come. Justice and peace will have to do with this coming of the other with the

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[433] Derrida, *Marx*, p. 89.
[434] Derrida, *Marx*, p. 64. Caputo correctly points out that Derrida rejects Husserlian horizons
[435] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 191.
[436] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 256, "Justice remains *to come*, it remains *by coming* [*la juste reste à venir*], it *has* to come [*elle a à venir*] it *is* to-come, the to-come [*elle est à-venir*]."
[437] Derrida *Rogues*, p. 143.
[438] Derrida, "Force of Law," p.256.

promise.[439]

While, similarly, Moltmann also relies heavily on the necessity of being open to this future horizon:

> The openness of Christian existence is not a special case of general human openness. It is not a special form of the *cor inquietum*, the restless heart that is part of man's created makeup. Rather, the historic and history-making *cor inquietum* of man arises from the *promissio inquieta*, and clings to it and is dependent on it. The resurrection of Christ goes on being a *promissio inquieta* until it finds rest in the resurrection of the dead and a totality of new being.[440]

Derrida's concept of autoimmunity opens the space for just this new being. As Derrida insists, "Without autoimmunity, with absolute immunity, nothing would ever happen or arrive; we would no longer wait, or expect, no longer expect one another, or expect any event."[441]

4.3 Derrida and Moltmann in other literature

This project is not the first time Moltmann's eschatological vision and theology of hope have been compared favorably to Derrida's work. Catherine Keller and Stephen D. Moore's co-written chapter entitled "Derridapocalypse" includes a reference where Moltmann makes a brief but important appearance to contrast one form of coming against another.[442] It is not a coincidence this passage is situated within Derrida's response to the apocalyptic chorus "Come!" found in Revelation.[443] Pointing out Moltmann's eschatological theology also depends upon this "coming" is an attempt to transpose apocalypse into hope

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[439] Derrida in John D. Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A conversation with Jacques Derrida*, p. 22.
[440] Moltmann, *The Theology of Hope*, p.196. So as the resurrection is without precedent, so must the future Kingdom of God *be*.
[441] Derrida *Rogues*, p. 152.
[442] Catherine Keller and Stephen D. Moore, *Derridapocalypse, Yvonne Sherwood and Kevin Hart eds., Derrida and Religion: Other Testaments, p. 198.*
[443] In Revelation the verb *erchou* 6:1, 6:3, 6:5, 6:7,11:1, 11:12, 17:1, 19:17, 20:17, 20:20, 21:9, 22:17 repeatedly; Derrida addresses this theme in "Apocalyptic Tone" and states that the Imperative "Come" cannot "become an object, a theme, a representation, or even a citation in the current sense, and subsumable under a category, whether that of the coming or of the event." p. 93.

and "hope as the Zukunft, the to come of *adventus* rather than the calculable linearity of futurum, parallels Derrida significantly,"[444] albeit, they add, not "unproblematically."

> Derrida's assertion of the pure coming, the *avenir*, over against the determinate *futur* structurally nearly parallels Moltmann's binary of pure and promised Zukunft vs. the emergent future: coming vs becoming. (Not only against being but against any Nietzschean or Whiteheadian immanence of becoming.)[445]

However, Moltmann is also critiqued because he

> criticizes the Parmenidian eternal presence only to yield to a *theologia gloriae*…the *parousia* yields total *ousia*, in the end—after the death and transience have been overcome…Derrida's own binary of determinate history and absolute promise heralds no total or final coming…the hardening of the messianic into a messiah will produce such totalizing effects.[446]

There are two issues with Keller and Moore's explication of Moltmann. First, Moltmann cannot be fairly accused of providing a content for an apocalyptical ending where the glory of God is fully present because, he argues, apocalypse belongs to eschatology and not the other way around. In other words, the future never collapses into the present. Second, Keller and Moore's chapter is focused more on combatting the *ousia*, presence, around which Derrida focuses much of his earlier work (*Plato's Pharmacy, Speech and Phenomena, Of Grammatology*), but the issue of presence or *ousia* is not Moltmann's direct concern. For Moltmann there is "only one real problem in Christian theology"[447] which is "the future," concerned as it is with a "God with 'future as his essential nature.'"[448] (We will return to this theme in Pannenberg.) Furthermore, Moltmann is committed to structuring Christian theology only around

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[444] Keller, Moore, *Derridapocalypse, p. 198.*
[445] Keller, Moore, *Derridapocalypse, p. 203*
[446] Keller, Moore, *Derridapocalypse, p. 203,* Interestingly, Keller and Moore recognize a theological irony in Derrida, "if the only alternatives are a determinist appropriation, on the one hand, and the gift of a separate absolute, on the other, might Derrida's own 'gift' not harmonize, hauntingly, with the triumphant chorale of God's absolutely free and transcendent gift, *charis*, grace, *sola gratia* - a unilateral, pure omnipotence, whether coming from above or from the future." The concern for Keller and Moore is that such an omnipotence is at odds with many theologies (they mention feminist and ecological) into which the "divine morphs into the *ruach*, Geist, spirit of infinite indeterminacy."
[447] Moltmann, *The Theology of Hope*, p. 16.
[448] Moltmann, *The Theology of Hope*, p. 16, quoting Ernst Bloch.

eschatology which is devoid of both final content as well as infinitely deferred; eschatology is "always only before us,"[449] at least from within the purview of any historical, and thus theological, account.

> The real language of Christian eschatology, however, is not the Greek *logos*, but the *promise* which has stamped the language, the hope and the experience of Israel. It was not in the *logos* of the epiphany of the eternal present, but in the hope-giving word of promise that Israel found God's truth. That is why history was here experienced in an entirely different and entirely open form. Eschatology as a science is therefore not possible in the Greek sense, nor yet in the sense of modern experimental science, but only as a knowledge in terms of hope, and to that extent as a knowledge of history and of the historic character of truth. These differences between Greek thought and that of Israel and Christianity, between *logos* and promise, between epiphany and *apokalypsis* of the truth have today been made clear in many fields and by various methods.[450]

Moltmann sidesteps the issue of purity and presence in order to focus on the coming future, and makes the point to show he is following the cue of other thinkers on this matter as he agrees with a quote from Georg Picht: 'The epiphany of the eternal present of being distorts to this day the eschatological revelation of God.[451]

Paul Fiddes has also addressed extensively this idea of deferred presence by examining both Moltmann and Derrida. He divides *ousia* into what he sees as two penultimate forms of presence which are the "millennial reign of God on earth," (mentioning Daniel 7, Ezekiel 37-38, Revelation 7, 20) as well as the "secular image of Utopia."[452] Important for this discussion is Fiddes' suggestion that openness in regard to the future is critically important. Fiddes rightly understands what is at stake in the work of both Derrida and Moltmann:

> What is to come is the power of the future in the present, as Moltmann puts it, but with a significant difference. This future is never reachable, it never has any content to it. I suggest that in eschatology we should, with Derrida, be taking

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[449] Moltmann, *The Theology of Hope*, p. 16.
[450] Moltmann, *The Theology of Hope*, p. 40-41.
[451] Moltmann, *The Theology of Hope*, p. 41, quoting G. Picht, Die Erfahrung der Geschichte, 1958, p. 42.
[452] Fiddes, *The Promised End*, p. 221.

the openness of the future totally seriously.[453]

Openness is important as Fiddes suggests, but it is critical to keep in mind that for Derrida, like Moltmann's *Adventus,* the future, as 'the impossible' does, in a way arrive because the promise cannot be ultimately inaccessible, nor indefinitely deferred. For Derrida the future promise, like the Adventus

> announces itself; it precedes me, swoops down upon and seizes me here and now in a nonvirtualizable way, in actuality and not potentiality. It comes upon me from on high, in the form of an injunction that does not simply wait on the horizon, that I do not see coming, that never leaves me in peace and never lets me put it off until later. Such an urgency cannot be idealized any more than the other as other can. This im-possible is thus not a (regulative) idea or ideal. It is what is most undeniably real and sensible. Like the other. Like the irreducible and nonappropriable differance of the other.[454]

This section examined the double-handed gesture of Moltmann's eschatology and aligned it with certain aspects of Derrida's latter political thought arguing the most congruent feature is the *aporia* around which Moltmann and Derrida build their respective concepts, which Derrida calls 'mystery' and Moltmann calls 'eschatology'. Moltmann wishes to affirm '"the sudden', the what-can-never-be-expected, the leap, the miracle,"[455] in the same way that Derrida wishes to affirm the impossible. Here it seems reasonable to understand Moltmann's "what-can-never-be-expected" and Derrida's "impossible" as describing the same openness to the future. Derrida would be sympathetic to Moltmann's refusal of a future that is predictable or controllable, as both thinkers want to present and preserve a future which is "out of joint" (quoting Derrida quoting *Hamlet* in *Specters of Marx*), that is, a future that cannot be construed as merely an extension of the present. For both Moltmann and

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[453] Paul Fiddes, interviewed by David Busch and the centenary conference of the Melbourne College of Divinity, and the annual conference of ANZATS, the Australian and New Zealand Association of Theological Schools, July 2010. http://www.jmm.org.au/articles/24516.htm

[454] Derrida, "Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility: A Dialogue with Jacques Derrida," Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy, Richard Kearney & Mark Dooley, (eds.). New York: Routledge, 2003, p. 84.

[455] Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, p. 29.

Derrida, there must be room for a future which can not be seen or anticipated but remains other, disjointed from the present and heterogeneous to it. Both describe a necessary radical openness in regards the content of the future. Both justice and the *Kingdom of God* are always to come and can never be considered in their final forms. An examination of Pannenberg introduces yet another aspect of Derrida's work which parallels the structure of theological thought having to do with the person of Jesus Christ in relation to the *Kingdom of God*.

CHAPTER FIVE
Pannenberg on Christ and *The Kingdom of God*

> *The only unity among men that does not bear the seeds of its own destruction is the unity that is brought about by justice…*[456]
>
> *The central concern of the Church and the primary point of reference for understanding the Church, must be the Kingdom of God.*[457]
>
> -Wolfhart Pannenberg

5.1 Jesus proclaiming the Coming Kingdom

In this chapter, the work of Wolfhart Pannenberg (1928-2014), will be placed alongside that of Jürgen Moltmann, highlighting their similar desire to ensure the *Kingdom of God* be understood only as a coming reality, that is, in the future. The fundamentally different ways both thinkers relate the person of Jesus Christ with the *Kingdom of God* announced by his life and teaching shall also be contrasted. Focusing on this critical methodological difference between the two theologians shall provide the opportunity to highlight similarities and congruencies between Pannenberg's articulation of the *Kingdom* in relation to Christ and the work of Jacques Derrida.

Although Moltmann and Pannenberg deploy dissimilar strategies for achieving the openness and otherness of the future in relation to the past-present, their fundamental insights on the relationship of time to eschatology is equivalent—that the mechanical, chronological arrow of time is a problematic concept when attempting to allow the future to be radically open and undetermined exclusively from the constraints of present and past circumstance. Pannenberg, like Moltmann, is committed to the radical openness of the future which requires a *non*-mechanical, a-chronological understanding of time, so the future isn't

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[456] Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969, p. 73.
[457] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 73.

trapped by the conditions of the present. By placing Pannenberg's concept of future alongside Moltmann's, this chapter will argue both theologians are committed to a similar eschatological reality at the center of their theology. From this argument parallels shall also be drawn between their work and Jacques Derrida's conceptualization of the present in light of a coming and other future.

The secondary focus of this chapter shall examine a substantive difference between Moltmann and Pannenberg that revolves around Jesus' relationship to, and identity with, the *Kingdom of God*. Pannenberg, in contrast to Moltmann who often conflates the presence of Jesus and the *Kingdom*, argues the *Kingdom of God* is not finally and materially present in Jesus, but rather, is proclaimed by Jesus as a coming, rather than as a present reality, as well as a reality in which he participated, rather than as a reality which is present. In other words, Pannenberg views the *Kingdom of God* as distinct from and other than Jesus, and Jesus' announcement of the *Kingdom* is not axiomatic, but is rather a quasi-transcendent reality to which Jesus himself only points and proclaims, "The kingdom of God is at hand,"[458] but it remains future and only ever partially immanent. It is this unique feature of Pannenberg's thought, that the *Kingdom of God* is always coming, never present —even in regards to Jesus' own person—that will be brought alongside Derrida's own insistence "justice, in itself, if such a thing exists,"[459] is always expected, always future, and never fully present. The implications of understanding the *Kingdom of God* in this way is Christ can not be said to be fully and finally the *Kingdom of God*. Derrida, similarly, is consistently reticent to allow the content of justice to rest complete in any decision, or any person:" At no time can one say presently that a decision is just...or that someone is just, and even less, 'I am just.'"[460] This chapter shall also

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[458] Mark 1:15 (NRSV)
[459] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 243.
[460] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 252.

reveal how Pannenberg maintains the distinction between Jesus and the *Kingdom* and offer Derrida's thought as an analogue. Reading Pannenberg in light of Derrida helps to establish a congruity between them, establishing Derrida as a thinker who contributes to theology, and, thus, ecclesiology.

5.1.1 Futurity is Fundamental - Similarities with Moltmann

For scholars concerned with the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ[461] it seems contentions arise when faced with its historicity, that is, how the transcendent and eschatological *Kingdom* is instantiated, or embodied in or through history. Analogously, for Derrida justice is presented in a double-handed manner and is addressed, at least superficially, in two ways. The first is historical, the "legacy we have received under the name of justice...the task of a historical and interpretive memory."[462] For Derrida it is necessary, in this first example of justice, to attempt to trace the historical genealogy of justice, "where it comes from, what it wants from us, knowing that it does so through singular idioms (*Dikē, Jus, justicia, justice, Gerechtigkeit...*)," but also to never cease to question "the origin, grounds and limits of our conceptual, theoretical or normative apparatus surrounding justice."[463] The second framework is a-historical and more theoretical, dealing with the "responsibility before memory"[464] insisting justice is not reducible to history or law, the relationship between law and justice is heteronomic, not reducible to an economy, and the authority upon which the law was established is non-legal, because it had to exist prior to law. In the same way, any ecclesial structure which understands its authority as grounded in the K*ingdom of God* must take into

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[461] *Kingdom or Reign of God.*
[462] Derrida, *Force of Law*, p. 248.
[463] Derrida, *Force of Law*, p. 248.
[464] Derrida, *Force of Law*, p. 248.

account this same tension and asymmetrical relationship between in constituent parts *ἐκκλησία* and *βασιλεία,* church and kingdom. Discourse about the *Kingdom of God*, like justice, has very often been categorized in these two registers: historic and present, but also transcendent and eschatological. I shall address Pannenberg's particular understanding of the *Kingdom of God* with this dual structure in mind.

In the first chapter of *Theology and the Kingdom of God,* when thinking about the *Kingdom,* Pannenberg emphasizes, "Futurity is fundamental," and the "eschatological future brought about by God" must recognize its futurity as well, and this for Pannenberg is the salient point, it must also inform the present. "God's rule is not simply in the future, leaving men to do nothing but wait quietly for its arrival. No, it is a mark of Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom of God that future and present are inextricably interwoven."[465] Pannenberg acknowledges that the *Kingdom of God* was a

> central motif in American theological history, notably the Puritan divines and the social Gospel movement. In German theology, from Kant and Schleiermacher through Richard Rothe and Ritschl, there was no disputing the centrality of the kingdom to the Christian message.[466]

He laments that in recent decades, writing in 1969, the *Kingdom of God* was thought to be achieved only in men's labor and through ethics. Pannenberg's work focused on returning the *Kingdom* to its eschatological roots and making it a central focus of theological and ecclesial thought. Pannenberg insists that the church "is nothing apart from its function as an eschatological community."[467]

Pannenberg's *Theology and the Kingdom of God* attempted to bring eschatology back into the theological mainstream but with some important shifts in understanding and emphasis. First, Pannenberg, like Moltmann, sought to assist in the "radical change from the ethical to

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[465] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 53.
[466] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969, p. 51.
[467] Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3, p.32,

the eschatological understanding of the kingdom of God," but in a way which attempted also to correct the eschatology of theologians like Bultmann and Barth for whom "eschatology is timeless and deprived of its temporal meaning."[468] A *Kingdom of God* deprived in this way, Pannenberg insisted, is unable to be anything more than a "slogan" for theology and cannot inform a "concrete future."[469] As we shall see, the future Pannenberg envisions is not merely a transcendent future for which we must passively wait, but also informs and is connected substantively, albeit asymmetrically and anachronistically, to the present. "God's rule is not simply in the future, leaving men to do nothing but wait quietly for its arrival."[470] Jesus' preaching about the future *Kingdom of God* was, and is, "inextricably interwoven"[471] with present realities as well.

> The accent of Jesus' message differed from the Jewish eschatological hope at precisely this point: Jesus understood the *present impact* of the immanent future. Bultmann, Dodd, and others exaggerated the difference, however to the degree of dismissing the futurity of the Kingdom of God in Jesus message as a remnant of Jewish thought. In abstracting the present impact from the whole of Jesus' message of the Kingdom, the message was grievously distorted. Jesus spoke of the presence of the Kingdom of God, but always in terms of the presence of God's *coming* Kingdom. Futurity is fundamental for Jesus' message.[472]

We begin to see the difficulty Pannenberg attempts to overcome in *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, namely, for *God's Kingdom* futurity is foundational, but also, the immanence of this *Kingdom*, that is, its "present impact" is also a serious consideration. Pannenberg was insistent recovery of the *Kingdom of God's* immanence was the "key to the whole of Christian

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[468] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God*, p. 52, "Barth and Bultmann recovered the apocalyptic urgency of Jesus 'message at the price of stripping it of its temporal prospect of a final future of this world."(Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Reich Gottes, Kirche und Gesellschaft in der Sicht systematischer Theologie," in Beiträge zur Ethik, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004, pp. 28–9.

[469] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 52.

[470] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 53.

[471] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 53.

[472] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 53-54.

theology."[473] By 'immanence' we will see Pannenberg is at pains to ensure a 'transcendent eschatology'—one with no bearing, no relation to the present—is to be avoided as theologically bankrupt. For Pannenberg, eschatology meant futurity as well as relationality to the present.

Pannenberg critiques those who only saw reference to futurity in the *Kingdom of God* as a "hangover from Jewish apocalyptic."[474] He insists, in ways that essentially are congruent with Moltmann, the *Kingdom of God* can only be understood eschatologically, that is, with *futurity* as the central constitutive feature.[475] Here one will recognize two analogues with the way Derrida envisions the future. First, recall the inescapability of deferring into the future the full presence and otherness of justice, while invoking the same (absent) presence and otherness as a central interpretive feature of the present which he alternatively names trace, or specter.

Second, this chapter highlights Pannenberg's insistence the future must be open, that is, an innate inability to describe, predict, or fully control the future from the past-present. Both Derrida and Pannenberg attempt to ensure present circumstance is open toward a future remaining radically other, and from which the present is held provisionally. For Derrida this takes many forms, including, *democracy to come*, *justice to come.* Recall such concepts, Derrida insists, have the structure of a promise—made in the present but whose fullness is

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[473] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 53, "The Christian hope is directed towards the coming of the kingdom of God and towards participation in the new life it brings. All other 'last things 'in Christian tradition are related to this." Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Eschatology and the Experience of Meaning," in Basic Questions in Theology, 3:196, quoted in Wong, Kam Ming, *Wolfhart Pannenberg on Human Destiny*, *The Ashgate New Critical Thinking in Religion, Theology and Biblical Studies*, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2008, p. 130.

[474] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 54.

[475] Although Moltmann and Pannenberg share common features in regard to eschatology as an orientation to the future and with great impact to history and the past-present, the political consequences of their subtle differences could occasionally draw them in completely different directions. Moltmann discusses their differences: "Whereas he knew that I was on the side of the Latin American liberation theologians, he fought vigorously against them in Faith and Order and joined forces with conservative Republicans in the United States, such as Peter Berger, Richard Neuhaus, and Michael Mowak, with the aim of silencing liberation theology," Moltmann, *A Broad Place: An Autobiography*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009, pp. 105-107.

deferred into the future. Similarly for Pannenberg, "Jesus indeed spoke of the presence of the *Kingdom of God*, but always in terms of the presence of God's *coming Kingdom*."[476] Subsequently, God's immanence, the fullness of his presence was only to be experienced in the future. As we shall see, in order to achieve this deferral of God's *Kingdom* and presence Pannenberg reformulates the relationship between the future and past-present.

In Pannenberg's thinking, the present is, to a degree, a result of the future.[477] The future is not a distant reality towards which the present chronologically moves, but rather the primary reality only partially and provisionally realized in present circumstance. The future, to which he grants ontological status denied to the present, is transcendent to, and other than, the present, but is also proleptically 'existent' in the present. It is important to note here the temporal reversal. Pannenberg grants being and ontological status only to the future, the effect of which is to deny ontological status to the present, thus inverting the usual connection between present and future. Pannenberg, in order to achieve this end, grants the future sovereign power over the past and present. He referred to this concept as a

> *backward linkage* (Rückbindung)… that events move not from past to future but rather future to past…If there is to exist a dynamic, open, and contingent flow of history, Pannenberg can only conceive of it occurring in the arrival of contingent events from God's future, moving then into the past.[478]

The future then could be said to determine the past retroactively (rückwirkend).[479]

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[476] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 54, emphasis Pannenberg.
[477] "It is through the future that eternity enters into time." Pannenberg, *Introduction to Systematic Theology*, p. 49.
[478] Stephen Lakkis, *A New Hope: Wolfhart Pannenberg and the Natural Sciences on Time*, Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge: Scholars Publishing, 2014, p. 120. See Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Contingency and Natural Law," p. 83. Also note that this concept would defend the Hegelian charge, often leveled at Pannenberg. "Hegel's postulate of a universal Absolute gradually unfolding and realizing itself in history (from past to future) is diametrically opposed to Pannenberg's theory of Rückbindung (which flows from future to past)." Lakkis, *Hope*, p. 120.
[479] Important to note there are scientific explanations which might corroborate Pannenberg's conception of time: Polkinghorne, J., *Faith, Science and Understanding,* London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2000, p. 166; see also Fred Hoyle, *The Intelligent* Universe, New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1983.

In order to produce the connection Pannenberg desires between future and past/present he relies on a reversal of a logical, and commonly held assumption, about temporal reality. Rather than the past-present being proleptically in the future, which destroys the openness of the future (and for Pannenberg also God's freedom and sovereignty) the future is present in the past-present. Pannenberg reverses the customary way to conceive of time as chronological—past followed by present followed by the future. Pannenberg argues that given the ultimate priority of the future over the past and present it is necessary, and even helpful eschatologically speaking, to understand the "present as an *effect* of the future, in contrast to the conventional assumption that past and present are the *cause* of the future."[480] This was not for Pannenberg merely a convenient philosophical or metaphysical game, but rather the way he understood Jesus announcing the future presence of the *Kingdom* in the Gospels. "This resounding motif of Jesus 'message—the imminent Kingdom of God—must be recovered as a key to the whole of Christian theology. Said another way, Jesus underscored the present impact of the imminent future."[481] Pannenberg recognizes the strange and strained relationship this creates for "contemporary thought," but what Pannenberg is at pains to emphasize is "the starting point for Jesus' message was in the Jewish hope for the future Kingdom of God."[482]

> Jesus' particular emphasis can be understood as a modification of the Jewish hope: God's Kingdom does not lie in the distant future but is immanent. Thus the present is not independent from that future. Rather does the future have an imperative claim upon the present, alerting all men to the urgency and exclusiveness of seeking first the Kingdom of

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[480] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 54, emphasis added. "[Pannenberg] first developed this conviction from Christology, observing that what is revealed of Jesus in his resurrection must be true, of Jesus and his life and ministry: 'the resurrection event has retroactive power.'" See also, Paul Fiddes, *Promised End: Eschatology in Theology and Literature*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2000, p. 212, "The resurrected Jesus is the crucified Jesus; so the one who is revealed as Son of God and Lord in his resurrection from the dead must always have been the true Son…the core essence of Pannenberg's presupposition of the ontological priority of the future is not about retroactively defining or revealing something; rather it is retroactively constitutive. Hence, Jesus' resurrection is not only constitutive for our perception of his divinity, but it is ontologically constituent for that divinity."
[481] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 53.
[482] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 54.

> God…In this way we see the present as an effect of the future, in contrast to the conventional assumption that past and present are the cause of the future.[483]

Although there are different strategies and vocabularies for articulating the relationship between past/present and future, Pannenberg, like Moltmann and Derrida, refuses to let chronology be the ultimate conception for how they are related. As we have examined in the above chapters, both Moltman's *Adventus* and the aporetic structure of Derrida's *différance,* highlight the discontinuity (for Derrida an "asymmetry") between the past/present and the future. For Pannenberg, the future *Kingdom of God* stands in contrast to present, not to eliminate the present but to emphasize a reality which is deferred—"the reality which is coming."[484] Moltmann, like Derrida, describes the future reality like a promise:

> Hope's statements of promise…must stand in contradiction to the reality which can at present to be experienced. They do not result from experiences, but are the condition for the possibility of new experiences.[485]

Pannenberg, in contrast, addresses the ontological oddity this structure creates. To defer being in this manner grants an ontological privilege to the future over the past-present by inverting chronological time. One finds this same disjointure of time in Derrida for whom justice, like the *Kingdom of God* for Pannenberg, "must rend time and defy dialectics."[486] Derrida's critique of the metaphysics of presence, of "being as ideality" continually revolves around this distinction.[487]

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[483] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 54.
[484] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 18.
[485] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 18.
[486] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 255.
[487] Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, p. 53. For a sustained treatment of this aspect of Derrida's work addressing Catharine Pickstock's, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* see James K. A. Smith, A Principle of Incarnation in Derrida's (Theologische?) Jugendschriften: Towards a Confessional Theology, Modern

5.1.3 Pannenberg's 'Appearance' and Derrida's 'Specter'

What Pannenberg and Derrida both emphasize is this future justice and *Kingdom* must also be connected, albeit not in a direct and symmetrical way, to the present. To achieve this Derrida relies on absent/presence of the spectre, a ghostly presence that haunts the present—the effect of which he calls 'hauntology.'[488] Pannenberg also only allows the ghost of a future ontological presence into the present without making a full appearance. On one hand, present and future are related; on the other hand, discontinuous and incommensurable and other-than. Pannenberg works to develop a notion of 'appearance' which emphasizes "the ambiguity of the word 'appearance' based on the relation of appearance to being,"[489] and which strongly resembles Derrida's specter. Pannenberg makes appearance provisional referring to the origin of "appearance as something can no longer be specified as a presently existing being…appearance in its contingency as the happening of that which is future." Pannenberg describes this appearance, in contrast to other philosophers who have considered

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Theology 18:2 (April 2002). A Derridean critique of Pannenberg's ecclesiology in light of his eschatology could be made as Pannenberg transposes these ideas into an ecclesiological register which becomes quite teleological in nature. For instance, in the future it seems we will all be unified under a sovereignty. This determination of unity as the "most comprehensive characteristic of being," would negate the very indeterminacy suggested as part of our experience of the future itself. Further, as Pannenberg develops his ideas, especially in the direction of ecclesiology, we are told that the church is necessary "so long as the social and political life of man does not provide ultimate human fulfillment," and the church's job then is to witness to societies limitations. In light of Derrida's thought several problematic questions arise. First, by assigning the church to the role of witnessing to society's limitations has it has already placed itself nearer the kingdom, able to render a "higher" viewpoint of the ends of humanity than secular society is capable of alone? Second, does Pannenberg assume for the church to perform this above function it must speak with a singular voice? Can the church potentially critique a plural society univocally and without reserve? Third, Pannenberg fails to determine how the church would derive a critique of society. How would we decide? How can we adjudicate our position and what tools, such as critical theory and source criticism, are at our disposal to do so ? In adopting these tools would we then be guilty of coming to our position with the very tools of modernity and secularity we should be critiquing? While I agree with Pannenberg that the church can and should both prevent the political organization and its representatives from claiming ultimate human significance" as well as to "stir the imagination for social action," it cannot provide what Pannenberg desires, namely," an opportunity to participate now in the ultimate destiny of human life."

[488] Derrida relies on the specter which takes several forms: the promise, an idea of justice, or a messianic without messianism and the specter of the future which haunts the present with it absence—"a paradoxical incorporation, the becoming-body, a certain phenomenal and carnal form of the spirit. It becomes, rather, some "thing" that remains difficult to name: neither soul nor body, and both one and the other." Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, p. 6.

[489] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 128.

it (Kant, Aristotle, Hegel, Plato), as "*anticipations*" conditioned by "contingency and time."[490] He writes,

> If appearance were to be understood as something that happens out of the essential future of that which appears, then its interpretation with reference to that which appears would only be possible by an anticipation of the future, as this anticipation characterizes the creative subjectivity of the imagination."[491]

Perhaps what Pannenberg is at pains to describe is the aporetic. A simplified explanation might be helpful. If the presence or essence of that which appears is relegated to the future, then the presence of that which appears has been anticipated, but its full presence, its full appearance deferred. This deferral is what, Pannenberg argues, constitutes subjectivity. The aporetic experience is constitutive of the identity of the *Kingdom of God*.

> In the oldest layers of the New Testament traditions of Jesus are sayings that speak of the presence of the Reign of God in the ministry of Jesus. These stand alongside sayings that differentiate the Reign of God as something future from the present ministry of Jesus. Whether and how both groups of sayings are to be reconciled is today a major exegetical question.[492]

Pannenberg's statement is critical for understanding the space he shares with *différance*. Two different descriptions of the reality of the *Kingdom of God*; the first as coterminous with Jesus Christ and the second, relegating the *Kingdom of God* to the future. Pannenberg critiques those theologians who would resolve the tension by saying one or the other group of biblical

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[490] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 141; For Plato, Pannenberg contends, the appearance was a "perceived form…shining through *in* the appearance, so that, for example, the idea of beauty is experienced in what is beautifully shaped." Hegel formulates a logical and fixed relationship between essence and appearance as reciprocal and argued that "Essence is…not behind or beyond appearance, but existence *is* appearance by virtue of the fact that it is essence which exists." pp. 108-109.

[491] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 141. "Such anticipation remains…ambiguous, because it can misrepresent the essential future…"p. 141 "At the center of Derrida's considerations, then, is a fundamental critique of presentism, of an existing order that presents itself as immutable. His critique is in the name of another future and a conception of justice beyond presence, beyond right and calculation. Derrida refers to such a critique as a "desert-like" messianic position, one without content and without an identifiable messiah, which he contrasts to the concrete, embodied, ultimately presentist character of eschatological, teleological, and apocalyptic positions." Moishe Postone, Deconstruction as Social Critique: Derrida on Marx and the New World Order: Review of *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International, History and Theory*, Vol. 37, No. 3, (October1998), p. 372.

[492] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 111.

sayings are inauthentic. Pannenberg proposes, "in the ministry of Jesus the futurity of the Reign of God became a power determining the present," recognizing a deferral of full presence whilst simultaneously acknowledging the future *kingdom* differs from the person of Jesus. Pannenberg observes:

> The difference of the Son from the Father, to which the christological doctrine holds fast, corresponds to the continuing difference in the message of Jesus between the futurity of the Reign of God and its presence in Jesus' ministry. And just as the future, precisely in its abiding difference from the present, is the basis for the present efficacy of God's Reign (and thus for its entrance into the present), so is the deity of Jesus himself, as that of the "son" based precisely on Jesus' holding fast to the difference between God the Father and himself.[493]

The *Kingdom of God* in Pannenberg's thinking becomes present because Jesus' ministry is grounded on a quasi-eschatological, quasi-transcendent reality. Quasi-eschatological because closer to Derrida than to many theologians, the content of this horizon is only determined by God's future reign with its horizon temporally and spatially deferred, the *Kingdom* in Pannenberg's view is never "absolutely self-identical and unconditionally present."[494] Pannenberg places futurity not only as constitutive of the *Kingdom of God* but of all reality juxtaposing what "is" from what is the "arrival of what is future."[495] His position could easily come from a Derridean scholar reflecting on *différance,*

> Both ways have their religio-historical backgrounds: the one coming from myth's orientation to primal time and the archetypical, the other from being grasped by an eschatological future. The first way is a well-beaten path and has been impressed on all our familiar habits of thought. The second way has until now been hardly considered…There is much to be said in favor of orienting philosophical thinking to that which always is. Above all, one may point to the possibility of forming general concepts and of making general structural statements that can be applied to the most diverse individuals and to changing situations. *And yet*, against this view is the truth that such a position, which sees what appears in the appearance only as a timeless universal, will inevitably underestimate or

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[493] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 112.
[494] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 114.
[495] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 117.

> totally fail to recognize the importance for our experience of reality of the contingently new, of the individual, and of time.[496]

Derrida, in developing the critique of meta-physics which appears in his work from the very beginning, attempting to preserve justice from totalizing discourse in latter essays, establishes the same pattern albeit with a different vocabulary and on a different register. For Derrida, recall the full presence of justice is always deferred into coming future (à venir) and that it always differs from present reality. These are the contours of Pannenberg's futurity as well. But some would wonder if Pannenberg is doing theo-logy at all. Like Derrida, detractors consistently critique Pannenberg's ontological oddity as being il-logical and lacking philosophical coherence.

5.1.4 Philosophical Philanderers!

Attempting to articulate these opposing realities causes some scholars serious reservations about adopting Pannenberg's notion of the future. The lack of "logical coherence," it is argued, greatly impacts Pannenberg's utility for "public theology."[497] The question arises whether Pannenberg's temporal arrangement can be held as valid even if it achieves its main goal to ontologically prioritize the future. Addressing the negative aspects of Pannenberg's work, that is, dividing present and future into categories of actual (present) and non-actual (future), One commentator, David Zehnder respectively asks whether

> the future itself has ontological independence over the past and can actually determine the course of history. In other words, he demands that the non-actual has ontological priority over the actual.[498]

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[496] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 117.
[497] David J. Zehnder, "The Origins and Limitations of Pannenberg's Eschatology," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, 53/1, (March 2010), p. 126.
[498] Zehnder, *Origins*, p. 127.

Zehnder goes on to plead that theologians should at all costs, "avoid obscurities that threaten theology's ability to communicate."[499] He adds,

> Kant and the tradition of cognitive philosophy have long demonstrated that knowledge cannot take place without our minds imposing their own a priori concepts onto objects that they perceive. Not only does this a priori conception contain certain laws of reason such as causality and noncontradiction, but it also imposes space and time.[500]

Setting aside the deployment of actual and non-actual determinations, we can begin to see, both by Pannenberg's orientation of time, as well as its critique, the same problem with which Derrida wrestles and is critiqued. Recall Derrida is adamant the "dislocation of the Greek logos"[501] is a constituent feature of *différance*. It is no surprise as these thinkers converge on the necessity of maintaining a future that is other, (and that still manages to "haunt" the present), the structure of their thought reveals striking similarities. Like Moltmann and Derrida, Pannenberg calls into question the chronological conception of time; all three thinkers are, at some level, at pains to defer the present's ontological status; all three resort to a future oriented conception of time around which language and thought is grounded—for Derrida it is mystical, for Pannenberg and Moltmann it is eschatological; all three insist on the provisionality of the structure of the present, and all three draw fire from theological and philosophical circles for setting aside the normative logocentric apparatus in order to do so.

Another congruity starts to emerge with Derrida in two respects. First, and most obviously, the futurity of the *Kingdom of God*, like that of justice, means that neither justice nor the *Kingdom* are ever complete; never present, ("justice, if such a thing exists") never a finished product, but always in process, always becoming and oriented toward the future. Derrida

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[499] Zehnder, *Origins*, p. 127 "To think of the future as prior to the past and the present is, at first, an exercise that threatens hernia of the mind," Braaten, p. 28.
[500] Zehnder, *Origins*, p. 127
[501] Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, p. 82.

makes this point about the structure of the law (and by extension society), while Pannenberg is at pains to make this point in light of the structures of the church,

> Christ points the Church toward the Kingdom of God that is beyond the Church. To the degree that the Church follows his pointing and heeds his reminder, the Kingdom of God will manifest itself through the Church. But note that this is quite different from attributing to the Church in its established structures the dignity of being the Kingdom of Christ.[502]

For Pannenberg, it is, then, imperative that the Church, oriented towards the future and to the coming Kingdom "recognize the provisional character of all ecclesiastical organizations."[503] Second, Pannenberg, like Derrida, sees the ambiguity of the futurity not only as a theory of interpretation or literature but an inescapable feature of reality and of meaning as such. So, like Derrida suggests, decisions which must be made in the face of this reality become themselves ambiguous. Pannenberg writes,

> This experience of the future's ambiguity points to an essential *indeterminateness* or vagueness in the events of nature. In this connection we speak of the contingency of events according to which, in a particular instant, something is decided that was only a possibility before. This contingency does not make planning impossible by any means, but is a presupposition in all efforts to calculate the causes of events and to make them humanly purposeful. Humility is the better part of valor in the face of the future which is not the prisoner of past and present.[504]

Compare this to Derrida who maintains decisions must pass through the "experience and experiment of the undecidable."[505] Both Pannenberg and Derrida recognize decisions, though necessary, rely on an undecidability, an aporetic reality, undergirding the decision in the first place—the impossible condition for a decision's possibility. Both Pannenberg and

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[502] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p 77. Elsewhere Panneberg states, "The futurity of the kingdom opens ever-new possibilities for action while still denying any human institution the glory of perfection that might warrant its making an absolute claim…Futurity does not mean powerless transcendency but an urgent and imminent future." p. 115.

[503] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 78.

[504] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 57. One might wonder if Pannenberg might not prefer the term undecidability over indeterminateness were he to have thought through Derrida's distinction.

[505] Niall Lucy, *A Derrida Dictionary*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2004,p. 149. See also Margrit Shildrick., "Relative Responsibilities," in *Women: A Cultural Review*, Vol: 14, No: 2, (2003), pp. 182-194 who argues "paradox and undecidability, emerge as the very elements that mobilize ethical response."

Derrida rely on this condition of the future not as a chronological future, but rather a universal structure of the future's immanence in the present—but this openness to the future has risks.

5.1.4 Danger, Danger

Congruent to Derrida, Pannenberg is concerned the future becomes overly predicable, planned, that is, the future becomes prisoner to the past/present. Pannenberg, in wondering how we "actually experience their relation to the future," describes humanity as "constantly confronted by the future as by a dark and uncertain power threatening our lives or promising their fulfillment."[506] Pannenberg recognized the risk to such openness, as did Derrida both in early and later writings, stating in 1974, "the future can only be anticipated in the form of an absolute danger,"[507] and twenty years later in *Specters of Marx*,

> Beyond right, and still more beyond juridicism, beyond morality, and still more beyond moralism, does not justice as relation to the other suppose on the contrary the irreducible excess of disjointure…that, in always risking the evil, expropriation, and injustice (*adikia*) against which there is no calculable insurance, would alone be able to *do justice* or to *render justice* to the other as other.[508]

Openness to the future for both Pannenberg and Derrida entails an unavoidable risk.

5.2 Implications for Ecclesiological Futurity

Though we will pick up the implications for ecclesiology in a subsequent chapter they are briefly introduced here, as they are made explicit at the beginning of *Theology and the Kingdom.* Pannenberg insists the *Kingdom of God* and the church cannot be coterminous.

> The theological identification of the Church with the Kingdom of Christ has all too often served the purposes of ecclesiastical officials who are not

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[506] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 56.
[507] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 5, "It is that which breaks absolutely with constituted normality and can only be proclaimed, *presented*, as a sort of monstrosity."
[508] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, p. 27.

> attuned to the Kingdom of God. Many Christians, especially church leaders, like to think they are in possession of the truth, or at least that they possess the ultimate criterion of truth. Because they feel themselves to be so indispensably related to the very Kingdom of Christ, they fail to recognize the provisional character all ecclesiastical organizations. They are unable to stand humbly before the coming kingdom of God."[509]

Provisionality for Pannenberg in no way suggests a political paralyzation, but rather empowers politics as a coming reality. Pannenberg's thinking of time, although perhaps philosophically different to Moltmann's *futurum* and *adventus*, agrees with Moltmann (and Derrida) in this fundamental regard: the future must possess a radical freedom from the past and present. To transpose this into Derrida's vocabulary: the very openness of the future allows politics (and the political decisions of the church) the possibility as a living, and not merely mechanical, entity. Political activity "is realized provisionally in the ever-renewed emergence of our striving in devotion to history's destiny."[510] Derrida would reject the suggestion there is a "destiny" if it is construed as a teleological direction or with preexistent content somehow protected from its own provisionality.[511] This is clearly not what Pannenberg suggests. The church's role, according to Pannenberg, is not to deliver a particular content of the future, but rather to allow the *Kingdom of God* to "stir the imagination,"[512] and to help us "perceive a transcendence that is engaged in the dynamics of the world...which helps us to gain critical distance from the present and still contains enthusiasm for the transformation of present."[513] This openness to the future requires,

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[509] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 78.
[510] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 81.
[511] "Is there not a messianic extremity, an eskhaton whose ultimate event (immediate rupture, unheard-of interruption, untimeliness of the infinite surprise, heterogeneity without accomplishment) can exceed, at each moment, the final term of a phusis, such as work, the production, and the telos of any history?" Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, p. 48.
[512] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 85.
[513] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 114.

Pannenberg argues, "criticism of established forms of social life and conflict with the forces of immobilism."[514]

Pannenberg understands the destabilization of the structures of the church (a.k.a. conflict) not as a distortion of the *Kingdom* but rather as a necessary means of destabilizing the perception of, permanence of, or the paucity of the *Kingdom of God* within the structures of church or state. "Conflict," he declares," gives birth to positive values and the birth pangs are the price to be paid."[515] Nor is Pannenberg naïve about the openness of the future; like Derrida's warning of political auto-immunity, he admits the future, as open, is a risk and can lead to "mutual destruction."[516] The threat the radically open future possesses has to be balanced, however, with the obverse, imposing a false purity about the *Kingdom of God* into ecclesiastical structures, "To hasten the unity of the Kingdom by imposing uniformity and destroying the pluralism of human existence."[517] Congruent to Derrida's insistence justice cannot claim existence for itself,[518] He wonders "whether the appearing reality (of the Kingdom of God) is to be understood more as the appearance of something that always is or as the arrival of what is future."[519] Pannenberg comes down on the side of deferred presence with Derrida.

5.3 Contrast with Moltmann and Agreement with Derrida

The eschatological theology of Pannenberg and Moltmann are congruent in many ways, and their work is often drawn together as complementary, especially in regard to the

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[514] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 116.
[515] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 125.
[516] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 125, he also rightly points out that the danger of mutual destruction is also an unavoidable danger when one attempts "to hasten the unity of the Kingdom by imposing uniformity and destroying the pluralism of human existence." p. 125.
[517] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 125.
[518] Derrida consistently questions justice's subjectivity, "Perhaps—one must [il faut] always say *perhaps* for justice." "Force of Law," p. 257, "Justice in itself, if such a thing exists...", "Force of Law," p. 243.
[519] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 141.

Kingdom of God.[520] However, the relationship between the person of Jesus and the *Kingdom of God* reveals serious differences between the two thinkers. For instance, Moltmann affirms that the person of Jesus—his teaching and ministry—is the ultimate expression of the *kingdom*. Jesus and God's *kingdom* are inextricably connected. Moltmann understands Jesus' preaching of the *kingdom* "is tied to his person and cannot be transferred to anyone else."[521] Harvie writes:

> This connection between Jesus' person and God's Kingdom leads Moltmann to explore Jesus within his social context, especially in his relationships with people through his proclamation and acts, particularly his healing. For Moltmann, Christ's proclamation and his acts must be seen together. In line with certain prophetic texts in Isaiah (Is. 52:7), Moltmann sees Jesus' proclamation as a herald of the Kingdom, but as one empowered and sent by the Spirit in unique ways. However, as the *unique* Son of God, Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom is inextricably linked with his person and mission in his relationship with his Father whom he called 'Abba.'[522]

Focused on this kingdom-oriented aspect of Moltmann's work, Harvie rightly asks,

> "If the kingdom and therefore the proclamation of the kingdom are bound to Christ's historical person, then it is left unclear how a continuing proclamation of God's eschatological consummation of the kingdom may still conduct a transformative work.[523]

Harvie continues the examination of Moltmann's conflation of Jesus and *Kingdom* by examining how, though Jesus' unique "acts, notably his healing and exorcisms." Creates

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[520] Timothy Harvie, "Living The Future: The Kingdom of God in the Theologies of Jürgen Moltmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg," International Journal of Systematic Theology Volume 10 Number 2 (April 2008); Nicholas Adams, "Eschatology Sacred and Profane: The Effects of Philosophy on Theology in Pannenberg, Rahner and Moltmann," International Journal of Systematic Theology, no. 3, (Nov 2000), pp. 286-92; Olson, Roger. "Trinity and Eschatology: the Historical Being of God in Jürgen Moltmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg," Scottish Journal of Theology, 36, (1983); Stephen Lakkis, *A New Hope: Wolfhart Pannenberg and the Natural Sciences on Time*, Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014; and Scott MacDougall, *More than Communion, Imagining an Eschatological Ecclesiology*, New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015, which will be examined closely in Chapter Six.

[521] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*, trans. R.A. Wilson and John Bowden, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993, pp. 121, 123.

[522] Harvie, "Living The Future," p. 42, emphasis added.

[523] Harvie, "Living The Future," p. 152.

"contradictions with the present circumstances of hurt and wounded people in a world still awaiting the fulfillment of God's promises."[524] Harvie asks legitimate questions,

> If the Kingdom of God is indissolubly connected with the person of Jesus of Nazareth in his historic specificity, how may the Kingdom be perceived to be working in the present? More precisely, how may theology understand the Kingdom of God to shape Christian action in the present if the promised Kingdom is manifest in Jesus Christ and still awaiting its consummation?[525]

Pannenberg, in contrast to Moltmann, articulates the *Kingdom* as something exterior and *other than* Jesus, towards which Jesus orients himself. In Pannenberg's thought, the *Kingdom of God* is not coterminous with Jesus' person, but rather is "dependent on whether the Son glorifies him and fulfils his lordship by fulfilling his mission."[526] Jesus' teaching and life are seen then, not as the *Kingdom* itself, but rather as signposts to a present/coming reality towards which Jesus chooses to be oriented and towards which the church may also be oriented, thus overcoming Harvie's concern above regarding waiting for a promise that has already been fully revealed:

> As Jesus in his earthly proclamation humbly distinguished himself from the Father and the future of his kingdom, so the church must distinguish its own existence from the future of the kingdom of God.[527]

In an article contrasting the eschatology of Moltmann and Pannenberg, Harvie confirms,

> Pannenberg views the kingdom present only in expectation aroused from proclamation, rather than materially present in Christ's person and acts in a penultimate sense…It would indeed appear that Jesus is the Christ in so far as he is determined by God's kingdom, rather than the kingdom (and therefore God's presence) being Christoform and thus determined by the person of Jesus. That is, the kingdom of God is present in Jesus 'person only inasmuch as he witnesses

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[524] Harvie, "Living The Future", p. 153, See Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and Implications of a Christian Eschatology*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993, pp. 103–4; and Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, pp. 104–5.
[525] Harvie, "Living The Future," p. 57, In developing this concern further please see Chapter Three highlighting the pneumatological aspects of Jesus' proclamation in Moltmann.
[526] Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 313.
[527] Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3, p. 32, see also *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2, p. 375.

> faithfully to the kingdom, rather than the kingdom being present to humanity as it draws near to the person of Christ.[528]

It is the *Kingdom's* absence of presence, especially as proclaimed by Jesus, which becomes significant and original in Pannenberg's thought (and congruent with Derrida's justice, 'if such a thing exists'). In *Systematic Theology, Volume II* Pannenberg focuses the implications of his argument around the authority of Jesus as distinct from the content of Jesus' message concerning God's *Kingdom*.[529] "In the debate about the figure of Jesus," Pannenberg insists, "it is of decisive importance that we should not put his person at the center. The center, rather, is God, the nearness of his rule."[530]

Similar to Derrida's specter, his concept of democracy (which is always to come), and especially his conception (or should we say abstraction) of justice, the absence/presence of the *Kingdom of God* is significant for understanding the eschatological aspect of Pannenberg's thought. Pannenberg's conception of the *Kingdom of God*, like Derrida's justice, isn't a presence, isn't a program, but confronts the present, especially the immobility or totality inherent in the present, and opens it to the unfolding reality of the future.

Pannenberg develops this argument to its consistent conclusion, which is that God's rule, as *Kingdom*, cannot be separated from God's *being;* the radical implication of which is, for Pannenberg, God cannot be said to exist.[531] Such existence is relegated to the future. Pannenberg writes, "the future is to be construed as the source of the wholeness of finite being, and its being as the anticipation of its future."[532] Pannenberg's relation of the *Kingdom of*

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[528] Harvie, "Living The Future," p. 154.
[529] Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. II, pp. 334-343
[530] Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. II, p. 335. Bruce Chilton describes several scholars who address this theme directly but, in agreement with Pannenberg, sees the failing of many scholars sharing "a single failing in common" in that they "transfer the kingdom's center of gravity from God himself to Christ, whether Christ as founder of the Church or Christ as the incarnate messiah." Chilton, *Kingdom*, p. 8.
[531] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 56.
[532] Pannenberg, *Metaphysics and the Idea of God*, p. 88.

God to Christ, reveals a closer proximity to Derrida's justice than does Moltmann. Remember Derrida is consistently reticent to allow the content of justice to rest complete in any decision (act), or any person: "at no time can one say *presently* that a decision is just...or that someone is just, and even less, '*I am just*'."[533] Using Pannenberg's argument, it is not possible to determine the *full* presence of the *Kingdom* (even in Jesus) as it must exist only in the future, it is coming, *the Kingdom à venir*. Derrida would be sympathetic to the inability to finally decide on the content or reveal the very presence of the *Kingdom of God* in the same way justice is absent even as it is present. Perhaps this is why the quasi-present-quasi-transcendent kingdom, like the haunting of justice, is only ever described by Jesus as "at hand," "has come near,"[534] or "not far."[535]

5.4 Pannenberg's Eschatological Ecclesiology

Pannenberg is clear the "eschatological splendor of the Christian Sunday should be evident in the liturgical life of the community."[536] He also laments this is not always the case. Grounding the church in this eschatological reality, as Pannenberg was committed, means, however, the identity and mission of the church has "transcended" the borders containing it—calling into question for Pannenberg the "particularity of its institutions."[537] Pannenberg says of the church:

> If in our ecclesiology we understand the Church in relation to the immanent Kingdom of God—as this was understood in early Christianity—our doctrine of the Church cannot begin from the viewpoint the Christian community is simply a group of individuals united by a common faith. The Church is not primarily an association of individuals of common religious interests and convictions.[538]

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[533] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 252.
[534] Mat. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; Mark 1:15; Luke 10:9; 10:11
[535] Mark 12:34
[536] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 91.
[537] Bryan P. Stone, *A Reader in Ecclesiology*, Oxford: Ashgate/Routledge, 2012, p. 248
[538] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 75.

The identity of the church, in this thinking, is not based on unity, communion, or *koinonia*, but rather, the identity of the church is itself in the space between present reality and future *Kingdom*. This eschatological pattern, following the pattern of *différance*, *defers* the full presence of the *Kingdom* into the future while simultaneously ensuring that the Church recognizes identity *differs* fundamentally from the same *Kingdom*.

Pannenberg, aligning closely to Derrida's argument, insists the unifying *Kingdom of God* cannot be enforced nor coerced by violence, nor represented by the structure of the law:

> This ultimate justice cannot be produced by a law in its abstract generality. While we must not despise the legal forms of life, neither should we think that, by themselves, they can provide ultimate justice…legal formulations must be subordinated to this justice. Laws serve justice, but they do not constitute justice."[539]

Pannenberg himself uses the structure of justice and the law as an analogy to the *Kingdom of God* and Church. He fully recognizes the social and political aspects of the *Kingdom of God*. He points out the historic attempts to realize such a reality and, rightly, demonstrates the gap between present circumstance and the *Kingdom* by admitting the "oppression and terror" (Derrida would more than likely refer to this as violence) which constitute such attempts. Also, like Derrida, he insists this is not bad news, but rather one may find in this the political chance of all historical progress,"[540] Pannenberg states this gap between Church and *Kingdom*

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[539] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 79. For Pannenberg, the content of this message of Jesus is the "creative power of the future" and finds its "actuality in terms of love." As with Moltmann, Pannenberg unequivocally affirms the concrete form love takes is justice. As justice, the love characterized by God's kingdom may not be relegated to an individual's subjectivity, but rather must take institutional form in ways reflecting the universal scope of God's immanent kingdom. "Justice and love are relevant not only to the individual but, primarily, to the structures of human interaction. Obviously, then, the Kingdom of God is pointedly political," Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 64.

[540] Derrida, "Force of Law", p. 242.

of God "does not paralyze political activity."[541] Quite the contrary. The new forms achieved will, in contrast with the ultimacy of God's *Kingdom*, turn out to be provisional and preliminary. They will in turn be called upon to give way to succeeding new forms. For Derrida, following Fish's "fresh judgement,"[542] is one of the social forms where the asymmetry between law and justice may be felt is in the courtroom where a judge "must not only follow a rule of law or general law (*loi*) but must also assume it, approve it, confirm its value, by a reinstitution act of interpretation, as if, at the limit, the law (loi) did not exist previously—as if the judge himself invented it in each case."[543]

5.5 Differences with *différance*

How to ensure a radically open future is not dictated merely by the facts of the past and present? As examined in the last section, Derrida names this difficulty explicitly in the three *aporias* found in "Force of Law,"[544] while Pannenberg relies on the ontological priority of the future over the present. The congruence of their arguments is evident in the structures of the present being called into question, made provisional. There are also some crucial differences. First, justice (Derrida) and the *Kingdom of God* (Pannenberg) both must *defer* a realized presence into the future so this future may *differ* from the past and present in substantive ways. Derrida wants to ensure the content of the future is not merely proleptically present but remains 'other'; while in Pannenberg's work we notice the presence works not from past to future but the other way around, thereby ensuring the same radically open future.

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[541] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 80. For Pannenberg, this structural emphasis in no way entails a loss of the role and freedom of the individual. See Pannenberg, *Ethics*, pp. 192–3.
[542] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 251, quoting Stanley Fish, "Force," *Doing What Comes Naturally*, p. 503-524.
[543] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 251.
[544] Derrida, "Force of Law," pp. 251-255.

Pannenberg asks," What warrant is there for speaking of the church as the new people of God or new Israel? Such language is justified only if the church is related essentially to the kingdom of God."[545] He is not naïve about the church's ability to deceive itself. Pannenberg points out the church's essential belonging to the *Kingdom of God* is always in danger of not recognizing the "provisional character of all ecclesial organizations." When an ecclesial community becomes so persuaded Pannenberg suggests God's reign can and will "manifest itself in the secular world outside, and frequently against, the Church."[546] Here one would be justified in referring to Derrida's distaste for the word "community" or the thing itself. Furthermore, Pannenberg understands well "definitive programs usually fail to recognize the preliminary character of even the most breathtaking achievements,"[547] and so must recognize the eschatological nature of the *Kingdom* and its orientation to the future. Pannenberg recognizes the "political forms of society" cannot possibly be final or ultimate. He also realizes the opposite danger, that the "Kingdom of God would be present in its completeness."[548] For instance, what he calls the "Marxist mistake," which Pannenberg insists is the "illusion that the truly humanistic form of society can be achieved definitively by man, and that it can be achieved in a short historical period."[549]

Pannenberg warns that although the transcendent *Kingdom of God* reminds us of the contingent reality of every organization of the Church and world, that "theologizing in this way about the Church is not the same thing as reshaping the Church along these lines."[550] One would be right to ask Pannenberg what the criteria might be which *would* allow for the

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[545] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 73.
[546] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 78.
[547] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 114.
[548] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 82
[549] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 82.
[550] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 82.

Church to recognize the "provisional character of all ecclesial organizations" within the organization itself, that is, the attempt to encode into the very political structure of the ecclesial community the gravity of the *Kingdom*.

Pannenberg approaches the necessity of practical material and political decisions on several occasions asking," But how do we know what is better as we move toward the best?"[551] In answering his own question he falls into the very trap he was trying to escape. for he determines the "measure by which we evaluate the transformations of political and social forms of life is the measure of love."[552] Love, Pannenberg maintains, is the "dynamic reality" and "ultimate norm" without addressing the myriad ways love as a heterogeneous and variegated political referent could be said to guide the decisions of the Church. By deploying 'love' as *the* transcendent attribute of an ultimate reality, Pannenberg is attempting to navigate another version of an *aporia*, and in this instance love becomes a stand in, a synonym for the *Kingdom* or for justice. Love, if such a thing exists, would be precisely the love that stands over and above any earthly reality, unable to be deconstructed in the same way justice, if such a thing exists, also may not be deconstructed.

Pannenberg makes no attempt to describe the church as complete or ultimate; only that the church remains necessary if and when it orients itself towards the future and the society along with it. The Church performs this in two ways, first, by challenging political or social structures or organizations which would claim "ultimate significance" and by stirring the "imagination for social action and to inspire the visions of social change."[553] When this same critique is applied directly to the church, Pannenberg chooses a quite narrow and protected version. He would agree change in the Church must occur, although he is only

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[551] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 81.
[552] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 81.
[553] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 85.

willing to discuss the overly authoritarian aspect of the church as it affects liturgy, authority, and scriptural interpretation which have produced "clericalism, dogmatism, persecutions, and divisions."[554] Second, he contends many have mistaken the Church's authoritarian form for its substance."[555] While this project affirms the protected and established interpretation of scripture or structure is ripe for asking what has been subverted in order to standardize the interpretation, more germane to this project is the exposing of the blind spot in Pannenberg's gaze of the Church, namely, his mechanism of deciding what to change in the church, how to change it, on what basis, and on whose authority. By questioning the validity of a centralized authority, the competing visions and alternate interpretations now compete in an open marketplace of sorts, but Pannenberg doesn't address the fundamental question about decisions themselves, which is why Derrida's latter political writing may fill the lacuna.

This work, he claims, would be important not just for the Church and the ability to interpret the Church in the light of the *Kingdom of God*, but also as a means to explore the church's relation to a wider society.

> The theological identification of the Church with the Kingdom of Christ has all too often served the purposes of ecclesiastical officials who are not attuned to the Kingdom of God…. Because they feel themselves to be so indispensably related to the very Kingdom of Christ, they fail to recognize the provisional character of all ecclesiastical organizations. They are unable to stand humbly before the coming Kingdom of God that is going to bring about the final future of the world. They are blinded to the ways in which even now, proleptically, the future manifests itself in the world (and not just in the Church, nor even always through the Church). Precisely because the Church mistakes herself for the present form of the Kingdom, God's rule has often had to manifest itself in the secular world outside, and frequently against, the church.[556]

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[554] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 93.
[555] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 93-94.
[556] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 78.

The inability of the Church to fully recognize or instantiate the *Kingdom of God* will be addressed more completely in the next chapter as this project focuses more directly on the ecclesial forms that might be practiced with this eschatology in mind. In *More than Communion: Imagining an Eschatological Ecclesiology*[557] the author, Scott MacDougall, examines the eschatological theology of Moltmann, Pannenberg and Joannes Baptist Metz (while also contrasting it to what MacDougall sees as the limited communion ecclesiology of John Milbank and John Zizioulas). He highlights the necessary futurity of the church, and the need for the present church to embrace more eschatological practices by attempting to create the space, in his case the "imagination," to allow for the gap between church and *Kingdom of God* to be explored, anticipated and ostensibly to *be* the object of our collective hope. As shall be suggested, the content of our future hope, when understood through the lens of present reality, provides an opportunity to explore some of the practical ways Derrida may be rightly said to make contributions to ecclesiology.

[557] Scott MacDougall, *More than Communion, Imagining an Eschatological Ecclesiology*, Bloomsbury, T&T Clark: London, New York, 2015.

SECTION THREE

The Church as Body Politic

CHAPTER SIX
Eschatology, Ecclesiology and *The Kingdom of God*

> *…the Messiah never comes, that the very idea of the Messiah would be destroyed were the Messiah, to everyone's embarrassment and consternation, to have the indiscretion to show up and actually become present. The very idea of the Messiah is that he is to come, à venir, someone coming, not that he would ever actually arrive. The very function of the messianic idea is to evoke or provoke the come, viens or venez, in the singular or the plural…The messianic idea turns on a certain structural openness, undecidability, unaccomplishment, nonoccurrence, noneventuality, which sees to it that, in contrast to the way things transpire in ordinary time, things are never finished, that the last word is never spoken. Were the Messiah ever to show up, that indiscretion would ruin the whole idea of the messianic.*[558] -John Caputo

6.1 Introduction

The above chapters examine the political thought of Jacques Derrida alongside the work of Jürgen Moltmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg, arguing the 'asymmetrical relationship' described by Derrida between law and justice is analogous to the relationship between Church and *The Kingdom of God.* In order to deploy the above insights into the landscape of ecclesiology, specifically Anglican ecclesiology, it is necessary to explicate the ecclesial dimensions of current Anglican thought and the structure and polity it undergirds. To this end, the two chapters in this section address current Anglican ecclesial self-reflection on two registers. Chapter Six commences with a close reading of a recent publication which argues for the need to augment current ecclesiology, which the author Scott MacDougall rightly suggests is grounded as Communion or *koinonia,* with an ecclesiology which is more eschatologically robust. MacDougall provides an excellent critique of the shortfalls of communion ecclesiology, and starts to lay the groundwork for an eschatological ecclesiology

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[558] John Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida,* p. 78.

to ameliorate them. For purposes of both comparing and contrasting MacDougall's project, it will be brought alongside some key aspects of Derrida's thought, so certain minute but critical blindspots might be exposed. These blindspots are not as much a critique of his excellent work but rather flaws inherent in the structure MacDougall uncritically adopts from communion ecclesiology and which Derrida helps in exposing. MacDougall focuses a good deal of attention on the Anglican Communion's commissions and reports in order to elaborate and illustrate his argument, the examination of which shall lay the groundwork for the following chapter highlighting the *Kingdom of God* as an eschatological reality—whether present or absent—in several Anglican reports of the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, and detail the ecclesial implications of Derrida's thought.

6.2 More Than Communion: Imagining an Eschatological Ecclesiology

MacDougall's recent publication, *More Than Communion: Imagining an Eschatological Ecclesiology*, deserves attention before proceeding further, for several reasons. First, it is an excellent argument distinguishing between a communion ecclesiology that MacDougall highlights through the work of John Milbank and John Zizioulas, and eschatological ecclesiology on which he relies on Wolfhart Pannenberg, Jürgen Moltmann and Joannes Baptist Metz as the corrective. Second, he situates communion ecclesiology within a broad spectrum of practices and traditions, specifically in what Miroslav Volf names the "episcopal churches" Anglican, Roman Catholic, Orthodox,[559] while simultaneously providing a robust critique of the communion ecclesiologies he rightly claims are dominant and insufficient.

[559] Volf, *After Our Likeness*, p. 13, quoted from MacDougall, *More Than Communion*, p. 3. Episcopal Churches specifically means "those churches in which the office of the episcopate is affirmed for strictly dogmatic rather than practical reasons."

Third, he critiques communion ecclesiology in ways congruent with this project, namely the ontologicalization of the church. MacDougall writes,

> Ecclesiologies of communion often stem from or at the very least reflect a metaphysics and ontology of a Neoplatonic cast. Under such a view, churches are ontoglogized—or slotted into a Neoplatonic metaphysical system at the level of Being—in such a way that its existence is held to derive principally through its participation (in ways variously theorized) in divine Being rather than existing as a theological entity, to be sure, but nevertheless equally as a social and historical—that is, eminently human—phenomena or event.[560]

As shall be highlighted, MacDougall wishes not to reduce or eliminate communion ecclesiologies but rather to contribute something to them, "pushing the ecclesiologies of communion further by advocating for the 'more,' for a richer eschatological imagination and a concomitantly richer eschatological ecclesiology of communion."[561]

6.3 Critiques of κοινωνία/communio- ecclesiologies

MacDougall, currently teaching in an Episcopal seminary, Church Divinity School of the Pacific, makes three principal critiques of communion ecclesiology: the eschatological critique, the relational critique, and the practical critique.[562] The latter two address concerns about communion in respect to the Trinity and Eucharist, and call into question an ecclesiology grounded solely by *koinonia.* This chapter focuses on the critique dealing directly with eschatology as it is the most germane to the argument in focus here.

6.3.1 The Eschatological Critique

MacDougall's eschatological critique revolves around the conviction that a "robust, tensive, and dynamic eschatology is often missing in communion ecclesiologies," which

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[560] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 36.
[561] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 10.
[562] MacDougall, *Communion*, pp. 40-58.

contribute to "ill effects upon the manner in which ecclesial life is conceptualized and practiced."[563] He develops four descriptions of failed or anemic eschatologies:

ecclesiocentric, the overly realized, Johannine, and restorationist eschatologies. The first, *ecclesiocentric eschatology*, envisions the church as an example of, or foretaste of, perfection. Rather than recognizing the church "neither exists for itself nor proclaims itself" the *ecclesiocentric eschatology* suggests the church will be brought to its final perfection, as church: claiming the *basileia* for itself and hence "present itself as the realized kingdom of God over against the world."[564] McDougal is rightly hesitant to allow the finite church to be too subsumed into the eschaton—even as a perfected entity. But, MacDougall offers as a corrective, "The Church is finite: it has by itself and for itself no eschatological ultimacy."[565] This will be an important point to which we will return later.

The second eschatological category, and perhaps the most common, is the *overly realized eschatology* which "tends to loosen the tension between the present and future."[566] He points to "eucharistic language overemphasizing the sacrament of communion as the 'banquet of the kingdom'," [567] and rightly maintains that in many instances the "tension between present and future" is lost—thus eliminating any sense of futurity. As an example of this over-realized eschatology MacDougall suggests the *Windsor Report*, a theological report of The Anglican Communion which shall be examined below, is guilty of such an over-reach:

> In the Windsor Report, immediately following a statement that does have the character of a properly tentative eschatology, there is mention of the

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[563] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 40.
[564] Jan Milic Lochman, "Church and World in the Light of the Kingdom of God," in Gennadios Limouris, ed., *Church Kingdom World: The Church as Mystery and Prophetic Sign*, Faith and Order paper 130, Geneva, Switzerland: World Council of Churches, 1986, p. 69, quoted in MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 43.
[565] Christoph Schwäble, "The Church as a Cultural Space: Eschatology and Ecclesiology," in John Polkinghorne and Michael Welker, eds, *The End of the World and the Ends of God: Science and Theology on Eschatology*, Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000, p. 114 quoted from MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 41.
[566] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 44.
[567] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 44.

> "kingdom" (inexplicably placed in scare quotes) having 'been accomplished,' rather than announced or even inaugurated, in Jesus Christ.[568]

In over-realizing the eschaton there is the temptation, as MacDougall rightly points out, to seek the unity of the church as a present rather than a future reality. In such an ecclesiology, communion or *koinonia*, understood only in the present tense, forgets the structure of a promise on which the church is properly grounded, and is then unable to anticipate the future towards which the *Kingdom of God* must be oriented.

Third, MacDougall examines *Johannine eschatolog*y whereby the "conflation of communion, eucharist, realized eschatology, and the Johannine corpus could hardly be more clear."[569] Referring to the Anglican-Orthodox statement *The church of the Triune God*, "St. John makes it clear that the fellowship or communion (koinonia) of life in the Church reflects the communion that is the divine life itself, the life of the Trinity."[570]

> By contrast, an ecclesial statement with a robust, properly tensive eschatology, such as Communion, Conflict, and Hope, does not open with a Johannine text or calls to "unity," but with the effects of the September 11, 2001 terror attacks and the "images of fragmentation, isolation and violence…"[571]

MacDougall presents "a tensive, less realized eschatology, one that engages the synoptic gospels and authentic letters of Paul, using these to supplement-not to deny, deemphasize, or demote-the theological importance of the eschatological images that derived from the Johannine literature."[572]

Finally, MacDougall addresses a *restorationist eschatology* that, he claims underemphasizes, or worse, ignores the "new…unfolding."[573] The *restorationist eschatology* emphasizes the importance of returning to "something prior" or a "restored humanity, as if

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[568] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 44, Windsor Report, para. 56, see pp. 43-45.
[569] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 48.
[570] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 47.
[571] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 48.
[572] MacDougall, *Communion,* p. 48.
[573] MacDougall, *Communion,* p. 48.

God's purposes once had been fully realized and the key to bringing this about again is a return to something prior."[574] Of course, as he points out, "Valuing the newness of relationship and encounter is much less likely if eschatology is conceived as restoration."[575]

MacDougall maps the many pitfalls one encounters in current eschatological thinking pertaining to the Church, which, in many ways, are congruent to the critique being leveled in this thesis. He continues in his second and third chapters, by deploying these insights directly on two thinkers, John Zizioulas and John Milbank, to highlight the problems he encounters in their work regarding a properly tensive eschatology, especially as they pertain to the relationship between church and the world.[576]

MacDougall's stated goal is to nurture,

> an eschatological imagination that stresses the balance of and the tension between the eschatological already and not yet produces an understanding of church that values communion as highly as the current models do but adds back to communion ecclesiology aspects of church that those approaches often miss.[577]

To this end, MacDougall realizes any eschatology must be mindful of several hazards, namely,

> it must contend with the Kantian critique of metaphysics without allowing itself to be cowed by it. It must confidently refute the charge of vulgarity, a reproach often leveled at anything concerned with materiality and the body, which an eschatology informed by the resurrection hope must necessarily be. And it must guard itself against projectionist metaphysical idolatry, the tendency to which, given its under-determination—its sketchiness—eschatology can be prone.[578]

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[574] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 49.
[575] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 48.
[576] "Zizioulas' and Milbank's eschatological ecclesiologies create problematic relationships between church and world. Zizioulas' church is located *beyond* the world, outside of history, focused so exclusively on the "heavenly" communion that concern for the material realities of earthly life almost slipped out of view. Milbank's church is situated over against the world, the only earthly manifestation of an "ontology of peace" that stands as a communal bulwark of divine harmony against the juggernaut of nihilistic atomization effected by the "ontology of violence" that permeates the post modern, secular world. *Communion*, p. 141.
[577] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 141.
[578] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 143. See also John E. Thiel, "For What May We Hope? Thoughts on the Eschatological Imagination," Theological Studies 67, (2006), pp. 517-541.

While being mindful of these many hazards, perhaps there are a few more inherent in the ecclesiologies he critiques, namely the *habitus*, the structure and dispositions, from which both Zizioulas and Milbank operate. MacDougall desires to bring "an eschatological imagination" to the work of these thinkers and to the Church, "that stresses the balance of and the tension between the eschatological already and not yet."[579] The predicament that needs to be addressed for MacDougall is one we have already been examining closely in the asymmetrical relationship Derrida posits between his own already and not yet, namely law and justice. Once it is established how MacDougall operates within this logic, I shall bring his work alongside Derrida for the opportunity to see how the Derridean logic may be deployed in his specific case.

MacDougall, following Trevor Hart, develops four critical functions of the eschatological imagination which will now be examined. They are: *1. making the absent present, 2. discerning the meaning of things, 3. envisioning new life, and 4. activating hope.* MacDougall, informed by the eschatological theology of Moltmann and Pannenberg (and Metz), deploys their thought adroitly to fill the void he perceives within current ecclesial theology. However, as will be exposed, MacDougall, though he thoroughly understands how and why the Church benefits by adopting a more eschatological framework, falls into the same trap he is trying to avoid. *More than Communion* is a powerful and erudite argument that makes an immense contribution to theology. So why is a Derridean critique of this work necessary? Like Moltmann and Pannenberg, MacDougall attempts to orient the church toward the *Kingdom of God* as the *sine qua non* of any ecclesiology. Derrida is a powerful ally for MacDougall's project because he buttresses the argument that communion ecclesiology, based as it is on essentialist

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[579] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 141.

and rational structures, must be called into question, but Derrida also pushes further into an awareness of the shortfalls of unambiguous self-reflection in the attempt to articulate either the essence of institutions or the discourse which undergirds it. The *Kingdom of God*, which must remain quasi-transcendental and radically exterior, may not simply be invoked or imagined with such sufficiency that it becomes a working political or ecclesial stratagem. Derrida's contribution is not merely negative in the case of MacDougall's argument. Derrida's wish is not merely to dispense with the subject, in this case the church, but rather to displace it.

In the anatomy of MacDougall's argument, he allows the supportive logic of communion ecclesiology to stand, and augments or supplements it with eschatology. It is a very charitable way of introducing his theological amendments, but structurally problematic. What is being called into question is the ground, the very essence of the community *vis-à-vis* the coming *Kingdom*. To allow the communal subject, in this case the church, its own subjectivity is to already privilege, and concretize the identity being called into question. Further, the dialectical relationship between church and *Kingdom of God*, if it follows the asymmetrical pattern for which Derrida argues in "Force of Law," cannot be thought of as a binary opposites. To begin with, this dualism is already to reduce the radical otherness of the coming kingdom either to a transcendent category or an overly realized eschatology.

Derrida can be helpful to this particular eschatological thought because, like MacDougall, Derrida seeks to displace subjectivity of law, democracy, friendship, messiah, so the future, the *a-venir*, is free to be radically other. For Derrida *différance* "governs nothing, reigns over nothing, and nowhere exercises any authority... Not only is there no kingdom of différance, but différance instigates the subversion of every kingdom."[580]

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[580] Derrida, *The Margins of Philosophy*, p. 22.

In other words to transpose ecclesial language onto Derrida's framework: "There is an *avenir* for *The Kingdom of God* and there is no *Kingdom of God* except to the degree that some event is possible which, as an event, exceeds calculation, rules, programs, anticipations."[581] The *Kingdom of God*, then, is an other and impossible event, unable to be predicted or determined in advance, ungraspable, open and other. The content of the *Kingdom of God* in Derrida's treatment, though mindful of both the les revenants—those who return— and les arrivants—those who come[582], must be not be adjudicated in any final anticipatory way. It is formally open and must remain so. This allows and encourages the eschatological imagination MacDougall seeks: in fact, it is its condition of possibility, because the *Kingdom* will always be open to reinterpretation and disputation.[583] MacDougall knows this as well. His opening statement about the eschatological imagination is that it is,

> literally and figuratively—sketchy. Scripturally speaking, our theology of 'the end' is based upon a mosaic of fragmentary, non-harmonious 'pictures' that attempt the express this ultimately inexpressible divine mystery.[584]

Immediately, however, he begins a litany of caveats. Following the work of Garrett Green, MacDougall conditions the imagination of the *Kingdom* by relying on the very 'foundations' such a *Kingdom* will call into question. According to MacDougall the eschatological imagination *must* be both "rooted in theological tradition, especially scripture," and "conditioned by and built on the eschatological imaginations of our theological forebears."[585] Although MacDougall is clear that with whatever sources the eschatology begins, "eschatologies can only ever be provisional, as they are built on the partial and the

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[581] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 257.
[582] This theme will be picked up again in the conclusion: 8.2 "Legacy and Inheritance: Eschatology's Relation to the Past," p. 254.
[583] This is not to suggest an indeterminacy of textual or ecclesial interpretation because hermeneutics occurs within a horizon of meaning and expectation where différance allows for the otherness of, in this case the *Kingdom of God*, which lays outside of this horizon. This is what Moltmann calls *Adventus*.
[584] MacDougall, *Communion*, pp. 142-143.
[585] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 144. See also Garret Green, Imagining the Future," in David Fergusson and Marcel Sarot, eds., *The Future as God's Gift: Explorations in Christian Eschatology*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000.

fragmentary from the start."[586] One may ask why preference exists for beginning the imaginative eschatological journey with the content of past orthodoxy? If the tradition from which one *must* begin such a task is given even provisional or condition prioritization, is the risk not to trap the radically new, or totally other within the horizon of present or past expectation? These questions are not explicitly answered by MacDougall as he explains the four functions of the "Theological Role of Eschatological Imagination," but this chapter hopes to address these questions in light of the aporetic tensions which may not be resolved.

6.4 Four Critical Functions

MacDougall commences his description of the eschatological imagination by adopting and deploying the work of Trevor Hart who suggests there are four functions of the theological role of Eschatological imagination which include: *1. making the absent present, 2. discerning the meaning of things, 3. envisioning new life, and 4. activating hope.* I will quote this section at length.

> The first (function) is *making the absent present*. Because eschatology deals with a reality that is not yet existent, imagination is the only way to make the subject of eschatology present. Moreover, in making this future present, in its contrast to present reality, its imaginative appearing puts the present under judgment for its deficits vis-à-vis the imagined future. Consistent with the provisionality of eschatology, however, this is a disciplined, careful exercise of imagination that guards against the projection and idolatry that stems from over-certainty.[587]
>
> A second critical function of the eschatological imagination is *discerning the meaning of things*. Envisioning the ultimate "end," in the teleological and eschatological senses, allows us to grasp their ultimate significance (an insight that goes back to Aristotle), which influences greatly how they are understood and experienced in the present. Imagining the future creates a temporal "space" that we "inhabit," a meaningful space for living into what is envisioned. Imagining the future as amounting to nothing can render the world and life and it meaningless and changeless; imagining it as good and destined for divine perfection can effect the opposite.

[586] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 144.
[587] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 144.

> The eschatological imagination also supplies a way of *envisioning new life*. As with its meaning making function, this has distinct implications for living in the present. The reality of the future fulfillment of the promises of God—not its content, which is in large part unknowable, but the fact of its promised coming capture[s] our imagination and… open[s] up for us a new vision of God's promise and the present it illuminates, thereby stimulating alternative ways of being in the world in the present, [and] living towards the future…"
>
> Finally, imagination is the seat of the human capacity for *activating hope*. Pannenberg writes that through our eschatological imagination we hope for "the impossible," a condition of perfection not only for ourselves but for all of creation, one we know no human power can effect.[588]

At first glance, MacDougall's project might seem to a align with Derrida—making the absent present as a form of specter or hauntology; future fulfillment as the structure of a promise; impossibility as the condition of the possible—the similarities provide an excellent opportunity to distinguish between the Derridean concepts they might suggest and the considerable structural differences between the two.

The crucial divergence here is the way MacDougall conceives of the difference between, for instance, the present, which for MacDougall is provisional, but suggests a self-aware entity fully grasped, and the absent which he allows to be already extant in the present. Though MacDougall wishes to defend the Church from ontologicalization of the present, which he carefully does, he conceives of eschatology as an object of cognition or imagination which may be deployed onto the ecclesial framework as a program or solution. That the coming future for MacDougall is able to be imagined as, at least, speculative imagination indicates that at least some aspect of the present's content has already been prioritized as always/already *Kingdom*. The future, in this instance, can be thought of, imagined, its teleological end construed and ultimate purposes understood. In other words, it seems vaguely possible to envision its "ultimate end." Following Derrida it is imperative to attempt to establish within an eschatological framework that the difference between past/present and

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[588] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 145-146.

future is not and can not be an observable or objectified relation between two opposed realities. Rather, for Derrida, difference is the underlying constitutive property. For Derrida, the identity of the present, despite its provisionality may not be conceived except as unstable due to the differed and deferred presence, which Derrida argues must be its intrinsic character. The binary construction at play in MacDougall's project between church/world (which largely comes from the starting point of Zizioulas and Milbank) present/future is itself an object of the metaphysics which MacDougall is attempting to call into question in the name of an eschatological imagination. The problem, at least in a Derridean framework, is the imagination seems to be a program or imaginative calculation which one may apply in order to proceed towards the imagined future. If the imagined future is constituted on "theological tradition, especially scripture," one must ask if the radical otherness of the future, on which Pannenberg and Moltmann (and Derrida) insist, hasn't already been reduced to sameness. As Simon Critshley asks, "can philosophical dialectics approach the otherness of the other, that is to say, can it entertain an alterity that cannot be comprehended or reduced to an object of cognition or recognition?"[589] To deploy Derrida's *différance* in a nutshell, if the future *Kingdom of God* can be expected, predicted, or imagined, even provisionally, then one has already reduced it to the present (it doesn't defer) and eliminated its claim to be truly other (it doesn't differ).

This does not mean Derrida can't be helpful given the task as defined by MacDougall. In fact, the "Five marks of an eschatological ecclesiology" MacDougall suggests lend themselves to a Derridean reading, but, as will be shown, the devil is in the details. If it is claimed eschatology describes a tensive or open future, MacDougall's next step, then it is imperative to allow the future to remain radically open and not foreclosed as a mere

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[589] Simon Critchley, *Ethics, Politics, Subjectivity*, 1999, p7.

extension of the present, even as it is being related to the present. This is the understanding of the *Kingdom of God* this project seeks to forward.

6.5 Five marks of an eschatological ecclesiology

The five marks of an eschatological ecclesiology, according to MacDougall, are: ***tensiveness, openness, risk, trust, and hope.***[590] Describing these five marks in turn allow this thesis to elaborate how each may be refined by Derrida's *différance*.

6.5.1 Tensiveness

Tensiveness, on the surface, appears to already have the flavor of a Derridean concept. For MacDougall, tensiveness "disallows reaching closure on the 'definitive' character of the church"; bars all dualisms (temporal, ethical, ontological, hierarchical, sexual, and so on); the future cannot be "decisively articulated," and produces perspectives that are always revisable and necessarily to be revised," as well as a disruption of "comfortable sureties, known truths, and theoretical systems."[591] MacDougall's eschatology revolves around the "commitment to a real future based on divine promise and an *already-not yet* structure."[592] MacDougall wishes to preserve an asymmetrical relationship between present and future which "preserves the balance between continuity and discontinuity eschatology demands,"[593] but the *already-not yet* character subverts this preservation in his argument. In describing the eschatological church as an *already-not yet*, MacDougall must privilege at least some content of the *Kingdom* as being a "partial yet authentic foretaste."[594] He continues,

> Church, as anticipation of the basileia, attempts to demonstrate what it conceives the realization of the four-fold communion to be like, invites

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[590] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 186.
[591] MacDougall, *Communion*, pp. 186-187.
[592] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 159, emphasis added.
[593] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 167.
[594] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 179.

> people to participate in it in a specific and intentional way, and, in so doing, becomes a genuine opening through which God's future is able to enter the world even now…[595]

MacDougall maintains both "already" and "not yet" are necessary, or else, he asks, "How would we know what to strive for if we did not already possess something of it?"[596] Here the concept of Moltmann's *adventus* is invoked as "the coming perfection that prefigures the basileia rather than realizes it." Recall that for Moltmann, *Adventus* requires the *novum,* the new, something which is not only impossible, but unexpected and the completely other; a future beyond our conception or conceiving, something which by "the standard of present experience appears impossible."[597] Possession of the *basileia*, even in part, would disallow *Adventus* as the concept to describe the future, as it would render the future as an antecedent in the past/present—something which Moltmann (and Derrida) would both reject.

6.5.2 Openness

Openness, the second of MacDougall's five marks of Eschatological Ecclesiology, attempts to clarify the first mark, *tensiveness*. In so doing, MacDougall struggles to overcome the very concept he puts at the center of his project, namely, the *already-not yet*. The openness he articulates is "undetermined," "impossible," "non-existent," and "unperceived."[598] Picking up the aforementioned *novum* in Moltmann, MacDougall now emphasizes the new thing (Isaiah 43:19) must be a constituent part of the *Kingdom of God*:

> Without openness to the new, there can be no hope. Openness to the new is precisely the reason why Metz eschews metaphysics, which he understands to be an inherently closed system, unable to express the novelty of the future… Similarly, Nikolaos Loudovikos claims that Platonic forms of eschatology, generally characterized by imagining the return of an individual subject to

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[595] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 179-180.
[596] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 188, quoting Dumitru Staniloae, *Theology and the Church*, Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980, p. 176.
[597] Moltmann, *Theology*, p. 103, Moltmann adds 'For what follows cf. the definitions of promise by W. Zimmerli, 'Verheissung und Erfullung', EvTh 12, (1952), pp. 38 ff.
[598] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 192.

> some type of original state through contemplation, do not generally emphasize the new.[599]

MacDougall, in the face of the new, the *novum*, suggests the "coming of the basileia is a messy affair" replete with "shock and surprise."[600] For some reason *openness*, as a quality of *tensiveness*, seems already to have shed the *already-not yet* structure in favor of a church with a truly open future which attempts to address the metaphysic and Platonic concerns above. MacDougall writes,

> When a church considers itself to be, *even if only to a certain extent*, the basileia, or considers itself and not the world is destined for eschatological perfection, it blinds itself to the fact that it has strayed from its appointed vocation, and that it can no longer anticipate the basileia.[601]

It seems *openness,* the second of the five marks of an eschatological ecclesiology, has attempted to correct some of the shortfalls *tensivenss* introduced. *Openness* not only provides for a powerful corrective to *tensiveness*, but also brings into sharp focus the provisional character of the church which necessarily has competing and conflicting versions of what church is (and there will be sharp divisions about what are and are not *Kingdom* values), thereby ensuring the nature of the church is not communion, but rather fragmentation. "Fragmentation is the real character of existence under present conditions. Unity is an eschatological reality…When unity is imposed, however, it is not only 'artificial' but deeply problematic theologically."[602] Conflict then may be construed to be fertile ground and not to be avoided. Here MacDougall makes his point in reference to the Anglican Communion,

> *Communion, Conflict, and Hope*, the only report to emerge out of the ecclesiological controversies within the Anglican Communion that puts the communion ideal into conversation with the inevitability of conflict and the

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[599] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 193, Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 92; John Marsden, "The Political Theology of Johannes Baptist Matz," Heythrop Journal 53, (2012), pp. 440-452; Nikolaos Loudovikos, *A Eucharistic Ontology:Maximus the Confessor's Eschatological Ontology of Being as Dialogical Reciprocity*, Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2010.
[600] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 195.
[601] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 199, emphasis added.
[602] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 200.

> eschatology of hope, make precisely this difficult and messy point—and has been ignored on account of it.

Communion, Conflict, and Hope will be examined further in the next section, but for now it is important to note the discontinuity of description between tensiveness and openness. The anticipated eschatology of the *already-not yet* structure that grounds this project is trying to mitigate several bad eschatologies, named above. However, it is crucial the 'already anticipated' is not allowed to foreclose the future. MacDougall, relying on Moltmann and Pannenberg realizes this, but has not thought through the implications of the *already-not yet* structure upon which his eschatology depends. This is why Derrida's contribution is vitally important. Though imaginations are critically important for overcoming the shortfalls of any theology or ecclesiology that would keep us chained to a non-fruitful status quo, our imaginations cannot be a replacement for Moltmann's *Adventus,* for it will always be imagining the *Futurum*, even an imaginative one. *Adventus*, in order to remain within the conditions Moltmann establishes, must remain other. Adventus must, adopting Derrida's *différance*, differ. The immediate presence of any decision resulting from our ecclesial imagination, no matter how radially new or inventive, must, following Derrida and Pannenberg, *defer* to the ontological priority of the future.

6.5.3 Risk

Risk, as another mark of eschatological ecclesiology, entails being "open to the emergence of the new" even as it "places us in tremendously uncomfortable positions."[603] Even as we await the promised future, we must recognize we do so with no certainty, there is no "script for our as yet unwritten future," and the promise

> provides no rules to govern our lives in the meantime…Yet, we must commit to acting in church and world knowing full well that we will shoot wide of the target, or, in theological terms, sin. Each time we act, we do so knowing that we might at some point realize that what we thought was the best way to

[603] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 201.

> proceed was not and come to regret what we did. To varying degrees, every act is imbued with that risk.[604]

Congruent with Derrida, recall that for something to be a decision, it has to risk being wrong. This is why Derrida says every decision, in order to be decision, has to pass through what he calls the "experience and experiment of the undecidable."[605] As has been shown already, both Pannenberg and Moltmann are clear about the unavoidable risk inherent in eschatological thinking. Pannenberg refers to this risk as one that can lead to "mutual destruction."[606] Moltmann, in describing eschatological hope writes, "life in hope entails risk and leads one into danger and confirmation, disappointment and surprise."[607] Derrida's contribution to this risk is, of course, autoimmunity which not only risks the decision but also the very structure of the entirety of the ecclesial body.

6.5.4 Trust

MacDougall's next mark of eschatological ecclesiology is trust. "Faith is not certitude but trust."[608] Trust in the future promise allows the church to accept the risks "informed by an eschatological theologia crucis."[609] The position opposite the necessary trust causes churches "to bar the doors against the risks entailed in anticipating the basileia leading to the 'sin' of a 'distrust' that 'results in building defenses against the future.'"[610]

> Lacking trust and relying on what we think we know, we impose structures and forms on church on the basis of extant doctrine and tradition, rather than allowing them to emerge as constructive dialogue with our always-revisable doctrines and traditions. In such instances, the structures of the church can

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[604] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 201.
[605] Lucy, N., *A Derrida Dictionary*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2004, p. 149. See also Margrit Shildrick., "Relative Responsibilities," in *Women: A Cultural Review*, Vol: 14, No: 2, (2003), pp. 182-194 who argues that "paradox and undecidability, emerge as the very elements that mobilize ethical response."
[606] Pannenberg, *Theology*, p. 125.
[607] Moltmann, *Experiment Hope*, p. 187.
[608] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 205.
[609] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 205.
[610] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 205, quoting Neuhaus, "Wolfhart Pannenberg," p. 26.

> easily become clericalist, dogmatic, and schismatic. These qualities, which Pannenberg calls, "signs of authoritarianism…"

Moreover, MacDougall insists tradition is also relativized by the *Kingdom of God.* "Historical forms of church have arisen for what were sound theological reasons, but that does not make them binding on churches today."[611] The "trust" MacDougall is developing is in line with Derridean criticism of certainty. In *Politics of Friendship* Derrida addresses precisely this theme in describing the passage between two "absolutely heterogeneous orders," namely, certainty and faith:

> this act of faith belongs—it must belong—to what is it incalculable in decision. We know that this break with calculable reliability and with the assurance of certainty—in truth, with knowledge—is ordained by the very structure of confidence or of credence as faith.[612]

Calling into question the very structure undergirding the identity of the church— doctrine, traditions—MacDougall aligns himself with a certain political deconstruction which not only alludes to Derrida, but may be served by deploying deconstruction's insights onto the landscape of eschatological ecclesiology being pursued in his argument.

6.5.5 Hope

Even as we examine Hope, the final mark of eschatological ecclesiology, one may continue to sense even without reference to Derrida there are parallels. MacDougall describes this hope "not as the unrealized potential of immanent material processes, but the potential of the transcendent, open future."[613] Of course, this is the thrust of Moltmann's distinction between hope and optimism in which hope allows for what optimism cannot, namely, "Hope connects the proximate and the ultimate."[614] In this space between, hope

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[611] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 210.
[612] Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*, p. 16.
[613] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 211.
[614] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 211, referencing Moltmann, *Ethics of Hope*, p. 3.

becomes tenable for Derrida. Hope in the messiah to come "as opposed to le futur, which is nothing but the future present."[615] For Derrida,

> the future to come… that is nothing other than the affirmation itself, the "yes"insofar as it is the condition of all promises or of all hope, of all awaiting, of all performativity, of all opening towards the future, whatever it may be, for science, for religion.[616]

MacDougall recognizes this hope as eschatological and perceives "the vast difference between the present and the future, not temporally but qualitatively."[617] The structure of this hope then, MacDougall is clear, cannot be imposed "as a political and economic goal,"[618] but on the other hand, neither can politics and economics be separated from the *Kingdom of God*.

In the five marks of eschatological ecclesiology examined above, one may perceive that the *already-not yet* structure, which certainly is preferred to all of the alternative eschatological offerings rightly critiqued by MacDougall (ecclesiocentric, realized, Johannine, restorationist), may not, in the final accounting, provide everything required to ensure characteristics of eschatological ecclesiology (tensiveness, openness, risk, trust, hope) sufficiently serve the church's future. All the marks examined above are compromised by the very structure of the *already-not yet* as it predetermines the future and fails to respect the "infinite alterity" which the *Kingdom of God*, like justice, must be. *The Kingdom of God*, to transpose Derrida's language of democracy, "will always keep within it, and it must do so, this is absolutely undetermined messianic hope at its heart, this eschatological relation to the to-come of an event and of a singularity, of an alterity that cannot be anticipated. Awaiting without the horizon of the wait."[619]

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[615] Derrida, *Archive*, p. 109.
[616] Derrida, *Archive*, p. 109.
[617] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 212.
[618] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 212, quoting Metz, *Faith in History*, p. 79.
[619] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, p. 65.

6.6 Conclusion

The fundamental myopia in MacDougall's project is not in any way a shortsightedness of the importance of eschatology to theology and ecclesiology, but rather treating the gap between the historic now and the eschatological future as a problem to be solved (or at least thought about) rather than the very structure of the church. The Church, unable to finally or fully determine the vision of what the *Kingdom of God* will or should be, must face the implications of this *aporia*.

The argument deployed against *More than Communion* is in a similar position as Derrida critiquing Benjamin (and Levinas). In many ways our projects agree. MacDougall argues koinonia ecclesiology, which comprises the ground of current theological reflection, is insufficient. There is an important point which should be made. In the same way Derrida critiques Benjamin, for example, the 'logic' of eschatology which rends time and defies dialectic is not something which may be merely added to current ecclesiology as MacDougall figures. As we communicate our imaginative thoughts, ideas, even our yearnings, with language, as long as we make the *Kingdom* an object of cognitive desire, it is already a re-presentation, a pre-existing, though perhaps more excellent, version of the same. Despite the imagination's ability to think or intuit the genuinely new, the impossible, as those imaginations are formed into decisions within the polity of the church through calculative reasoning, they become the very structure of polity and theology which they had originally called into question. In other words, imagination creates the space, the openness, but not the content of the *Kingdom of God;* nor can imagination bridge the gap between self and other. This is the important point Derrida makes contra Levinas.

Levinas' *A-Dieu* desires to reimagine transcendence, not as eschatological or mystical but as an immediate ethical relation, writing,

> The transcendence of the movement towards God (à-Dieu) moves as if across a gap that no genus, not even an empty form, can ever span and both this transcendence and the relation to the absolute or the Infinite have an ethical significance, that is to say that their meaning is to be found in the proximity of the other man, he who is a stranger and who may be naked, destitute and undesirable; but also in his face, that undesirable face which summons me, which concerns me, which puts me into question.[620]

Transcendence as *Other* understood not as opposed to immanence, but rather for Levinas the *other* is immanent, immediate, proximal as the face of the other. Derrida's *Adieu* to Levinas points out, however, that Levinas' creation of other as a totally other, pure alterity, is still predicated on a distinction between self and *other* and which Derrida wishes to name *aporia* and thus subvert.

In the same manner, McDougall understands the eschatological imagination as the solution to a problem rather than the recognition of an inescapable reality. Although MacDougall rightly defers the actualization of the *basileia* into the future, he relies on a "divine promise and an *already-not yet* structure." He assumes the gap between the *theologia crucis* (already) and the *theologia gloriae* (not-yet) may be bridged by the eschatological imagination, without recognizing the tensiveness and openness he desires is foreclosed by the presence of the future in the present as an "already." Further, MacDougall asserts, "not only is it possible to anticipate the communion that is promised and the *theologia gloriae* that attends on it, but it is our responsibility to do so."[621] While the responsibility to act and decide are themes upon which Derrida insists, it is not possible to anticipate with the determinative force upon which MacDougall bases his ecclesiology. The impulse to insist on a historicized rather than transcendent *basileia* is well founded. Moltmann and Pannenberg work hard to ensure the same, and MacDougall recognizes this. He claims it is necessary "to counteract any

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[620] Emmanuel Levinas, "Beyond Intentionality," in *Philosophy in France Today*, ed. Alan Montefiore, New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 113-114.
[621] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 159-160.

eschatology that would stave off the radical effects of the eschatological promise to some distant and therefore, for all intents and purposes, presently irrelevant future."[622] The already in the *already-not yet* eschatological ecclesiology, however, seems, at critical points, to disallow the future to be radically *other* and instead, is drawn back into the past/present as its derivative. The otherness of the *Kingdom of God* cannot be sold short. MacDougall's project succeeds on many levels, yet, like both Pannenberg' (*rückwirkend*) and Moltmann (*Adventus*), Derrida can be a powerful ally as we continue to hold the *Kingdom of God* as the absent and present foundation of the church. We cannot let our imagination move too easily from the *theologia gloriea* into cognition; from actualized into imaginary as it may have the same deleterious effects upon the ecclesia which imagines the *basiliea* cast in the church's own image. This theme appears again in the final chapter when examing the unimagined Adventus presented in the resurrection narrtives. Notably, it is not eschatological imagination which reveals the risen Christ at the tomb to Mary, in Emmaus to Cleopas or on the Sea of Tiberias beach to Simon Peter and the other disciples.[623] Perhaps our imaginations will help us draw near to certain aspects of our future, but the horizon itself must remain precisely that, a horizon, and not an object of (imaginatve) cognition.

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[622] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 160.

[623] The escatological imagination can not anticipate the unexpected, nor recognize the impossible – this is the work of the Adventus which must make room for revelation. In the conclusion I explore Heidegger's distinction between *Offenbarung* (revelation) and *Offenbarkeit* (revealability).

CHAPTER SEVEN
The Kingdom of God in Anglican Ecclesiology

> *The Jewish Bible, the Christian Old Testament, is fundamentally a literature of hope…The dominant intellectual tradition of the West, that of hellenistic philosophy out of which has come the ground of reasonableness for science, is not a tradition of hope. It is a tradition of order which seeks to discern, understand, decipher, know, and, if possible, master and control…We are in a season where the urge for order seems nearly to squeeze out the voice of hope.*[624]
>
> -Walter Brueggemann

7.1 Introduction to Anglican Ecclesiology

Having argued there is a congruence between the eschatological *Kingdom* theology of both Moltmann and Pannenberg and the asymmetrical and aporetic relationship Derrida develops between justice and law, this project will now appraise several theological reports commissioned by the Anglican Communion. Looking through the lens of this asymmetrical and eschatological relationship established over the last chapters, the aim of this chapter is to highlight several features of Derrida's thought exposed within Anglicanism, especially within the several commissioned reports recently published by the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission (IATDC). To achieve this, the three concepts explicated in prior chapters— ***aporia*, undecidability, and autoimmunity** — along with the theological correlates explored in Moltmann and Pannenberg, will now be deployed to reveal the areas of recent Anglican theology that may be understood through a Derridean lens. The relevance of these concepts to the ecclesial patterns reflected below shall be evidence Derrida's political thought makes a substantive contribution to ecclesiology, and thus furthers Derrida's contribution to theology *in toto*. The Derridean concepts highlighted in this chapter are:

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[624] Walter Brueggemann, *Hope Within History*, Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1987, p. 72-73.

7.1.1 *Aporia*

This chapter shall accentuate the *aporia* present in the asymmetrical relationship between church and *Kingdom* in these Anglican theological reports. Dealing with documents which neither reference Derrida, nor employ his thought, it shall be necessary to pay close attention to those descriptions directly addressing the relationship of *Kingdom* and Church within the reports themselves. For instance, in the first report, *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, the authors rely heavily on the word "tension" to describe this relation as a "tension which is built into Christian existence (and) must be admitted, explored, and *understood*."[625] It shall be argued, the transposition from "tension" which is "understood," to *aporia*, which defies being easily manipulated as a mere object of cognition, reveals opportunities to explore the Church and its theological self-articulation in new ways. Derrida's aporetic structure provides a conceptual apparatus that better aligns with an eschatological ecclesiology, and may help think through the implications of both benefits and problems of this structure. In this scheme, the *Kingdom of God* is "other," not in the sense of a true distinction, "logically regulated and masterable,"[626] but rather "other" in the sense the Church is moving between itself and the K*ingdom of God*, on which the Church ostensibly is founded. Therefore, the Church must always oscillate between itself as identifiable and self-aware, and on the other hand, a Church which is other than itself; dependent on a *Kingdom of God* which is both its ground and its other; both friend and stranger.

7.1.2 Undecidability

Recalling *différance* is a semantically ambivalent neologism designating the condition of possibility of meaning through the simultaneous acts of differing (synchronic difference) and

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[625] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 9, ¶24, emphasis added.
[626] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 250.

deferring (diachronic difference), this chapter attempts to accentuate the otherness, especially the futurity in the IATDC's reports. Attempts to dismiss the *Kingdom of God* as merely final, as opposed to future reality, or alternatively a heavenly realm, will be exposed. It shall also be the goal to highlight those instances where the *Kingdom of God* is structured in a more fundamentally futural and temporally deferred, yet present way. This is the impossible future which Moltmann calls *Adventus*, and Derrida names the messianic "or messianicity without messianism," which fully embraces concepts like justice, yet without determined predicates; an opening to the future or to the coming of the other as the advent of justice, but "without horizon of expectation and without prophetic prefiguration."[627]

7.1.3 Autoimmunity

Amongst some of the latter theological reports produced by the IATDC for the Anglican Communion, the emphasis on The *Kingdom of God* shifts considerably. So, too, will the conceptual apparatus used to examine Derrida's thought in light of ecclesial reflection. Although *For the Sake of the Kingdom* and *Communion, Conflict and Hope* deal explicitly with the notion of the *Kingdom of God*, and thus the church's provisionality, *The Virginia Report* and *The Windsor Report* predominantly regard the church as a legal entity without a robust eschatological ecclesiology, diminishing the church's own future into what Derrida would name law and Moltmann *futurum*. In order to highlight why these reports shift the ground of Anglican reflection, it is helpful to deploy Derrida's borrowed biological term, autoimmunity. Noting that auto-immunity is the biological condition in which a living organism, in seeking

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[627] Derrida, *Acts of Religion*, p. 56, also *Specters of Marx*, p. 59, Derrida, in deploying the messianic as irreducible to deconstruction refers to "the formality of a structural messianism, a messianism without religion, even a messianic without messianism, an idea of justice-which we distinguish from law or right and even from human rights-an idea of democracy-which we distinguish from its current concept and from its determined predicates today."

its own protection tries to immunize itself against its own "immunity,"[628] Derrida lifts this concept into a political dimension. The "strange illogical logic,"[629] which exemplifies autoimmunity means that any political entity, including the church, must corrupt itself and threaten itself in order to protect itself against threats."[630] There is a clear desire on the part of certain Anglican reports to immunize against such threats in the form of the instruments of unity and the proposal of an Anglican Covenant.[631] Derrida's insights, far from being threatening themselves to political or communal undertakings, are, in fact, helpful tools for critical reflection by revealing the relationship between the community itself and what is considered other and futural. All ecclesial reflection is accomplished in this context.

Seeing the Anglican Church through the three lenses above shall be an opportunity to reflect on the ground of the Church's theology and ecclesiology, as well as provide some insights not only for Anglicanism, but for any Church undertaking self-reflection. The Church must be radically open to *The Kingdom of God* and its own future as informed by this *Kingdom*. Recognition and embrace of this provisionality might well ameliorate the tensions extant in the Church in times of radical change, open dissent, and any challenge to the *status quo*. The effect of the *aporia* which permeates all institutions is undecidability. The experience of the ecclesial decision is, to borrow from Derrida's words, where any "decision between church and K*ingdom of God* is never insured by a rule." These *aporia* will be exposed in the text to bring to the surface any attempt at a positive and totalizing discourse, assuming a pure

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[628] Derrida, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror,* Interview with Giovanna Borradori, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003. p. 94.
[629] Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 123.
[630] Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 40.
[631] The 1978 Lambeth Conference called for the creation of an Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, and this commission in 1986 produced a report, For the Sake of the Kingdom. The 1988 Lambeth Conference called for a "common declaration" that would assist a coherent doctrinal identity for the Communion. While this was never agreed or adopted, there are some echoes of this call in the 2004 proposal of the Windsor Report (paragraphs 113-120) that provinces should bind themselves to each other by an inter-Anglican covenant.

accounting of the *Kingdom of God* as an original referent which would ignore or suppress the acknowledgement of what is outside and other-than the church. Therefore, any decision the Church undertakes, in light of the *Kingdom of God* must pass through a crucible of the *undecidable* and must "deliver itself over to the impossible decision while taking account of law and rules."[632] Instances will be highlighted within these commissioned reports of the IATDC where the necessary provisionality and conditionality are either present within the text or, in most cases, absent.

7.2 Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission

Bruce Kaye, a constituent member of the IATDC that authored *Communion, Conflict and Hope: The Kuala Lumpur Report*, points out the vital importance of the context in which the theological task was undertaken.

> Ever since Schleiermacher in the eighteenth century and Barth last century it has been difficult if not impossible to contemplate doing theology without recognising the dynamic relationship between the ecclesial tradition out of which the theological task is being enterprised and the shape and direction of the theological task itself.[633]

The IATDC began its exploration into the relation of Church and *Kingdom* by situating itself within its Anglican context. One of the papers prepared for the beginning of the commission's work elaborated on the legacy of Anglican theology, especially referring to one of its original thinkers, Richard Hooker (1554-1600). The Anglian theological method is situated over and against two rival dogmatic systems represented by Thomas Aquinas and John Calvin. For Aquinas the church has, and is, the absolute authority: *Roma locuta cause finita*, i.e., when Rome

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[632] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 252.
[633] Bruce Kaye, "The Role of Eschatology in Recent Anglican Ecclesiology: A study of three recent International Doctrine Commission Reports," A Paper delivered at the Conference of the Australian and New Zealand Association for Theological Studies, Melbourne (July 2010). Kaye was a member of the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission from 2002-2007.

makes a pronouncement, there is no further argument. John Calvin for his part propagated the slogan s*ola scriptura*, i.e., The Bible Alone. Thus both arrived at what they believed to be infallible truth by the method of logical deduction and exclusivism."[634] Opposed to this, Hooker, and the Anglicanism he envisioned, would "opt for the method of broad, open, empirical religion…which produces neither certainty nor a system."[635]

As the IATDC gathered to begin consideration of the relation of Church and *Kingdom*, they began by pondering what precisely the *Kingdom* is along several dichotomies: "rule/vulnerability, present/future, revealed/hidden, death/resurrection."[636] What became clear from the outset were several assumptions that were to guide the thinking of the IATDC towards the completion of their first paper. The first was the admission that, "We cannot write programmes of the Kingdom for each other."[637] Despite this insight the group also maintains the Church is "an instrument of the Kingdom," and "at moments Church and Kingdom coincide."[638] One aspect of the *Kingdom's* presence the group suggests is that "where Jesus is, there is the Kingdom, & vice versa."[639] Coincident with this statement they also affirm "the Kingdom in its fullest sense is the manifesting of God's rule."[640] The IATDC often addresses the *Kingdom of God* as a subject that may be contemplated, even as a topic for consideration, however, as a working ecclesial concept *Kingdom* is kept confined at the margins. Even when it is being addressed directly, the conflict between *Kingdom* and Church is

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[634] John Pobee, "Creation in the Bible and Tradition," IATDC/29, 2460, p. 2.
[635] John Pobee, "Creation in the Bible and Tradition," IATDC/29, 2460, p. 2; It is the contention of this paper that this fundamental insight allows for the possibility of a certain eschatological ecclesiology to be present even when more systematic or positivist desires reveal themselves in strained political or ecclesial climates.
[636] IATDC, "Church and Kingdom," Group Reports, Unpublished notes from IATDC gathering, IATDC number 3-5, pg. 2.
[637] IATDC, "Church and Kingdom," 3-5, pg. 6.
[638] Martin Mbwana, "The Church in Relation to the Kingdom," IATDC 41, p. 4, who also insists, "The primary task of the Church is the proclamatlon of the Kingdom of God in the world." p. 5. See also, IATDC, Church and Kingdom, number 3-5, pg. 9.
[639] IATDC, "Church and Kingdom," Group Reports, pg. 9.
[640] IATDC, "Church and Kingdom," Group Reports, pg. 9.

clearly understood as something which is undesirable, something which should be ideally overcome.

7.2.1 Theologies of Liberation

One of the models presented to think through the complex relationship between Church and *Kingdom* is offered by Rowan Williams, one of the original members of the IATDC. He suggests theologies of liberation advance some important ideas, namely the attempt to recognize the social structures the church inhabits. Failing to do so, says Williams (following Gutierrez), "is to continue in unacknowledged bondage to the existing social order:"[641]

> Theology is not an 'innocent' thing, with no political constraints or effects. Like all systems of ideas, it is in fact operating in somebody's interest, and so long as it is blind to this truth it will operate in the interests of the status quo (because it is in the interest of the status quo not to be questioned, analyzed and relativized). But once theologians grasp their dependence upon social and economic realities, once they accept the relativizing of social order by social and economic analysis, they can now decide whether or not to be consciously allied with existing power structures: there is no possible neutral stance.[642]

Williams continues with two important insights. First, this means of doing theology "is likely to exist in societies where acute conflict is already present."[643] Pointing to Latin America and Liberation Theology as a current and sharp challenge to the status quo and the prevailing power structures it critiques, Williams contends liberation theologies within Anglican structures are the "response to stimulus…quite outside Anglicanism, rather than any kind of development of native Anglican themes."[644]

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[641] Rowan Williams, "Liberation and the Political and Social Dimension of Christian Mission," IATDC/27, 2453, p. 5.
[642] Rowan Williams, "Liberation and the Political," IATDC, 27, 2453, p. 6.
[643] Rowan Williams, "Liberation and the Political," IATDC/27, 2453, p. 6.
[644] Rowan Williams, "Liberation and the Political," IATDC/27, 2453, p. 12.

Second, this insight might be "threatening to the theologian (especially the theologian living in a less visibly conflict-ridden context) because it is rightly seen as relativizing theological utterances and thus undermining religious certainties."[645] This is not bad, he insists, with the liberation theologians, "theologies ought to be relative to their context…Theological certainty is inseparable from commitment to a particular human project; theological truth is inseparable from the durability of that project. There is no other kind of absoluteness in our history."[646] The IATDC would, in their preliminary work be asked to consider the relative nature of theology in reference to Heidegger's hermeneutic circle which established:

> any interpretation never is the apprehension of something arrived at without a supposition. More than that: any interpretation that seeks understanding has to have already understood that which is going to interpret" (Sein un Zeit). This means, of course, that we work (and think) inside a world vision already given, through which reality manifests itself as such. Heidegger speaks also of the need of a "pre-comprehension" that can be understood as our possibility for understanding, rooted, by one side, in our rational potentialities, and, by the other, in our historical conditions of existence…Interpretation is, then, dependent on the place where we are and on the interests we have.[647]

Acknowledging the importance of this insight, the relationship between the *Kingdom of God* and the Anglican Communion can now be undertaken.

7.3 Eschatology and the Anglican Communion

The word Anglican originates in e*cclesia anglicana*, a medieval Latin phrase dating to the Magna Carta (1215) although the 'Anglican Communion 'only achieves political reality when, in 1867, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Charles Longley, invited seventy-six Anglican

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[645] Rowan Williams, "Liberation and the Political," IATDC/27, 2453, p. 7.
[646] Rowan Williams, "Liberation and the Political," IATDC/27, 2453, p. 7-8.
[647] Jaci C Maraschin, "Theology of Liberation in Latin America, Liberation and the Political and Social dimension of Christian Mission, IATDC 33, 2480, p. 9.

bishops to attend the first Lambeth Conference.[648] Though this chapter examines the ecclesial structure of the Anglican communion developed from that first gathering, critiquing the structures of the Anglican Communion directly shall not be undertaken. Neither shall it be undertaken to examine such bodies as the "Worldwide Instruments of Communion,"[649] nor Anglican concepts such as interdependence, subsidiarity, councilarity, synodality, autonomy, consultation. Although these entities contribute to Anglican Communion identity in a central and important way, the focus of this argument is to begin to describe the church as an eschatological reality and not merely as a political/social construct. The structures and identity of Anglicanism will be called into question by a reading of eschatological ecclesiology which understands the *Kingdom of God* as the central reality upon which the church is promised. Furthermore, in the same way Derrida argues justice both destabilizes and founds the law, the church is both founded and destabilized by the *Kingdom of God.*

The challenge to distill precisely the meaning of 'Anglican theology' remains "too contested a phenomenon to allow for any straightforward presentation."[650] Focusing on one aspect of the church's self-reflection, this thesis addresses the reports of the IATDC as they provide insight into the theological landscape of Anglicanism, and more directly, as the Anglican Communion has undertaken explicitly to assist in ecclesial reflection and,—as in the *Windsor Report*—to make up the backbone of ecclesial decisions and action.

The IATDC reports were released over many years—the first commission was published in 1987—and cover diverse topics such as, The *Kingdom of God*, conflict, diversity.

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[648] https://www.anglicancommunion.org/structures/what-is-the-anglican-communion.aspx

[649] The four instruments of communion (unity) are: the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Conference, The Anglican Consultative Council, The Primate's Meeting. The four, in that order, were described as "the worldwide instruments of Communion" in The Virginia Report: the Report of the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission. The Virginia Report was commissioned by the 1988 Lambeth Conference, following a crisis in communion occasioned by the proposal of the Episcopal Church to consecrate a woman bishop.

[650] Mark Chapman, *Anglican Theology*, p. 5, cf. "Anglican theology is both highly complex and highly contested." p. 171.

women's ordination, and human sexuality, among others. This chapter intends to stay focused predominately on the matter of the *Kingdom's* relation to the church which, according to the first report, *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, is what "Jesus the Christ stood for and stands for."[651] In short, the *Kingdom of God* is the dominant theme, and although the reports make conclusions on many current affairs, this reflection is guided by the desire to align the church with God's purposes, i.e., *The Kingdom of God.*[652]

For an Anglican group like the IATDC, operating within the bounds of canon, creed, and councils, to make ecclesiological determinations is hardly surprising, but radically different determinations may be supported by the same limits—Derrida calls them 'guardrails'—is worth considering for a moment. One of the ways Derrida describes *différance* is as "differential conditions of determinable history."[653] Diversity, and the theology which undergirds it, which Anglicans generally refer to as their 'breadth', has, in large part, determined the contours of Anglican theology from the Elizabethan settlement. To assume Hooker's three legged stool of scripture, tradition, and reason could ever produce a final, stable, single determinable meaning has never been a problematic concern for Anglicans. What is significant here, and analogous to Derrida's "Force of Law" argument of asymmetrical relationality, is in the same way justice exerts its pressure on a predetermined law, the *Kingdom of God* exerts itself on the determinable elements of all church structure.

If the canon or 'guardrails' of Anglican theology in this instance are the basic structures of our common life, such as the Bible and the ecumenical creeds, these elements

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[651] "What Jesus the Christ stood for and stands for, however, is the Kingdom of God. The Gospels make it plain that the theme and promise of Jesus' ministry, the redemptive reality which he proclaimed, was the *[B]asileia tou theou*, the 'reign' or 'kingship' or 'Kingdom' of God." *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 10, ¶ 28.

[652] Much of the focus of the IATDC's reports is not as much the *Kingdom* as the problem of diversity currently within the body of Anglicanism itself. Recognizing, however, the presence of the *Kingdom of God* itself is first perceived not at the center of the structure but at the margins, these interrelated concerns will both be at many points the same reflection.

[653] Derrida, *Limited* p. 145.

comprise the determinable aspects upon which the *Kingdom* may exert pressure. The "meaning of both is determined by Jesus Christ and his ministry, death, and resurrection and his coming as judge and deliverer," and thus is a "central point of reference for Christians as they seek to understand God, themselves, and their world."[654] The Church's relationship to God's Kingdom is established by God in Christ and through Christ. Yet, this relationship raises a fundamental question: "How is this self-disclosure mediated to us?"[655] More crucially for the Church's identity, how can an ecclesiology be founded upon a self-disclosure that remains veiled—like the eschaton, like justice, like the *Kingdom of God*? A community that takes seriously the conditions of eschatology as the *sine qua non* of its identity necessarily enters into this aporia, for its very existence—far from being stable or coherent—is called into question.

A church founded upon an eschatological basis must, ontologically speaking, not only accept but also proclaim the radical contingency of its own identity—an unsettling reality often acknowledged only begrudgingly. Surely such an ecclesiology, grounded in provisionality and open to an eschatological *Kingdom*, will often feel as though its identity and structure are being called into question, and hence, destabilized. Could the experience of the Kingdom be not only an encounter with the impossible but, from an ecclesial perspective, a sacred moment of chaos, dissent, and protest—where the Church's structured identity yields to the coming Kingdom? How might such a determination be made?

The analog in Derrida's work is that the law must always be willing to be subordinated to that which is its other: justice. As this chapter will show, the very foundations of ecclesial reflection may preclude, or at least problematize, the possibility of reflecting upon this eschatological demand.

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[654] *For the Sake of the Kingdom, p. 6-7, ¶ 15.*
[655] *For the Sake of the Kingdom, p. 7, ¶ 15.*

Martyn Percy highlights this reality responding to one of the IATDC's report, *The Gift of Authority.* Published by the Anglican Communion in conjunction with the Roman Catholic church, Percy points out, "A number of recent statements about the Church have tended to Platonize the koinonia of the Church (concrete reality), identifying it as a parallel reflection of the koinonia of the Holy Trinity (ideal form). The result "demonizes all conflict and division as inimical to the life of the Church."[656] The unwillingness to accept conflict and division as anything other than sinful has been, as shall be argued, one area Derrida's aporetic thought would challenge through his insistence that law, and its analogs, must be open to the destabilizing structure that justice, *Kingdom*, might exert and the Spirit/Ghost haunts.

7.4 Anglican Reports, Communiqués and Documents

Major reports from the IATDC have been published roughly every ten years interspersed with communiqués and letters. The major reports include: *For the Sake of the Kingdom* (1987), *The Virginia Report* (1997), *The Windsor Report* (2004) including the invited response: *To Set Our Hope on Christ: A Response to the Invitation of Windsor* (2005), *Communion, Conflict and Hope: The Kuala Lumpur Report* (2008), and the proposed *Anglican Covenant* (2009).[657] These reports, though responding to specific requests made by contemporary Anglican bodies, do not represent or establish any definitive Anglican theology, nor do they propose a structure of Anglicanism which could be said to be fixed or final. They do, however, provide

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[656] Martyn Percy, "The Gift of Authority in the Church of England: sketching a contextual theology," *Unpacking the Gift: Anglican Resources for Theological Reflection on The Gift of Authority*, edited by Peter Fisher, London: Church House Publishing, 2002, p. 85.

[657] *The Windsor Report* (paragraphs 113-120) proposes that provinces should bind themselves to each other by an inter-Anglican covenant. The Joint Standing Committee of the Primates and of the Anglican Consultative Council commissioned a study paper on the idea in March 2005, *Towards an Anglican Covenant.*
In May (2006), the Joint Standing Committee asked the Archbishop of Canterbury to establish a Covenant Design Group to further the project. This group created three drafts: *The Nassau Draft* (2007) and the *St. Andrew's Draft* 2008 and the *Ridley-Cambridge Draft* (2009).

something of a stable ground, a perspective through which Anglican theology may be examined specifically around its relation to the *Kingdom of God*.

7.4.1 For the Sake of the Kingdom (1987)

At the Anglican Consultative Council's (ACC) third meeting in Trinidad in 1976 a resolution was put forward and passed establishing a commission to "consider theological and doctrinal questions concerning the Anglican Communion as a whole."[658] Over the next forty years the work of this group comprised a central role in the theological thought of the global Anglican Communion. The representatives were comprised of bishops and theologians from around the Anglican communion and would be called The Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission (IATDC). Meeting every two years from their 1981 meeting in England, the IATDC had the initial brief of studying "the relationship between the Church of God as experienced and the *Kingdom of God* as anticipated."[659] They took this to mean both the relations between church and *Kingdom* as well as the "complex relations between the Gospel and social or cultural forms in the light of the central assertion of the Gospel itself—that the Kingdom of God is at hand."[660] The IATDC began their study with the following questions:

> What is meant by the rule, or kingship, or Kingdom of God? Where and how is it manifested? Can the saving presence of God—and so the presence of his Kingdom—be discerned in the insights and teachings of non-Christian cultures with the religious traditions or ways of life which they embody? Can the Kingdom be identified in social and political movements which arise without reference to the church and sometimes in conflict with it?[661]

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[658] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, Preface, p. 2
[659] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 2.
[660] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 3.
[661] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 6, being a study of the relationship between the Church of God as experienced and the Kingdom of God as anticipated with special reference to the diverse and changing cultural contexts in

Even though it was mandated from the start that this commission would not be any "supreme authority for the Anglican Communion on disputed questions of doctrine," which wouldn't be in keeping with "our Anglican understanding of dispersed authority,"[662] it was clear from the first paragraph this study was to help "form a *common mind* on a variety of pressing theological and doctrinal issues" and clarify a *"theology of Anglican identity."*[663] Despite the institutional parameters of the initial brief, *For the Sake of the Kingdom* manages to situate itself not merely as an articulation of the Anglican Communion, but also the reality of the church struggling to determine its proper relationship to the eschatological *Kingdom of God*.

The commission, being sensitive to the wide cultural situations in which Anglicanism is practiced, defined its own task thus,

> as an exploration of the complex relations between the Gospel and social or cultural forms in the light of the central assertion of the Gospel itself—that the Kingdom of God is at hand; that what God wills to effect through the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus is a *new realization* of his rule in the hearts and lives of human beings. The Kingdom is promised, then, but (as it has been put) what happens is the church. Every Christian theologian thus has the job of striving to understand the unity and the distinction of church and Kingdom. So our examination of Gospel and culture, church and context, has had to return constantly to the question of the meaning of that promised kingdom.[664]

Accepting the premise that any realization or recognition of the *Kingdom of God* is indeed a "new realization" and therefore not a part of the structure of the status quo, requires contemplating how such a transformation may take place and by what means. *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, accepting the provisionality of the theological task, asks the following questions:

> Can the Kingdom be identified in social and political movements which arise without reference to the church and sometimes in conflict with it? What is the

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which the Gospel is proclaimed, received, and lived." *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, preface; The issue for the commission was "the problem of the relation between church and culture" while also noting (without reference) that "various liberation theologies have seemed to suggest that the kingdom of God could be achieved as an earthly reality." 1.1 Introduction, p. 3.

[662] *For the Sake of the Kingdom,* preface.

[663] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, 1. emphasis added.

[664] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, 1.4, emphasis added.

> role of the church itself in relation to God's Kingdom? Does it in itself embody the Kingdom in such a way that we can say the new creation is actually present in the church now? Or would it be better to speak of the church as a sign of the Kingdom, pointing to it, directing and urging us towards it?[665]

As the IATDC gathered in Woking, England from varied cultures around the world, it became apparent, as the group considered the questions put to them, that one of the hurdles to speaking about the *Kingdom's* relation to the church was one of diversity, both theirs and the Anglican Church as a whole. The problematic relationship between the *Kingdom of God* and the church, especially the Anglican Church, experienced in radically different contexts brought to light that diversity would play a big part in defining precisely what the "problem" is. In order to be hospitable to all participants the commission "tried not to assume the absolute priority of any one traditional style or 'canon' beyond the Bible, the ecumenical creeds, and the basic structures of our sacramental life," as well as seeking a "language that does not speak only to and for those familiar with the classical voices of Augustine, Aquinas, Hooker, Barth, and so on."[666]

It is clear from the outset of *For the Sake of the Kingdom* that the authors understand the church "builds itself…consciously or unconsciously into an established structure of political and economic power."[667] They also explicitly state the all too real dangers of allowing the Church to "rest on a foundation of manifest injustice and oppression, and may even endorse such systems."[668] This leads to the insight a Church "belongs and yet doesn't belong to the social and political system under which it operates. Its life is both continuous and—even if sometimes only implicitly and in principal—discontinuous with the structures of its

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[665] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 8, para. 14.
[666] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 5, para. 10.
[667] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 8, para. 20.
[668] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 8, para. 20.

society."[669] To bifurcate church and society in order to articulate the tension existing between the sacred and secular is to invite a certain triumphalism of the church which ignores the tension within itself between the *Kingdom of God,* to which it is called, and the church militant, the church extant. Fortunately, *For the sake of the Kingdom* does not fall into this trap, but neither are they comfortable articulating what the *Kingdom's* absent/presence then means for the church. This takes several forms within the document.

7.5 Kingdom as Tension, Promise, Gulf, and Horizon

For the Sake of the Kingdom operates from several paradigms when describing the relationship existing between Church and *Kingdom*. Within two pages at the heart of the document the authors refer to the relationship between world and *kingdom* as a "tension," "promise," "gulf," "horizon."[670] "Tension" is described within the paper as both the tension between the church and the world, and also the tension between Church and *Kingdom*. The tension between Church and world is described in social-political terms where the Church is called to belong and not belong: "they are at once natives of their places and foreigners in it, at once lovers and affirmers of its life and critics of its ways."[671] Failure to admit this tension, "to miss points of conflict and discontinuity" can result in "moral and theological blindness."[672] The authors also understand, however, this same tension "provides the framework within which Anglican Churches can appreciate and weigh the issues,"[673] but when the tension which describes the relation between Church and world moves into the realm of the *Kingdom of God* it evolves into a more transcendent register:

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[669] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 9, para. 23.
[670] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 10-11.
[671] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 9, para. 24.
[672] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 9, para. 24.
[673] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 16, para. 44

> On the one hand, the Kingdom of God which is revealed and established in Christ affirms the world as God's. The world is the subject of redemption and so the object of God's love. There is continuity between its present life and its fulfillment in Christ. On the other hand, the Kingdom of God which is established and revealed in Christ stands to the same world as 'beyond'—a transcendent hope—and therefore questions and relativizes it.[674]

The inherent relational difficulty the *Kingdom of God* reveals is represented here quite well. There is continuity between the present and the future fulfillment, but the *Kingdom of God* is beyond—a transcendent hope. In order to discuss *Kingdom* whilst maintaining its transcendence, *For the Sake of the Kingdom* makes a perceptible shift to speaking about the *Kingdom* as "gulf" and "horizon."

For the Sake of the Kingdom describes the gulf as the "world as human beings have made it and that same world transformed as God's kingdom,"[675] establishing Jesus as the means by which the *Kingdom* "has been fulfilled in his own person,"[676] "the one in whom and through whom God's reign is realized,"[677] and the one through which the "divine reign" has "come true."[678] The bridge for this gulf seems, then, to be Jesus Christ, though this is never explicitly stated. Equating Jesus Christ and *Kingdom of God*, as Pannenberg was aware, begs the question of how, given the historical distance from the source, the church is to comprehend and constitute the *Kingdom of God* in our time and context. *For the sake of the Kingdom* is clear this is a priority as it insists "the church, as a body of disciples, is engaged in the same business as the Lord: that of opening the world to its horizon, to its destiny as God's Kingdom."[679]

The authors of *For the Sake of the Kingdom* are mindful of two important realities: the "Kingdom of God is indeed the world's horizon, but at the same time its transcendent

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[674] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 12, para. 35.
[675] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 11, para. 31.
[676] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 11, para. 31.
[677] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 11, para. 31.
[678] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 11, para. 31.
[679] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 12, para. 33.

horizon. It is not something which is simply given in the common sense, everyday world of unchallenged untransformed perceptions." While at the same time insisting God, as the source of this transcendent *Kingdom* is "never unmindful of or absent from the world. God is present for it as the context and horizon of its being,"[680] the authors emphasize Jesus Christ as the horizon which, like a promise, evokes the future. This does not, however, "abolish the distance between God's *Kingdom* and the world as humans have made it." They adamantly emphasize two distinct realities: the church "refers itself to, and has as its principal in the strictest sense, the Kingdom of God," while also affirming that the *Kingdom* is the Church's "transcendent horizon."[681] The theological ground informing this commission begins to reveal itself in such statements.

Like Moltmann and Pannenberg, the authors of *For the Sake of the Kingdom* are at pains to describe a relationship which is both necessary and problematic. If the *Kingdom of God* is too transcendent, it fails to inform the present moment; too immanent, and as Moltmann puts it, "People who think they are living in an already fulfilled hope cannot tolerate any still open hope of the future."[682] Recall Moltmann's chief critique of Barth, that Barth's *eschaton* was ultimately a "transcendental eternity" and "unhistorical,"[683] and therefore unhelpful for the present. Recall also Pannenberg's innovative use of time: the present moment deferred and informed by the future. The relationship between Church and *Kingdom* must deal with this conundrum, and the authors are sensitive to the tightrope they must walk. However, the shape of their theological argument is determined entirely by a model of transcendence which emphasizes the gulf between the world and God. Kaye, examining the role of eschatology in recent Anglican ecclesiology, writes,

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[680] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 13, para. 39.
[681] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 11, para. 32-33.
[682] Moltmann, *Coming of God*, p. 154.
[683] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 40.

> Eschatological categories function here as the ultimate point of reference for faithfulness and underlines diverse responses in different local situations. The gospel is the sovereign truth that is to be embodied in each and every local situation. It is an emphasis on transcendence that shapes the argument and frames the interpretation of the challenge.[684]

He goes on to point out while *For the Sake of the Kingdom*—as well as *Communion, Conflict and Hope*, which we will examine below—prioritizes the eschatological element, "they leave unexamined any account of institutions for an eschatologically shaped community whose primary condition is the radical contingency of their existence."[685] The asymmetrical relationship between law and justice Derrida develops in "Force of Law" et al., proves valuable as an analogy of how we might consider the same asymmetries at the heart of the relationship between the Church and *Kingdom of God*. Recall that Derrida articulates the radical contingency of the law in the light of justice: "law is deconstructible, justice is not. Deconstructive justice can never be fully assimilated. It is an 'infinite asymmetry'."[686] In the same way, might we not adopt the structure of this argument thus, "The church is deconstructible, The *Kingdom of God* is not." Recall also, that for Derrida, "the fact that the law is deconstructible is not bad news. One may even find in this the political chance of all historical progress."[687] *For the Sake of the Kingdom* recognizes the importance of this contingency in any progress the Church might hope to make towards the *Kingdom of God*. Clearly, the report understands God's transcendence relativizes the church. To be Church, the report demands, "is always to be turning to God, always to be in transition to a better mind, always to be answering afresh the call of God in Christ as events and circumstances make that call

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[684] Kaye, "The Role of Eschatology in Recent Anglican Ecclesiology: A study of three recent International Doctrine Commission Reports," A Paper delivered at the Conference of the Australian and New Zealand Association for Theological Studies, Melbourne, (July 2010), p, 12.
[685] Kaye, "Role of Eschatology," p. 12.
[686] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, p. 22,
[687] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 242-243.

concrete."[688] The church "follows the way of repentance, because that is the way along which God's Kingdom is found."[689] Within the report, however, there is little to suggest this repentance has much, if anything to do with the institution of the Church. *For the Sake of the Kingdom* does not draw out the implications of this repentance for ecclesial life, nor does it examine the difficulties in "turning to God" given the provisionality of its identity. As examined above, these are the chief concerns for Derrida's latter political work and to accept the analogy I am proposing—law : justice :: church : Kingdom of God—perhaps the ecclesia, the church could well be served by a philosopher who has largely been ignored by theologians and rarely, if ever, thought of as potentially helpful for ecclesiology.

To transpose Derrida's political writing into the Church's register is to emphasize the *aporia* at work as the present church and future church are contemplated. If the authors of *For the Sake of the Kingdom* had been able to articulate not a gulf, nor a tension at the heart of the Church, but rather an *aporia*, several expectations about the shape of the community would follow. First, the radically pluralistic environment in which *For the Sake of the Kingdom* is composed, becomes the basis of, rather than a challenge to, its own identity. Second, to be a radically contingent community suspends the very notion of a 'we' attacked by outside forces whether inside or outside the community. Such an ontological suspension, like Pannenberg's insistence that only in the future can the church be said to exist and able to greet the sort of change the church would too soon have to face; only a community which, by embracing its other, both spatially and temporally, is able to face the pressures the *Kingdom* may exert upon its ecclesial structures. Such a community might be "something like what Levinas calls the relation without relation, the relation in which the relata absolve themselves from the

[688] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 12, para. 33.
[689] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 12, para. 33.

relation."[690] Caputo, picking up a theme suggested by Edith Wyschogrod suggests that a Derridean community would be an,

> Underdetermined, open-ended, quasi system that lacks programmable effects…an undecidable system, a vague, quasi-community that would communicate only in the sense of being interactive or relational…a whole that would not be so sufficiently ordered as to produce predictable, foreseeable results, but would always be vulnerable to chance and surprise from what is outside the community.[691]

As the authors chose to represent the relationship and space between the church and *Kingdom* as tension, promise, gulf, and horizon, and not *aporia*, they assume a Church identifiable both in terms of itself and what is 'other'. The idea of the church's provisionality is one where the Church's identity may be clearly presented, contingent on a future towards which it progresses. In contrast, Derrida would call into question the very identity of the community, disallowing any ontological purity (like Pannneberg) even as the future is seen not as a progression of the past/present into the future, but rather a future that can not be predicted or expected, i.e., a surprise, the impossible (like Moltmann's *adventus*). Combining both the suspension of ontological status of the community of the Church, as well as the radical otherness of *kingdom* existing in an asymmetrical relationship with the church is why Derrida's *différance* is a helpful term for ecclesial reflection.

Questions of conflict and status quo did feature heavily in the support material for the report. In "Kingdom and Church: Some Preliminary Notes,"[692] which were notes drafted by and shared with members of the IATDC working on *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, there is a plethora of work highlighting this political tension. There are at least two voices running

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[690] Caputo, "A Community without Truth: Derrida and the Impossible Community," Research in Phenomenology, Vol. 26 (1996), pp. 25-37.
[691] Caputo, "A Community without Truth," p. 26.
[692] IATDC, Church and Kingdom - Group Reports: The following quotes were acquired in the library in Lambeth Palace from a binder of notes prepared for the participants in the IATDC working on *For the Sake of the Kingdom.* They are not organized by section and some are hand written but are included here to assist in revealing the theological assumptions which informed the published work. The quotes are assigned to their authors when possible.

through the prepared notes. One theologian asserts: "where Jesus is, there is the kingdom, & vice versa," which leads him to then posit, "Thus, the church is the place where the fulness of the Kingdom is witnessed to…rather than the place where his fulness is actually realized."[693] Jesus, then, is the full realization of the *Kingdom,* and the Church, presumably in the absence of a present Jesus, will only ever be a witness to an original event it can no longer reproduce.

Other perspectives are produced as well. Another such perspective highlights the tension between the universal and the particular by suggesting the background of Jesus' life and teaching is significant in answering the "classical problem about the relation between Jesus' own proclamation (of God's *basileia*) and the early proclamation of Jesus himself…The issue of both proclamations is simply the eschatological reign of God."[694] The author concludes:

> Jesus' message—whether expressed in direct proclamation, in parable, or in the performance of signs and healings— announced the near advent of the saving event…Since his message was primarily an announcement and warning, not an exhortation or a program of action it presupposed that the assertion of God's basileia is God's own work…[695]

In other words, at least as portrayed in the Gospels, Jesus' ministry was itself a sign of the *Kingdom* and not a full manifestation of the *Kingdom*. Jesus proclaimed the coming *Kingdom* as an anticipatory manifestation. The theologian continues, "The rule of God, in short, is a transcendent reality in which all the promises implicit — but unfulfilled— in human experience are kept. As such, its nature cannot be understood in any limited set of terms."[696]

Pointing to the "relationship between Anglicanism and the civil administration of colonial territories was inherently ambivalent," the authors describe a belonging and not belonging to the culture in which it operates, "at once natives of their places and foreigners in

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[693] IATDC, Church and Kingdom - Group Reports
[694] IATDC, Church and Kingdom - Group Reports
[695] IATDC, Church and Kingdom - Group Reports
[696] IATDC, Church and Kingdom - Group Reports

it."[697] *For the Sake of the Kingdom* also describes their common life shared with a "transcendent source which is named 'God' and 'Christ' and 'Spirit'."[698] These sources insist Christ stands for the "basileia tou theou, the 'reign' or 'kingship' of 'Kingdom of God'."[699] The authors of *For the Sake of the Kingdom* evoke many images to articulate this relationship; when they mention transcendence, they are well aware that Jesus' announcing the Kingdom was "not to build or create that Kingdom by carrying out some sort of plan or program."[700] They recognize the gulf existing between present reality and future Kingdom, "between the world as human beings have made it and the same world transformed as God's Kingdom."[701] The document recognizes the world as God's transcendent kingdom which is "beyond" and "therefore questions and relativizes"[702] the world while simultaneously affirming God is "never unmindful of or absent from the world."[703] The presence/absence of God and God's Kingdom, is dealt with in *For the Sake of the Kingdom* as a tension which both belongs and doesn't belong, is both continuous and discontinuous, to society and political systems under which it operates.[704]

The authors are even able to affirm interpretive pluralism and dissonances stemming from many cultures' use of the scriptures, which "never speak apart from a context," and "our understanding of them is always conditioned." These dissonances may be "sources of discomfort, but they readily admit, they can also prompt and enable new insight and change of mind." The authors of *For the Sake of the Kingdom* ultimately affirm the most critical aspect of the *Kingdom's* relationship to the Church, which is "to the extent that we remain bound in a

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[697] *For the sake of the Kingdom*, p. 9, para. 23.
[698] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 10, para. 26.
[699] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p.10, para. 28.
[700] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 10, para. 28.
[701] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 11, para. 31.
[702] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 12, para. 35.
[703] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 13, para. 39.
[704] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 9, para. 23,24.

narrow loyalty to our given perspective, imagining it to be final, 'objective', or 'scientific', we keep truth, life-giving truth, at a distance."[705]

To limit the *Kingdom* to a 'set of terms' is explicitly understood as limiting the coming *Kingdom* as a program or particular action. Certainly the differences highlighted in the report itself and in the preliminary notes are parallel to the differences between Moltmann and Pannenberg. The challenge this thesis proposes to address, however, is whether Derrida makes a contribution to ecclesiology. In *For the Sake of the Kingdom* the authors in manifold ways express corollaries to Derrida's difference in regard to the *Kingdom of God*. Firstly, there is agreement the *Kingdom* is future, coming. The full presence of the *Kingdom* as postponed only to the future means, like the temporal implications of *différance,* it is deferred. Similar to the futurity of many of Derrida's quasi-transcendent categories such as democracy, justice, and friendship, the *Kingdom of God* is structured in this report like a promise. Similar to Moltmann, the *Kingdom* can only be understood as *Adventus*, not as a future (*futurum*) present in the past/present, but something new and impossible. Secondly, though there are some aspects where the person of Jesus and the *Kingdom* are conflated, there are numerous examples of Jesus not being coterminous with the *Kingdom* but rather proclaiming it as coming. The implications of a coming rather than a present *Kingdom* are, in agreement with Pannenberg, different and other than the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The Derridean corollary is the spatial aspect of *différance,* which is to suggest the Church is other than the K*ingdom*, and though asymmetrically related to the *Kingdom*, they *differ*. Though Pannenberg and Moltmann may both be used to exemplify and clarify the theological arguments in respect to the futurity of the *Kingdom* and the person of Christ in relation to the coming *Kingdom,* it is evident that Derrida's *différance*, in bringing these two interrelated aspects of the Kingdom of God into a

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[705] *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, p. 23, para. 78.

unifying concept suggests his political philosophy is indeed a helpful lens through which to do theology and, as it pertains to the relations between the church and *Kingdom*, ecclesiology as well.

Though *For the Sake of the Kingdom* addresses, if not develops, these complex themes, the work of the authors of the report would be short-lived. Three years after its publication a new brief was sent to the IATDC. This time they were to produce a report to buttress the identity and authority of the Anglican church at the expense of any eschatological ecclesiology developed in *For the Sake of the Kingdom*. The prior theological document, written in 1986, seems not to have had any impact whatever on the subsequent report. It seems little eschatological insight was included in the IATDC's next commission, which composed *The Virginia Report*.

7.6 *The Virginia Report* (1997)

The next ten years would prove the beginning of a radical shift in Anglican ecclesial life. Though years earlier women had been ordained by the church[706] the prospect of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America (PECUSA) ordaining a woman bishop stirred controversy which inspired ACC to invite the IATDC to once again consider theological matters pertinent to the church. The next ecclesial report would be named *The Virginia Report*. Named for the Virginia Theological Seminary where the IATDC met in December 1994 and January 1996, *The Virginia Report* was the result of being asked by ACC to reflect on a particular ecclesial issue that affected the life of the church. The matter at hand

[706] Florence Li Tim-Oi, ordained on 25 January 1944 by Ronald Hall, Bishop of Victoria, Hong Kong. As well as the "Philadelphia Eleven" as they are called, eleven women ordained as priests in the Episcopal Church on July 29, 1974, two years before General Convention affirmed and explicitly authorized the ordination of women to the priesthood.

were the affairs surrounding the possibility of PECUSA consecrating a woman bishop. As such, the *Virginia Report* addresses the diversity of voices on this particular matter, as it attempts to address authoritative and structural solutions to diversity and unity in light of the reports grounding image, namely the unity of Trinity. Mark Dyer, one of the IATDC members who composed the document, stressed:

> our unity with one another is grounded in the life of love, unity and community of the Godhead. The eternal, mutual self-giving and receiving love of the three persons of the Trinity is the source and ground of our communion, of our fellowship with God and with one another. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are drawn into a divine fellowship of love and unity.[707]

As shall be argued, this grounding of the work of the IATDC in the image of the Trinity functions to position ecclesial matters as necessarily unitive, based on the concept of *koinonia* and not as eschatological, not as future or other. By the adoption of an ecclesiology based in the Church's own doctrine, the direction first pursued in *For the Sake of the Kingdom* has been left aside in favor of an ecclesial model that acknowledges a tension only to resolve it. By deploying Derrida's concept of autoimmunity as a lens through which to read *The Virginia Report*, it shall further be argued that by seeking structural protection from the "limits of diversity,"[708] as well as emphasizing organizational principals as the basis of unitive ecclesiology, rather than an eschatological ecclesiology, the authors risk the very church they are trying to save.

This blindspot becomes evident in the introduction of *The Virginia Report (1998),* which takes up the issue of unity and authority so the church may,

> describe how the Anglican Communion makes authoritative decisions while maintaining unity and interdependence in the light of the many theological

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[707] Transcribed notes from 11th meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in Dundee Scotland, September 1999.
[708] *The Virginia Report,* p. 8.

issues that arise from its diversity.[709]

This work was to be explored with "particular reference to the doctrine of the Trinity, the unity and order of the Church, and the unity and community of humanity."[710] Though the decision to establish the Trinity and not the *Kingdom* (or even Spirit) as the theological ground of the *The Virginia Report* is never explicitly explored or explained,[711] the IATDC proceeds on the basis that both divine and ecclesial unity emphasized believers need to "maintain agreement with one another and thereby avert divisions."[712] As Kaye indicates,

> There is remarkably no significant role here for failure, sin, redemption, corruption or restitution in the eschaton. Indeed these things do not play a significant role in the argument of the report. The report is rather an extended framing for understanding church structures, and in particular the recently created structures of the Anglican Communion.[713]

The privileging of unity as a priority undercuts the church's ability to disagree and thus the ability of the *kingdom* to destabilize or question the structure of the church, so as to orient the church eschatologically toward the future. Said another way, if the moments of disruption to the ordered life of the church may only be interpreted as a betrayal of the divine communion, such disruption will never be allowed to be the occasion which ushers in the *Kingdom*. In the first instance, the report sees unity as divine and disunity as problematic chiefly because it understands the "eternal, mutual, self-giving and receiving of love of the three persons of the Trinity" as the "source and ground of our communion, of our fellowship with God and one

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[709] *The Virginia Report*, p. 5; Bruce Kaye describes the nature of *The Virginia Report*:" It does not refer to earlier attempts at Communion institutions which were abandoned, things like regional centres, a Communion theological centre or congresses such as those held earlier in the twentieth century, which were widely regarded as significant in building awareness beyond provincial borders. Things like the fallibility of the church are acknowledged, but are often qualified and the qualification taken up as the main theme in the argument."
[710] *The Virginia Report* p. 5.
[711] Kaye, *The Role of Eschatology*, p. 6.
[712] *The Virginia Report*, p. 7.
[713] Kaye, *Role of Eschatology*, p. 7, Kaye points out that the ecclesiology of *The Virginia Report* "is static and could be thought to echo something of the analogia entis that was so vehemently attached by Karl Barth." See Barth, Dogmatics I.1, p. xiii.

another."[714] But what, it must be asked, is the relation between the divine and the provisional, the eternal Trinity and conditionality of the human grasp upon it? Furthermore, as pointed out by the Doctrinal Commission of the Anglican Church of Australia, offering a critique entitled, *A Response to the Virginia Report from an Australian Perspective*,

> This model immediately resonates with the importance of koinonia, but it also presents some possible stumbling blocks, not least because there is no one single Trinitarian theology, nor is any understanding of the mystery of the Triune God complete.[715]

The Virginia Report affirms the "life of divine communion is made visible in a characteristic way within the ordered life of the Anglican Communion."[716] Because of this underlying premise the authors certainly connect the life of the Church with the life of the *Kingdom*:

> Because the Church as communion participates in God's communion of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, it has an eschatological reality and significance. The Church is the advent, in history, of God's final will being done "on earth as in heaven."…The Church is the icon of the future toward which God is directing the history of the world…The seventh century theologian St. Maximus the Confessor put it this way: "The things of the past are shadow; those of the present icon; the truth is to be found in the things of the future (Scolion on the ecclesiastical hierarchy, 3,3:2)[717]

The authors of *The Virginia Report* refer to futurity of God's *kingdom*, yet seem to emphasize a *kingdom* heavily reliant on the church's present memory, as well as a reorienting of the promise

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[714] *The Virginia Report*, p. 11.
[715] The Doctrine Commission of the Anglican Church of Australia: A Response to the Virginia Report from an Australian Perspective, available at http://www.anglican.org.au/governance/commissions/documents/doctrine/virginia-response.pdf The response to *The Virginia Report* suggests the unexamined adoption of a Trinitarian ecclesiology is due to the preponderance of written material being produced at the time the report was undertaken. "Since the 1988 Lambeth Conference trinitarian ecclesiology has been developed in a very considerable body of literature. It has been embraced across the Eastern Orthodox – Western Church divide, and has included contributions from Roman Catholic, Anglican and Reformed theologians. The theme has been pursued in such works, for example, as Jurgen Moltmann's *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* (1981) Miroslav Volf's *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (1998), and the Roman Catholic theologian, Catherine LaCugna's *God for Us:The Trinity and Christian Life* (1991). Ecumenical dialogue is also conditioned by the same style of theologising. The ARCIC document Church as Communion (1990) is but one example of this."
[716] *The Virginia Report*, p. 23.
[717] *The Virginia Report*, p. 12.

of the *Kingdom* from being deferred to experienced in the present.

> The Church lives in the present, remembering again and again (making anamnesis) the Christ event and receiving in hope the promise of the Kingdom. In this way, the saving events of Christ's death and resurrection and the foretaste of the Kingdom are brought into the present experience of the Church… Faithful Christian community with God the Holy Trinity, is focused in a vision of the final and ultimate reign…"[718]

Two aspects of the above quote are significant. First, the emphasis on *anamnesis*, a clear eucharistic reference, reorients the political and historical significance of the *Kingdom of God* to merely a liturgical one. Later in the report the authors suggest, "All injustice, racism, separation and denial of freedom are radically challenged when Christians share in the body and blood of Christ. Through the eucharist the grace of God penetrates, restores and renews."[719] By emphasizing memory (*anamnesis*) as the chief means of experiencing the coming *Kingdom*, the content of that future as memory, recalled again and again, serves to overemphasize a recognizable past and present as the content of the future. To again deploy Derrida's *différance*, it would be necessary that the content of the future remains open and other-than, even as it is re-membered, and must *differ* from the past-present. Even for Moltmann, the *adventus* is a reality where the future is radically new and not merely a recapitulation of things past, recalled in the present. Second, *The Virginia Report*, by emphasizing the "final and ultimate reign," loses a most significant feature of eschatology which is not finality but futurity. To bring the *Kingdom of God* into the "present experience of the Church"[720] diminishes what Moltmann and Derrida would insist is a necessary feature of the full presence of the *Kingdom* or justice: it must be deferred.

Certainly the authors of *The Virginia Report* recognize the importance of addressing injustices as the Church. When the provisionality of the Church's structures are addressed,

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[718] *The Virginia Report*, p. 13.
[719] *The Virginia Report*, p. 13.
[720] *The Virginia Report*, p. 13.

the answer is not directed to the structures themselves but rather to the icon of Trinitarian table imagery: The Eucharist. Unlike *For the Sake of the Kingdom* which orients itself around the eschatological, and thus futurity and otherness, *The Virginia Report* seems to dismiss *Kingdom* orientation of the previous report of the IATDC outright. Kaye agrees,

> The Virginia Report lacks any forceful eschatological concerns. It displaces love as the primary gospel virtue with unity. It more comfortably thinks of institutional structures as vital to the unity they seek.[721]

Even when the report draws upon the eschatological and provisional it does so at the individual and not the corporate or ecclesial level, suggesting "Those who are baptised, through the power of the Holy Spirit, die with Christ and rise to new life in him and are joined with all the baptised in the communion of God's own life and love."[722] One might inquire why the Church corporately cannot access the *Kingdom* through the same death and resurrection.

The Virginia Report articulates an image of the Anglican church which, through the instruments of unity, prioritizes unity over discord and a structural rather than an overtly eschatological ecclesiology. Returning to what may be learned from an ecclesiology filtered through Derrida, it is important to stress another aspect of Derrida's thought: autoimmunity. Autoimmunity, in the attempts to protect itself, actually corrupts itself instead, and in so doing threatens itself in order to "protect itself against threats."[723] The Church, much like law in "Force of Law," cannot maintain a structure that is self-sure, self-aware, and closed. Seen through the eschatological lens, the Church is what it is only by *différance*, that is, the Church's identity must, if it is to participate in the *Kingdom,* defer itself and differ from itself. The desire to make "authoritative decisions while maintaining unity" reveals the communion's desire to

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[721] Kaye, *Role of Eschatology,* p. 13.
[722] *The Virginia Report*, p. 29
[723] Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 40.

protect itself from just such an autoimmune vulnerability:

> Sometimes the lived experience of a particular community enables Christian truth to be perceived afresh for the whole community. At other times a desire for change or restatement of the faith in one place provokes a crisis within the whole Church. In order to keep the Anglican Communion living as a dynamic community of faith, exploring and making relevant the understanding of the faith, structures for taking council and deciding are an essential part of the Communion.[724]

The emphasis on the structures and authority within *The Virginia Report* directs the commission to consider the instruments of unity, as well as concepts of subsidiarity and interdependence, but missing from the report is the examination of any of the transcendent structures of the Church, such as how the eschatological *Kingdom of God* (or eternal unitive Trinity) relates to any temporal finite crisis. Any "change" or "restatement of the faith" does indeed require "structures for taking counsel and deciding" which *The Virginia Report* hardly acknowledges.[725]

It could be argued *The Virginia Report* laid out the discerning structures in an amicable way, and in so doing, set the tone for the Anglican Church's continuing theological reflection in the years to come. What was to follow, *The Windsor Report*, would continue its reflection based on the Trinity as the transcendent model for historical unity and not on the eschatological ground explored in *For the Sake of the Kingdom.*

7.7 *The Windsor Report* (2004)

The Archbishop of Canterbury, The Most Reverend Rowan Williams, established The Lambeth Commission in October 2003 at the request of the Anglican Primates. The presenting issue was homosexuality and the consecration of a gay bishop in the Episcopal

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[724] *The Virginia Report*, Sec. 3.11, p. 16.
[725] *The Virginia Report*, p. 16.

Church in the United States of America.[726] The commission was not to address sexuality issues themselves but rather considered "ways in which communion and understanding could be enhanced where serious differences threatened the life of a diverse worldwide Church."[727] Of central concern to the commission was the principle of 'adiaphora'—(literally, "things that do not make a difference").[728] Some differences of opinion or practice could be tolerated while others could not. *The Windsor Report* authors, following the example set in scripture in Pauline letters, "insists that some types of behaviour are incompatible with inheriting God's coming kingdom, and must not therefore be tolerated within the Church."[729] However, this report was not was mandated to determine which types of behavior may or may not fall into this category but to focus exclusively on its primary subject, namely, the unity and communion of the Church. Despite this restriction, the commission's report does pause for a moment to dismiss a concept from "postmodern discourse" which is particularly relevant to this thesis:

> 'Difference' has become a concept within current postmodern discourse which can easily mislead the contemporary western church into forgetting the principles, enshrined in scripture and often re-articulated within Anglicanism, for distinguishing one type of difference from another.

Rather than develop a carefully articulated meaning of the word difference it seems sufficient to the authors to note,

> that which would otherwise separate Jew and Gentile within the Church is 'adiaphora'. That which embodies and expresses renewed humanity in Christ

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[726] The Lambeth Commission was to respond to several issues of concern to the unity of the Anglican Communion namely, the "decision by the 74th General Convention of the Episcopal Church (USA) to give consent to the election of Bishop Gene Robinson to the Diocese of New Hampshire, the authorising by a diocese of the Anglican Church of Canada of a public Rite of Blessing for same sex unions and the involvement in other provinces by bishops without the consent or approval of the incumbent bishop to perform episcopal functions."
[727] *The Windsor Report*, From the Forward, The Most Reverend Dr Robin Eames, Archbishop of Armagh, Chairman of the Lambeth Commission, p.4.
[728] *The Windsor Report*, Sec. 89, p. 39. This principle of 'adiaphora' was invoked and developed by the early English Reformers, particularly in their claim that, in matters of eucharistic theology, specific interpretations (transubstantiation was particularly in mind) were not to be insisted upon as "necessary to be believed," and that a wider range of interpretations was to be allowed.
[729] *The Windsor Report*, p. 39.

> is always mandatory for Christians; that which embodies the dehumanising turning-away-from-God which Paul characterises with such terms as 'sin', 'flesh', and so on, is always forbidden.[730]

It is in discerning the *Kingdom of God*, however, that deciding which is and which is not is of utmost importance for the Church. This is where Derrida's thought may be deployed. Reflecting on chapter Two and Three, would not the distinction between indeterminacy and undecidability be useful? At one point the authors, in describing the limits of postmodern differences, invoke the indeterminacy paradigm as though all differences in post-modernity may mean, "Not all 'differences' can be tolerated. (We know this well enough in the cases of, say, racism or child abuse; we would not say 'some of us are racists, some of us are not, so let's celebrate our diversity')."[731] Remember from Chapter Two undecidability is something altogether different. The determination or decision within the church must pass through the crucible of being undecidable and can not be calculable or programmable. Furthermore, if the *Kingdom of God* is to break in to the structures of the church, *The Windsor Report* is unhelpful as it focuses almost entirely on the structure of unity at the expense of all else. Ellen K. Wondra considers the report's value to the Anglican Communion:

> From the angle of conserving an existing communion by strengthening its orderliness, the Windsor Report is quite strong. But from the angle of leaving room for those open windows and doors, those cracks and fissures and broken places through which the Spirit has moved, it is quite weak. And that is a theological flaw as well as a practical one.[732]

Wondra's insight may be taken further. Turning to another theme Derrida's thought provides, autoimmunity gives us a lens through which to see the attempt of the church to protect itself from chaos and disunity. Autoimmunity, transposed from the biological to political, indicates an organism's desire to protect itself, to make itself safe and sound,

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730 *The Windsor Report*, sec. 90, p. 39.
731 The Windsor Report, sec. 90, p. 39.
732 Ellen K. Wondra, "The Highest Degree of Communion Possible," Anglican Theological Review, Volume 87, (Spring 2005), Number 2, p. 199.

inevitably turning its self-protective mechanisms against itself. This thesis contends *The Windsor Report* does precisely what Derrida's autoimmunity predicts. In attempting to strengthen the Anglican Communion's instruments of unity, without the concommittal decision for a fresh judgment concerning the matter at hand, without adequate recognition of its own provisionality, the communion has attempted to protect itself from the intrusion of difference, of 'the other'. This autoimmune posture both protects and destroys. On one hand the enemy, say of secularism, threatens to make the Church resemble the world rather than the *Kingdom*; on the other hand, to close off the Church from its other is merely the refusal to acknowledge the church is always 'to-come', and its arrival, as well as the source of its arrival, can not be accurately predicted. Without openness to the Church's 'other' the church may not be fully open to its own future from which it defers itself and differs from itself. According the Derrida, democracy may be what it is "only by spacing itself beyond being and even beyond ontological difference, it is (without being) equal and proper to itself only insofar as it is inadequate."[733]

One of the primary functions of the institution of the church is conservation and coherence rather than the acceptance or recognition of the new or other. In the case of *The Windsor Report* the matter at hand was quite specific: The Episcopal Church (USA) gave consent to, and proceeded with, the consecration of Gene Robinson, Bishop of New Hampshire, a divorced man openly acknowledged to be living in a sexually active and committed same-sex relationship, despite the fact this action might well "tear the fabric of our Communion at its deepest level."[734]

> Such a process would require appropriate *ecclesiastical procedures*. Such procedures that do exist have developed within the Anglican Communion over a period of time and in response to particular earlier problems. We have described in the previous section the ways in which they were followed quite

[733] Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 38.
[734] *The Windsor Report*, p. 27, ¶27.

> carefully in the run-up to the consecration of women to the episcopate. Several recent Anglican documents, notably *The Virginia Report* (1997), have spelled out explicitly and in detail what procedures could be applied and the way in which they could function, making it clear (among other things) that these procedures are not merely pragmatically determined but express the theology they seek to serve.[735]

This insight does not go unaddressed by other theologians. George Pattison writes of the "triumphalist tone" of *The Windsor Report* that it "promotes a fundamental model of the church, community and law that at key points is at odds with our call to live as witnesses of the eschatological truth."[736] Nor does this shortcoming escape the attention of the Anglican Structures of Unity themselves. Shortly after the publication of *The Windsor Report* (2004), the IATDC was commissioned again, producing *Communion, Conflict and Hope: The Kuala Lumpur Report of the third Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission.* This document considers unity and communion whilst also considering conflict and hope. If by "Conflict" what is meant is entities within the whole that *differ* from one another and by "Hope" what is meant is a future which is structured like a promise, i.e., deferred, then one may immediately begin to see the contribution Derrida may make in ecclesiology. Against *Windsor's* structuralist emphasis, *Communion, Conflict and Hope* takes a more "missional and relational approach" to communion that construes contention not negatively, as in *Windsor*, but as a divine gift providing an opportunity for Anglicans to grow together toward God's promised future through their difficult relational work.[737]

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[735] *The Windsor Report*, p. 20-21, ¶34.
[736] George Pattison, "Church: Law, Community and Witness," ed. Gerard Mannion, *Church and Religious 'Other',* p. 217.
[737] Jeffrey Driver, "Communion, Conflict and Hope: A More Dynamic Approach to Koinonia," St. Mark's Review, no. 206, (2008), pp. 50–51.

7.8 Communion, Conflict and Hope (2008)

The day before the third IATDC meeting was to take place, September 12, 2001, the "World Trade Centre in New York was destroyed and the Pentagon attacked." So begins *Communion, Conflict and Hope The Kuala Lumpur Report*, which looks to augment the previous *Virginia Report's* understanding of church, understood as *koinonia* grounded in the doctrine of the Trinity, with "understandings which were more historical, pneumatological and eschatological."[738]

> The Commission believes that the unity Christ wills for the church, the koinonia into which he calls it, involves much more than simply an alliance of like-minded believers.

Rather than focus on the structures and authority of the Anglican Communion, the IATDC was to pick up themes not addressed since *For the Sake of the Communion*, namely, the eschatological way in which the church is comprised and "new foundational traditions,"[739] "especially in times of change and disruption."[740] *Communion, Conflict and Hope* brings back to the foreground the "failures, conflicts and mistakes"[741] of the early church, the disciples' fallibility and the failure of the community to fully comprehend the *Kingdom of God*, not because Jesus' teaching was complicated but because Jesus' *Kingdom of God* challenged the "cultural and mental assumptions"[742] of the disciples, and in turn, us. The lack of full comprehension on the part of the early church, however, does not fully impede their process and this report emphasizes strongly the transforming work of the Spirit as the key to decision making. Taking up the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:1-35) the report sums up the most "vital element" for decision making: "communication of the Gospel and the establishment of new churches": "It seems good to the Holy Spirit and to us" (Acts 15:28).[743] This work of the

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[738] *Communion, Conflict and Hope*, p. 8, para. 3.
[739] *Communion, Conflict and Hope*, p. 9, para. 8.
[740] *Communion, Conflict and Hope*, p. 13, para. 11.
[741] *Communion, Conflict and Hope*, p. 19, para. 23
[742] *Communion, Conflict and Hope*, p. 20, para. 25.
[743] *Communion, Conflict and Hope*, p. 21, para. 27.

Spirit is clearly to be seen in the Jerusalem council. The conclusion is specific to the issue before them. They listened to each other and to the testimony about what God had been doing through their lives relative to the question under discussion. The conclusion is thus particular and "limited in scope of time and place"[744] and also at the same time testifies to the presence of the Spirit in leading the church: "Holy Spirit and to us." Divine immanence is evident in contingent circumstances such as these.[745]

In *Communion, Conflict and Hope* three points may be emphasized. First, the Spirit is allowed stand in as the "other advocate,"[746] the absent/presence of the *Kingdom of God* which encourages the community to "look beyond their immediate circumstances to the Kingdom of God."[747] Second, the Spirit, understood as spirit or ghost, can be viewed here through a Derridean lens as precisely the absent/presence that 'haunts' the particular decisions and circumstances of the church. An ecclesiology which affirms this absence/presence must then take seriously the *aporia* which Derrida outlines as the relationship between justice and law. Justice, the quasi-transcendent informer of law, can not be co-opted and understood as one and the same with the law, and its relationship to law is only ever asymmetrical, that is aporetic. In the same way, the discernment of the *Kingdom of God* is only ever "relative" to the question under discussion and thus "limited in scope of time and place." Third, if we apply Derrida's understanding of justice as quasi-transcendence it is perhaps helpful to concurrently understand the obverse of the same concept, namely, any immanence, of community, institution, law, et al., should only ever be understood as "quasi-immanence."[748]

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[744] A phrase used by CCH, referred to below.
[745] *Communion, Conflict and Hope*, p. 21, para. 29.
[746] John 14:16 "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever," cf. John 14:26, 15:26, 16:7
[747] *Communion, Conflict and Hope*, p. 21, para. 28. (Luke 4:18-19; Isaiah 61:1-2)
[748] This quasi-immanence, I would mean more as the inverse of Derrida's justice, and not in a Husserlian way where the "bracketing of existence" could be said to be logically regulated as essential distinctions.

Communion, Conflict and Hope focuses on several ecclesial matters stemming from the relationship between *Kingdom* and Church. The report outlines the difficulties and complications arising from the earliest attempts to preach the Gospel in changing and diverse circumstances. As opposed to previous IATDC reports, conflict is explicitly understood as "part and parcel of the experience of the church as a fragile and fallible community."[749] Conflict, then, is not a shortcoming of communal life, nor a problem which needs to be eliminated or resolved, but a foundational and integral asymmetry between the Church and the *Kingdom of God* which founds it. This report affirms that as Church the community must "deal faithfully" with two asymmetrical aspects of the church, namely, "the divine character of the church as a community of people called by God," while also recognizing "the much more messy empirical reality of the actual church," an ambivalence "woven in to the fabric of Anglican ecclesiology."[750]

However, this ambivalence seems to take a specific form in Anglican ecclesiology. Although *Communion, Conflict and Hope* names the essential tension between Church and *Kingdom*/Spirit, the report itself focuses not on the problematic structure of that asymmetry but rather on "diverse and changing cultural contexts."[751] Recalling the original task of the the original IATDC report, *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, was to study the Church and the *Kingdom of God* with "special reference to the diverse and changing cultural contexts in which the Gospel is proclaimed, received, and lived,"[752] the relationship between *Kingdom of God* and Church is viewed primarily as a problem of pluralism and competing norms.[753] This bias is made explicit in Part II of the document, exploring four key questions circulated globally to

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[749] *Communion, Conflict and Hope*, p. 23, para. 33, cf. I Corinthians 4.7ff, 5.1-5; cf. Jeremiah 8.4-11; Hosea 6.4
[750] *Communion, Conflict and Hope*, p. 23, para. 34.
[751] *Communion, Conflict and Hope*, p. 25, para. 40
[752] *Communion, Conflict and Hope*, p. 25, ¶40; cf. *For the Sake of the Kingdom*, preface, p. 1.
[753] *Communion, Conflict and Hope*, p. 26, para. 41

Anglicans in various parts of the world to ascertain the ways in which "communion" was understood.[754] These questions, along with the Six Propositions[755] which subsequently followed, framed the resulting conversations primarily as a problem of diversity rather than constitutive of any community, especially Church, which admits an asymmetry between itself and the quasi-transcendental and eschatological *Kingdom*.

In focusing the commission's attention only on diversity and changing cultural contexts, the result of which was to affirm merely the need to "develop structures for *testing*, reconciliation and restraint,"[756] the commission ignored the more pressing question: how does one discern the *Kingdom of God* and then "test" the results? This is where the structure of Derrida's political thought becomes germane to theology and ecclesiology. Perhaps because of the *aporia* inherent in the relationship between Church and *Kingdom,* it is preferable to focus on the cultural context as the lens through which to understand this complexity, rather than

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[754] Four Key Questions for Anglicans World-Wide: When we speak of the Anglican Communion, what do we mean by the word "communion"? What is it that makes some disputes so crucial that failure to resolve them threatens a break in communion? In what ways are Christian teachings about moral behaviour integral to the maintenance of communion? In answering these questions we shall be asking how far does the Virginia Report meet the relevant situations that have arisen in the Anglican Communion since its publication? The summary of responses received from around the Communion were gathered together in a document entitled The Communion Study, 2002 which can be found in the appendix and the IATDC section of the Anglican Communion website: www.anglicancommunion.org

[755] The Six Propositions (or Statements) for debate are: Proposition 1. The koinonia of the Anglican Communion is both greatly enriched, and at times challenged and confused, by the variety of ways of encountering scripture. We bring our whole lives, in our different cultural and personal contexts, to scripture, and from those places open ourselves to "being read by" scripture; Proposition 2. Dividing doctrine from ethics not only creates the possibility for serious mistakes in Christian thinking but also diminishes the coherence of the life of holiness which is the Christian vocation; Proposition 3. The reality of the incarnation implies that the Gospel is always proclaimed in specific cultures. Inculturation always runs the risk of syncretism, in all cultures without exception. One of the gifts which comes from membership of the Anglican Communion is that other Provinces hold up a mirror to each of us, enabling us to question whether the gospel has been compromised among us; Proposition 4. Since the beginning of Christianity disputes have arisen in which the truth of the Gospel is seen to be at stake. Not all disputes are of such significance, but some are. In a Communion made up of many different churches, discernment is required to identify what in any particular context are the crucial issues for the life of the church. Proposition 5. Disputes in the church may be on many issues. Issues of discipline, such as church teaching on sexuality or the recognition of ministerial orders may be important in some contexts: specific issues of poverty, justice and peace in others. Attention to the concerns of other churches within the Communion is important for putting those of each local church into a proper perspective. Proposition 6. At every level, the practice of koinonia requires that there are those who have the responsibility to arbitrate in disputes and conflicts vital to our shared life. Such arbitration gains its force from the ties that bind us together in a voluntary communion.

[756] *Communion, Conflict and Hope*, p. 54, emphasis added.

recognize at the heart of the relationship between Church and *Kingdom*, there is an "impossibility" we are hesitant to name but is at the same time the very conditionality of the Church's existence. The IATDC recognizes the ambivalence and ambiguities which lie at the perimeter of the church where it meets the culture, but does not choose to engage with the aporetic reality running through the very center, the heart of the institution itself.

The IATDC focus on uniformity and pluriformity revolves around a Communio-ecclesiology in which "the path towards *resolving* such conflict will involve following in the steps of the crucified Christ and allowing the presence of the Spirit to bring the conflicted parties to a place of new life."[757] In describing Anglicanism's "experience of catholicity," it is understood "its credentials are its incompleteness, with the tension and the travail in its soul. It is clumsy and untidy, it baffles neatness and logic."[758]

Part III of *Communion, Conflict and Hope* focuses on unity, "In a rapidly fragmenting world, Christians need to think about what it is that binds them together.[759] The subsequent focus is on 'consultative communion', and how in a "richly variegated Communion"[760] and through social conflicts, the Church may remain comprehensive yet maintain unity in diversity. Six propositions are identified: 1) The Gospel and Scripture: The Centrality of the Bible in the Anglican Tradition; 2) Christian Living: The Gospel and Christian Ethics; 3) Responding to the Gospel where we are: Context and Culture; 4) The Limits of Diversity: Encountering Disputes and Failures; 5) Life with Others: Accountability and Competence; 6) Dispute Resolution: Finding Appropriate Structures.

The six issues are offered as a means "of inviting individuals and groups in the

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[757] *Communion, Conflict and Hope*, p. 28, ¶50, emphasis added.
[758] Arthur Michael Ramsey, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, London, Longman and Co. 1956, p. 220.
[759] *Communion, Conflict and Hope*, p. 31, ¶54.
[760] *Communion, Conflict and Hope*, p. 35, ¶66.

Communion to engage with the substantive issues of the Communion."[761] Although the majority of these issues highlight only the diverse contexts in which Anglicanism must operate, there are instances where the ground of Church and the basis for decision making within the Church fluctuates between a communion ecclesiology (koinonia, dialogue, collegiality, *consensus fidelium*) and an ecclesiology which points beyond itself to the implication of the "Pentecost experience."[762] The notion of such a Spirit-led and *Kingdom* oriented ecclesiology makes intermittent appearances. The authors are well aware of the "openness to innovation and experimentation" necessary to hear "what the Spirit may now be saying" but this is left frustratingly undeveloped as the report focuses almost exclusively on the structures of the church in light of the challenge of diversity —again relegating any mention of eschatology to the periphery. As Kaye asserts:

> If institutions are about continuity of relations between people and or things over time then they necessarily emphasise the reliability of that continuity. There is a certain fixity in institutions and they thus become important, even vital in understanding the community they exist to serve. But if that community believes as an article of defining faith that their citizenship is in heaven, that they live not for this world, but in the hope of the coming Kingdom of God, then that fixity in institutions becomes a challenge to that kind of faith. While For the Sake of the Kingdom and Communion Conflict and Hope show a priority for this eschatological element they leave unexamined any account of institutions for an eschatologically shaped community whose primary condition is the radical contingency of their existence. The Virginia Report seems sadly unaware of the question nor does it reveal any vital sense of the eschatological character of Christian ecclesiology.[763]

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[761] *Communion, Conflict and Hope*, p. 33, ¶61.
[762] *Communion, Conflict and Hope*, p. 40, ¶88.
[763] Bruce Kaye, The Role of Eschatology in Recent Anglican Ecclesiology, p. 12-13. To support his statement on the importance of institutional coherence Kaye cites the work of Robert E. Goodin, *The Theory of Institutional Design,* Cambridge, England; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1996; N Luhmann, *Social Systems,* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995.

7.8.1 Kaye offers this chart of several of the IATDC's reports:

	For The Sake of the Kingdom	**The Virginia Report**	**Communion, Conflict and Hope**
THEIR BRIEF	Church and the kingdom of God in the context of diversity and plurality in and between churches	The understanding of the church as communion in the light of the doctrine of the trinity and institutional structures in the Anglican Communion	Developing the idea of communion, a brief given at a time when conflict within the Anglican Communion had escalated over sexuality issues
THE CONTEXT	New independent Anglican churches following decolonization and globalisation and the challenge of mission in multi religious societies	Conflict between provinces in the Anglican Communion over the ordination of women	Heightened conflict between Anglican Provinces
THEIR FOCUS	The witness and mission imperative for the church and belonging to the Kingdom of God	The doctrine of the Trinity as model for unity in the church and how that is sustained by organisational structures in the Anglican Communion	Living faithfully in a church marked by failure, endemic fallibility and conflict
THE THEOLOGICAL DRIVERS IN THE ARGUMENT	The kingdom of God as the transcendent reality that shapes local expressions of the gospel	The doctrine of the trinity and church institutions	A dynamic conception of the catholicity of the church and the hope present in Christ and as the telos of the church's pilgrimage
ESCHATOLOGY	A transcendent kingdom of God	Notional reference only	The hope arising from the death and resurrection of Christ and as the telos towards which the church moves

Recent theological documents from the Anglican Communion acknowledge the *Kingdom of God's* relationship to the Church in broad, non-specific terms. However, the absence of a sufficiently developed eschatological ecclesiology, along with the theological commitment necessary to engage honestly with the *aporia* at the heart of this asymmetrical relationship, ultimately forecloses the possibility of embracing struggle, suffering, and conflict as integral to ecclesial life. Instead, these tensions are softened or reconciled prematurely, obscuring the

disruptive and transformative demands of the *Kingdom*.

The recent controversies around gender and sexuality are both opportunities and dangers to our common life, though the Anglican Communion has certainly emphasized the latter. To experience the Church as a provisional and imperfect institution is not singularly bad news; it is in fact the condition for the possibility we have a future informed by God's own reign. That future, like Derrida's justice, is coming; the *Kingdom of God* is coming, and though as an institution the Church may not be able to transition to the *Kingdom* without remainder, thinking robustly about such matters will certainly assist in times of crisis. As Moltmann insists, "the sign of hope is also the sign of crisis."[764] Moltmann wisely describes salvation history as simultaneously the proclamation of disaster as well. The moment of decision for the church, Moltmann claims, is when the "church sees itself as the people and the vanguard of the universal kingdom of freedom," while also realizing "that through its particularity it acts like a leaven to produce discord."[765] Moltmann continues,

> Without an understanding of the particular church in the framework of the universal history of God's dealings with the world, ecclesiology remains abstract and the church's self-understanding blind. This will lead almost unavoidably to the danger that the church will lend a universal claim to quite limited tasks, and will support interests conditioned by a particular period with the solemnity of the absolute.[766]

The many crises facing Churches of all stripes and ecclesiological structures remains quite evident in today's pluralistic world. As ecclesial institutions continue to discern and decide in the form of synods, councils, commissions, dioceses, recognizing the asymmetrical structure of the relationship between the Church and *Kingdom* may not make governance any easier. Like a judge who decides the undecidable (between law and justice), the Church must also make decisions for itself while working to include its other, *The Kingdom of God*. The aporetic

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[764] Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, p. 47.
[765] Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, p. 49.
[766] Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, p. 51.

structure itself will occasionally be a source of some considerable tension for decision makers within the church. However, embrace of the *aporia* opens up the opportunity of a future not merely an extension of the past and present, but one which can be radically open to the breaking in of the *Kingdom of God*. This is good news while it also poses inherent risks for the community and ecclesial institutions from which the natural inclination is to protect itself. As Derrida points out, however, autoimmune responses when taken on the part of any political body which rests on the "mystical foundation of authority,"[767] constrict and close off community from its foundation. If the church, which is ostensibly founded on *The Kingdom of God* closes itself off from this eschatological (transcendent/mystical) reality, it is no longer the church as it has been historically and theologically understood.

7.9 Expansive ecclesial reflection

Perhaps it is worth stepping back from the context of Anglicanism specifically to attempt to draw out the implications of Derrida's thought for the wider church community. The examination of other thinkers in light of this thesis allows even more expansive ecclesial self-reflection. The question shared amongst these thinkers might be summed up thus: how may a community engage in self-reflection and decision making as a "community under erasure," i.e., a self-negating "community without community." Though not possible to examine exhaustively, there are numerous authors who have attempted to work though the identity and limits of what is meant by community and its erasure through a Derridean lens,[768] and this project examines two who specifically respond to Derrida's work on

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[767] Jacques Derrida, subtitle for the essay "Force of Law: The Mystical Foundation of Authority", *Acts of Religion*, 2002.

[768] One may think additionally of Jean-Luc Nancy's The Inoperative Community. Even before getting to the first chapter of Nancy's book, we are warned by the author of the foreword, Christopher Fynsk, it would be

community and hospitality: Caputo's "Impossible Community,"[769] and Shakespeare's "A Community of the Question."[770] Both Derridean apologists not only address Derrida's legacy around community but also what the basis of such a quasi-community might be, namely "hospitality." Stephen Shakespeare justifies this attention to hospitality, which he describes as a "discipline of hospitality," as a founding feature of a "community without community." Shakespeare suggests it is a discipline precisely because,

> It does not sell short the demanding and costly venture of making room for the other—but also because it acknowledges the contingent and otherness which is always already lodged in the heart of every claim for identity.[771]

Similarly, Johm Caputo embarks on communal reflection by recounting the etymology of two important words of Derrida's reflection: hospitality and community. Caputo reminds his reader 'hospitality' shares its etymology with a "military formation" and hospitality originally meant a stranger, an enemy, one who is hostile, "stranger (hostilis), +

"exceedingly difficult" to apply Nancy's work practically, and seeking an immediate political application of his thought of community risks frustration. Fynsk wonders how "one might move from his definition of a nonorganic, differential articulation of social existence…to any currently existing politics." Nancy's work, following Bataille, focuses around myth as central and essential to community, there can be no community outside of a myth that sustains it and on which it is founded. He writes,

> Absolute community-myth-is not so much the total fusion of individuals, but the will of community: the desire to operate, through the power of myth, the communion that myth represents and that it represents as a communion or communication of wills… which gathers them together and gives them their common figure in its speech and as this speech (p. 57).

The founding of the community is based on a myth which if interrupted in turn interrupts the community. Nancy suggests myth is crucial to community and by that he means it "completes it (the community) and gives it the closure and the destiny of an individual, of a completed totality." However, communal myth that is interrupted also creates, in closing down of the identity of the immanent community, an incompleteness. Elaborating on this theme Nancy suggests "Neither the community nor, consequently, the individual (the poet, the priest, or one of their listeners) invents the myth: to the contrary, it is they who are invented or who invent themselves in the myth." In other words myth is not something by which community is created but rather is itself the creation of a community while ironically, in realizing the fictionality of its own mythology —what Nancy, following Blanchot, calls "literature"—disrupts its own communality.

[769] John D. Caputo, "A Community without Truth: Derrida and the Impossible Community," Research in Phenomenology, Volume. 26, (1996), pp. 25-37.

[770] Steven Shakespeare, "A Community of the Question: Inclusive Ecclesiology", *Church and Religious 'Other'*, edited by Gerard Mannion, London, New York: T & T Clark, 2008.

[771] Steven Shakespeare, "Community of the Question", p. 165.

pets (pots, potes, potentia), to have power."[772] Also, Caputo highlights Derrida's distaste for the word "community." Community (communitas) is a "kissing cousin" of the word "munitions" and "to have a communion is to be fortified on all sides, to build a 'common' (com) 'defense' (munis) as when a wall is put up around the city to keep the stranger or the foreigner out."[773] The use of these two thinkers shall assist in imagining how a (quasi)eschatological ecclesiology may be conceived and, equally important, how it may not; that is, how to think about the Church through the crucible of *aporia*, undecidability and autoimmunity.

7.9 The Church as a 'Community without Community'?

For any ecclesial community to be open, to be hospitable to the coming and future *Kingdom of God*, it seems vitally necessary for there to be in place a working theology able to engage with the *aporia* between the present Church and the coming one. Can ecclesiological structure remain open to eschatological realities with enough of its identity intact to be recognizable to itself, and simultaneously, to carry the weight of authority from which it may speak, teach or worship? The Church, if it is to be at all related to the *Kingdom of God*, even asymmetrically, must, as Moltmann and Pannenberg both emphasize, be oriented to the future: Adventus for Moltmann and the denying of ontological presence in the present for Pannenberg. As Derrida would insist, a community must be structured like a promise and open to the future. Therefore, the Church's present and presence is always relativized, provisional, that is, critical of the self-same which allows it to orient itself to its own future. This theme regularly finds itself into theological thought. Rosemary Radford Ruether writing

[772] Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, p. 110.
[773] Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, p. 108.

in 1968 recognizes this aporetic imperative clearly,

> The eschatological event encounters the present, but always as a reality whose fulfilled essence lies in the future. Therefore, it is a reality that always transcends the present situation, and both pronounces judgement upon it and imparts to it the power to free it from itself. Only in this form can the historical community abide in the eschatological Pneuma. When, however, it puts the Pneuma behind itself as the rationale of its own historical actuality, then it ipso facto no longer understands what the Holy Spirit is. The historical church can possess the Spirit only by knowing that it does not possess it, but must let itself be possessed by a power beyond itself. The Holy Spirit does not underwrite any finalised historical structures or dogmas, but rather breaks apart and brings to an end such history. It is surprise; and it is known only by those who are willing to be taken by surprise and radically re-created.[774]

Here Ruether insists the continuity of the historical Church must, in order to be open to the continuation of the work of the "eschatological Pneuma," be discontinuous with itself, properly understood in the terms insisted upon by Derrida, Moltmann and Pannenberg—in the sense of futurity. Like justice for Derrida and the *Kingdom* for Moltmann and Pannenberg, Reuther argues the eschatological Church may never be fully present (to itself) which also, in agreement with Derrida, calls into question the ability, even the necessity for any community to self-identify. If by community, what is meant is uniformity, resemblance, cohesion, coherence, or continuity, such collectivity must, in Derrida's thinking, remain radically provisional. As Derrida says in the film "Derrida's Elsewhere,"

> Whenever the "we" is a kind of fusional community where responsibility is swamped, I can see danger. Thus I have, with experience, contracted an allergy to any community of that type. But on the other hand I would term "we" acceptable when it is made of interruptions, where those who say "we" know that they are singularities with an interrupted connection. Not only does that not prevent us from saying "we" and talking to ourselves and hearing ourselves, but the condition for talking to ourselves and hearing ourselves is that interruption remains.[775]

Derrida's notion of community is paradoxical, or aporetic, and can only exist as such. Two

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[774] Rosemary Radford, *The church against itself; an inquiry into the conditions of historical existence for the eschatological community,* New York, Herder and Herder, 1967, p. 61.
[775] Derrida's Elsewhere, *D'ailleurs, Derrida* (original title), Director: Safaa Fathy, Documentary, Spain, 1999.

works specifically examining this communal non-structure and attempt to name this aporetic reality, include Shakespeare's "A Community of the Question"[776] and Caputo's "Impossible Community."[777] This section shall briefly look at each to determine how they may contribute to the church's self-reflection which may embrace a Derridean quasi-structure. Kevin Hart suggests that such an attempt may well be worthwhile:

> Derrida says nothing about the kingdom, the community of Jesus' disciples, for example, but he indicates what is needed for the concept "kingdom" to be repeatedly reformulated in philosophy and theology. He says nothing about the life in the Spirit, or how that life is possible by way of Jesus' death, but he gives us an idea of how and why "life" gets reworked in Christian theology. And he tells us nothing of the experience of God, although once we learn to distinguish the otherness of différance from the otherness of God we can perhaps be more precise in our theological formulations.[778]

7.9.1 Steven Shakespeare's A Community of the Question

Wanting to "come to the table with an ecclesiology worthy of the name," Stephen Shakespeare opens his book, *Church and the Religious Other: Essays on Truth, Unity and Diversity*, with the following set of questions comprising a simple yet profound dualism,

> Is the church today a community in question. Is it a community which exists in the power of the question, the first and last question of who we are called to be? Or is a community the answer? A body which sets out and transmits a truth already complete and achieved, whose development is simply a matter of saying the same thing in different contexts.[779]

As one who supports a more inclusive ecclesiology in the Church, Shakespeare contributes to this dialogue by approaching the work of the "errant rabbi' the philosopher Jacques Derrida in order to work through an ecclesiology which reminds us "no community, no language is a

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[776] Steven Shakespeare, "A Community of the Question: Inclusive Ecclesiology," *Church and Religious 'Other'*, edited by Gerard Mannion, London, New York: T & T Clark, 2008.
[777] John D. Caputo, "A Community without Truth: Derrida and the Impossible Community," Research in Phenomenology, Volume. 26, (1996), pp. 25-37.
[778] Kevin Hart, Four or Five Words in Derrida, *Living Together: Jacques Derrida's Communities of Violence and Peace*, edited by Elisabeth Weber, New York, Fordham University Press, 2013, p. 186.
[779] Shakespeare, "Community of the Question," p. 156.

self-contained whole which can simply define itself without recourse to violence, or the exclusion of its rejected other."[780] Shakespeare begins his essay on "The Community of the Question" from a paragraph in *Writing and Difference* that wonders about the 'question' of community that might be asked or contemplated without the

> hypocrisy of an answer to already initiated itself beneath the mask of the question, and not determined enough for its voice to have been already and fraudulently articulated within the very syntax of the question. A Community of decision…but also a threatened community, in which the question has not yet found the language it has decided to seek.[781]

Shakespeare recognizes the nature of this discourse is foreign to ecclesiology but, similar to this project, wonders if Derrida might offer some understanding about the nature of ecclesial reflection. To this end Shakespeare examines the recent work of the World Council of Churches' document entitled *The Nature and Mission of the Church*. Shakespeare notes from the document the marks of the church being:

> The oneness, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity of the church are God's gifts and are essential attributes of the church's nature and mission. However, there is a continual tension in the historical life of the church between that which is already given and that which is not yet fully realized….The Church is an eschatological reality, already anticipating the Kingdom. However, the Church on earth is not yet the full visible realisation of human history and therefore needs constant repentance and renewal in order to respond fully to its vocation.[782]

On one hand, Shakespeare continues to highlight the WCC document, the church "already participates in the communion of God," but on the other hand, "in its human dimension, is made up of human beings who…are still subject to the conditions of the world."[783] Responding to this, Shakespeare continues the same line of thought to its conclusion:

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[780] Shakespeare, "Community of the Question", p. 157.
[781] Shakespeare, "Community of the Question", p. 157; quoting Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, p. 80.
[782] Shakespeare, "Community of the Question," p. 157; *The Nature and Mission of the Church*, Faith and Order Paper 198, Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2005, §52, p. 13.
[783] Shakespeare, "Community of the Question," p. 157; *The Nature and Mission of the Church*, Faith and Order Paper 198, Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2005, §49, p. 12-13.

> What interests me is the grudging tone of this document (*The Nature and Mission of the Church)* towards the only medium within which meaningful life can be imagined to exist: history. History is what stops us fully exhibiting the full reality of the kingdom."[784]

Shakespeare wonders if approaching the *Kingdom* despite history, that is, history and individuality as troublesome obstacles only to be viewed negatively, can be the basis of a robust ecclesiology. At the center of Shakespeare's concern, like MacDougall, is the ecclesial over-reliance on a communion or *koinonia* structure as the basis of thinking about ecclesial life which understands *koinonia* as a unity which must silence dissent. Recall from above Martyn Percy's critique of the temptation for recent ecclesiological thought to "Platonize the *koinonia* of the Church…identifying it as a parallel reflection of the koinonia of the Holy Trinity…which demonizes all conflict and division as inimical to the life of the Church."[785] Shakespeare continues reflecting on the "idealistic *koinonia*" until he makes the following critical and essential comment:

> …the kind of idealistic koinonia privileged by documents such as *The Nature and Mission of the Church* brackets out the contested political processes which arrived at ideas of holiness, catholicity, unity and apostolicity in the first place. The notion that these ideas are delivered to us freshly minted from the hand of God, and then tarnished by our historical hands is not sustainable.[786]

The Church, the historic and fallible church, must recognize the reception of traditions and doctrines as part of a historical process, even if they were inspired by the Spirit, and which had no direct, contextless access to the *Kingdom of God*. History is always bound by context, from a particular time and space. Ecclesiology, caught as it is between the eternal and historical, cannot escape from the *aporia* and must struggle mightily with what the *Kingdom*

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[784] Shakespeare, "Community of the Question," p. 158.
[785] Martyn Percy, *"The Gift of Authority in the Church of England: sketching a contextual theology," Unpacking the Gift: Anglican Resources for Theological Reflection on The Gift of Authority*, edited by Peter Fisher, London: Church House Publishing, 2002, p. 85.
[786] Shakespeare, "Community of the Question," p. 159

of God may mean for our time and context, while recognizing our received truth has been delivered to us through particular definitions and acts of exclusion, which by their very historicity make them contingent. There is no escaping this reality. What Derrida calls into question is the pure moment or position of departure: any Archimedean point from which we derive what is and isn't a concept like justice. When translated, justice is translated into the register of the *The Kingdom of God.* Shakespeare agrees:

> Derrida does not reject the possibility of meaning or a rigorous approach to questions of truth. What he questions is any attempt to establish the purity of truth, a truth which is sheerly given and wholly present, without mediation or deferral….Derrida deconstructs the self-enclosed circle. No system, no truth no presence can wholly account for its own possibility. There is always a remainder, something unthought, unsaid, undone. And therefore there is always the possibility of genuine ethical decision and faithful response, because truth does not lie in the abolition of time and finitude.[787]

Derrida maintained a lifelong allergy for the word 'community' and, if transposed into an ecclesial register would likely agree that any ecclesiology, while acknowledging guardrails, must reflect on itself but must do so while mindful that it is not a self-enclosed circle.[788] The resistance to the pre-determination of the question which might form communal identity leads Shakespeare to ponder briefly the Anglican Communion confessional covenant undertaken as a response to *The Windsor Report*. The recommendation from *The Windsor Report* recommended the adoption of an Anglican Covenant to have a "mechanism to enable and maintain life in communion, and to prevent and manage communion disputes."[789] As Shakespeare sees it, "Only if we decide what we believe in advance, it seems, can we belong to one another, and offer admission to properly defined outsiders who must then become like

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[787] Shakespeare, "Community of the Question," p. 163.
[788] See Section 2.3.2 "Closure/Clôture"; Critchley, Ethics, p. 238, 256.
[789] *The Windsor Report*, sec. 119, p. 49.

us in order to be welcomed."[790] Recall the *The Windsor Report* suggested a covenant which would allow Anglicans to "protect their distinctive identity and mission."[791]

How might the Anglican Church, any Church, think about itself in more open and hospitable ways to that which is 'other'. How may ecclesial reflection contemplate of the unity of the Trinity in ways that do not preclude the historic Church, recognizing divisions may reveal a truth about not only diversity, but might also help embrace a theology of change, of both moving towards (à-Dieu) and away from (adieu), of embracing and excluding? For if ecclesiality has anything to do with politics as Simon Critchley defines it in *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, then it must face "'the moment of decision' of judgement, of justice, of action, of antagonism, of beginning, of commitment, of conflict, of crisis,"[792] and is therefore "concerned with struggle, dissension, contestation, and negotiation."[793] These are the moments inscribed into ecclesial decision-making at councils, conventions, and vestries as well as synods and other consultative bodies. Ecclesiologically, decision-making would need to recognize the collective identity of any ecclesial body must remain other-than itself, not only welcoming the stranger as aliens and exiles[794] but indeed living as aliens and exiles unto ourselves.

The historic and immanent Church, the Church of vestries and diocesan councils, of synods and communions, remains aware of the many divisions and conflicts which often seem to define the modern era and make outsize demands of attention and energy. There are many decisions facing the Church, some of which are merely procedural, but others seeming to revolve around the contested and shifting ground of identity. It is these polemical decisions

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[790] Shakespeare, "Community of the Question," p. 164
[791] *The Windsor Report*, sec. 119, p. 49.
[792] Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, p. 187.
[793] Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, p. 215.
[794] 1 Peter 2.11

that might benefit from an ecclesiology which has been taught to recognize the *aporia* at the heart of the community self-identity. An eschatological ecclesiology, one that acknowledges Derrida's undecidability as analogous to the *Kingdom* work of some of its own profound and venerated theologians like Moltmann and Pannenberg, might help to create fruit of the Spirit such as patience, kindness, self-control during times of conflict and division. In recognizing the provisionality of the present, as well as the inability, even the undesirability, to predict in advance what shape the *Kingdom of God* might take in the future, the gathered, historic Church may find itself more amenable, more hospitable to the challenges it currently faces. An eschatological community, a community of the question, will be able to see within conflict both possibility and potentiality for its future. However, a community which seeks to immunize itself from the deleterious effects of disagreement and dissension may already have circled the wagons from the the perceived hostiles in a manner which simultaneously shuts out a coming future (Adventus), opting instead for a future more predictable and controllable.

The ecclesiology for the church Shakespeare highlights in Derrida's work reaffirms the "Christian tradition as a tradition of embodied hospitality." This discipline of hospitality will "be cautious about assuming that it knows in advance where and in what guise God will appear," and will eschew any "criteria of judgement…defined by a mythical ideal of perfection," relying instead on the "substantive virtue of hospitality itself, if there is such a thing."[795]

[795] Shakespeare, "Community of the Question," p. 165.

7.9.2 Hostipitality[796]

Hospitality is a helpful auxiliary concept found throughout Derrida's work (and in scripture) which helps elaborate the aporetic relation between law and justice, so may assist in ecclesial self-reflection regarding the *Kingdom of God*. The experience of hospitality, Derrida writes,

> is the exemplary experience of deconstruction itself…Hospitality—this is a name or an example of deconstruction…Hospitality is the deconstruction of the at-home; deconstruction is hospitality to the other, to the other than oneself, the other than "its other," to an other who is beyond any "its other."[797]

Derrida illumines the *aporia* of hospitality by emphasizing an etymological and semantic ambivalence especially present in the French word *hôte* (from Latin *hospes*) as both the one who offers hospitality as well as the one who receives it, both host and guest. The word hospitality originally meant a stranger, an enemy, one who is *hostile,* "stranger *(hostilis),* + *pets (pots, potes, potentia),* to have power."[798]

> In a sense, Derrida is making the point that faith must always risk being misplaced. The other, who lacks any determinate qualities, could just become a specter, an emptiness. Faith is always dealing in the desert with a radical atheism and with ghosts. And yet it is driven by a desire for the other, and a hospitality that welcomes the risk brought by this other beyond being, and far from all guarantees and assurances.[799]

Derrida's concept of law points beyond itself to its other, to the concept of justice which is the "incalculable affirmation of and hospitality for the other."[800] This hospitality of the other opens up the possibility of faith and hope but also recognizes and accepts risk. John Caputo

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[796] Derrida, "Hostipitality," trans. Barry Stocker and Forbes Morlock, *Angelaki* 5, no. 3 (2000): 3–18, the neologism *hostipitalité* is a fusion of hospitality (hospes) and hostility (hostis). Derrida exposes the paradox at the heart of welcoming the other: the moment one offers hospitality, one simultaneously retains the power to set the terms of that welcome. Hospitality, therefore, is always shadowed by the possibility of exclusion, conditionality, and even violence.

[797] Derrida, "Hostipitality," in *Acts of Religion*, p. 364. Derrida develops the question of hospitality mostly in the following texts: *Adieu* to Emmanuel Levinas, "Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility: A Dialogue with Jacques Derrida," in *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*, edited by R. Kearney, M. Dooley, London: Routledge, 1999, pp. 65–83.

[798] Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, p. 110.

[799] Shakespeare, *Derrida and Theology*, p. 147.

[800] Shakespeare, *Derrida and Theology*, p. 131.

delas directly with this risk as well as its concomitant desire of any person or political community to attempt to ameliorate this exposure.

7.9.3 Caputo and the "Community without Truth"

In a direct way, Caputo has already engaged the question at the heart of this project by suggesting the same analogy proposed herein, "the church is 'deconstrucible,' but the kingdom of God, if there is such a thing, is not."[801] Caputo argues, following Alfred Loissy, that the church is "plan B," as it occupies the space, deferred and different, between the *Kingdom* announced by Jesus and the Church which followed. The Church is a "function of *différance*" and it is necessary, according to Caputo, "to bring that kingdom about in itself, here on earth, in a process of incessant self-renewal or auto-deconstruction."[802] One finds in Caputo's work an explicit attempt to address the meaning of Derrida's *différance* and deconstruction for the church as a "work of memory and imagination… daring ways to imagine the future."[803]

7.9.4 Caputo's Church Community or Deconstruction as the Hermeneutics of the Kingdom of God

In many ways this project is inspired by a certain reading of Caputo's work around the figure of Derrida, especially in its relationship to the *Kingdom of God*, remarking: "The good news deconstruction bears to the church is to provide the hermeneutics of the Kingdom of

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[801] Caputo, *What would Jesus Deconstruct?: Good News of Post-modernism for the Church*, The Church and Postmodern Culture Series, Edited by James K. A. Smith, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007, p. 35.
[802] Caputo, *What would Jesus Deconstruct?*, p. 35.
[803] Caputo, *What would Jesus Deconstruct?*, p. 35, though he is reticent to fully think through the implications from within a practicing ecclesia.

God."[804] Caputo elaborates the identity of this 'church' as quasi-community by laying Derrida's distaste for the identity and presence implicated in the word community.

"I don't much like the word community," Derrida said in an interview; indeed "I am not even sure I like the thing."[805] Caputo picks up Derrida's distaste for the word community as it provides "an indispensable precondition for coping with the aporetics of community,"[806] reminding his readers community (communitas) is a "military formation" built against the other whether city or person.[807] It is this impulse "deconstruction resists." Caputo, following Derrida, wonders if there could be a community beyond community, one that is "permeable and porous, its powerful sense of self-identity having been shaken loose," a "nontotalizing community" a "quasi community."[808] To ask if such a community is possible is already to evoke the spirit of presence in such a manner which may well foreshorten the eschatological and futural. It is not a matter of *being* such a community but rather a matter of the orientation and commitment to the future. But Caputo, though rejecting a confessional or creedal basis for this community does proceed with the notion of a community which finds its best expression as the *Kingdom of God*:

> The event harbored in the Christian tradition(s) is the kingdom of God. The kingdom is what is to come; it has already begun to come in the life and death of Jesus. The entire vocabulary of "come" (viens) and "to come" (à venir) in deconstruction bears the mark of Jewish and Christian messianism. In weak theology the parables about the kingdom of God that Jesus tells, the parable that Jesus himself is, is the paradigm.[809]

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[804] Caputo, *What would Jesus Deconstruct*, p. 137. The deconstruction of Christianity is not an attack on the church but a critique of the idols to which it is vulnerable—the literalism and authoritarianism, the sexism and racism, the militarism and imperialism, and the love of unrestrained capitalism with which the church and its various forms has today and for too long been entangled, any one of which is toxic to the kingdom of God."
[805] Derrida, *Points*, p. 355, quoted from Caputo, "A Community without Truth: Derrida and the Impossible Community," Research in Phenomenology 26 (1), (1996), p. 25.
[806] Caputo, "A Community without Truth," p. 25.
[807] *Munire*, to fortify ourselves, to build a wall, to gather ourselves together (com) for protection against the other.
[808] Caputo, "A Community without Truth," p. 26.
[809] John D. Caputo, *A Short Précis of The Weakness of God and The Insistence of God*, The following is an excerpt from the Preface of the English translation of the Spanish edition of Caputo's Weakness of God. The Spanish edition

Caputo works through the implications of this *Kingdom*-oriented, theoretical quasi-community by suggesting it would be a "non-totalizing community," a community that would recognize difference as the way to "recognize the abyss or gulf of singularity" for which he credits and evokes Levinas' "relation without relation."[810] This community would be open-ended and undetermined, lacking programmable effects and be marked by "constant interaction," and one in which there would not be the ability, nor the desire to only "produce predictable, foreseeable results but would always be vulnerable to chance and surprise from what is outside the community."[811]

Therefore, the commitments of Caputo's theoretical community would not allow confessional theology unfettered without the inclusion of what he names "radical theology," which puts "pressure," or "haunts the confessional theologies."[812] As one might imagine, this haunting of confessional theology exists without authority from or regard to the establishment:

> Radical theology does not report back to the confessional community or seek its authentication there, and reserves for itself the right to ask any question, without regard to whether it fractures or divides the community or causes schismatic conflict and confessional breaks or engages in revisionist readings of classical scriptures. Radical theology emerges both as a demand of thought, which has the right to ask any question and as a demand of praxis, which seeks to suspend any claim that privileges an inherited legacy, which is an accident of birth (a historical community).[813]

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is entitled, La Debilidad de Dios: una teleologia de acontecimiento, trans. Raúl Zegarra; Buenos Aires: Promoteo Libros, 2014, p. 112. One might wonder if this conflation of *Kingdom* and Jesus might be precisely the distinction made between Moltmann and Pannenberg.

[810] Caputo, "A Community without Truth," p. 26.

[811] Caputo, "A Community without Truth," p. 26.

[812] Caputo, *The Insistence of God*, p. 68.

[813] Caputo, *The Insistence of God*, pp. 68-69.

Despite the admission Caputo makes that in his purview "any kind of theology today, confessional or radical, will be the product of an 'academic' theologian,"[814] he concurrently affirms radical theology isn't merely negative or subversive. Although not affirmative of confessional beliefs or practices, yet affirming an 'arch-faith' (following Kirkeggard's Johannes Climacus who prefers *becoming* Christian to *being* one, Bonhoeffer's "religionless Christianity," or Levinas' love of Torah more than God), Caputo imagines a radical theological community managing somehow to be quite free of preexisting history and context, absent of hierarchy, authority, systems, doctrines, etc. If there is an order of theologians who are able to articulate this arch-original theology, either within or without the ecclesial community, it is not clear at all how radical theology's analysis and conceptualization escapes and still speaks to the confessional community. Further, how does a theology predicated on being 'radical' challenge the contingent and historical particulars while operating from within the context of historical confessional theology? Caputo is careful to walk this fine line by insisting that, like Derrida's refusal to identify any specific democracy as fulfilled, the ecclesia is *à'venir* (to come) and is not future present, nor some future democracy that will *eventually* become present. In the same vein, Caputo recognizes within "(finite) identifiable content, there is contained something that it cannot contain,"[815] and so leaves this articulation of the ecclesial community as theoretical, although he does apply *différance* to the social and political realm when he takes up issues such as economic justice, militarism, patriarchy, abortion, and homosexuality.

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[814] For Caputo this means theology "reports back" to a "powerful disciplinary system of academic protocols… like career-minded, university-hopping academics for "peer reviewed" conferences, journals, and academic presses, by academic candidates in search of employment, tenure, promotion, and a long list of academic honors like endowed chairs, research grants, and prestigious lectureships.
[815] Caputo, *The Insistence of God*, p. 84.

When Caputo does turn to the less-theoretical application of these open-ended ideals, he does so autobiographically with Derrida's own intimate and private life of being somewhat of the outsider: a Jew raised in an Arab country and "rightly described as an atheist," as well as being Algerian but raised culturally and linguistically as French. Caputo wonders if when "he writes about the exile, the outsider, the nomad, the desert, the uprooted, the dispersed"[816] "a Jew *sans* Judaism, a Christian *sans* Christianity, an Arab *sans* Islam…a religious man *sans* theism."[817] When Caputo attempts to articulate a more communal, less individual expression of this same '*sans*', he calls it a community without truth, that is "without the blood that gets spilled every time someone assures us that they speak for God."[818] As Caputo affirms the *sans* at the heart of a community without truth, he does so without any of the communal context with which he describes Derrida individually. He advocates for a community "without vision, without truth, without revelation,"[819] but sadly the community in Caputo's sight is also one *sans* context or history. The question he ignores is how to think through the coherence of a communal identity through time given this radical theology.

There are occasions when Caputo focuses on how the church may be a community of *différance*:

> "What would Jesus deconstruct?" The answer is first and foremost the church! For the idea behind the church is to give way to the kingdom, to proclaim and enact and finally disappear into the kingdom that Jesus called for, all the while resisting the temptation of confusing itself with the kingdom. That requires us to clear away the rhetoric and get a clear picture of what "deconstruction" means, of just who "Jesus" is, and… to sketch a portrait of alternative Christianity, one that is as ancient as it is new, one in which the "dangerous memory of Jesus" is still alive—deconstruction being, as I conceive it, a work

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816 Caputo, "A Community without Truth," p. 28.
817 Caputo, "A Community without Truth," p. 32.
818 Caputo, "A Community without Truth," p. 33.
819 Caputo, "A Community without Truth," p. 33, quoting Derrida, *Raising the Tone of Philosophy: Late Essays by Immanuel Kant, Transformative Critique by Jacques Derrida,* ed. Peter Fenves, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993, p. 167.

> of memory and imagination, of dangerous memories as well as daring ways to imagine the future, and as such good news for the church.[820]

Like MacDougall, Caputo is quick to ensure the Church's preconceived imagination of its kingdom/eschatological future is placed in check. For MacDougall, an eschatological ecclesiology must stress balance between the "eschatological already and not yet."[821] Caputo is also quick to ensure the church's imagination of itself remains unknown, "on the go, making a crossing, trying to get somewhere else."[822] He analogizes two concepts from Augustine's Confessions: *Coram Deo* and *Cor inquietum* to provide parallels to Derrida. First, *Cor inquietum*, is the restless heart which must be a defining mark of a community of *différance*. The agitated heart, Caputo claims, is the *sine qua non* of religion. The restless heart is in "search of something, as opposed to being satisfied with the reality that sits under our noses…genuine adventure means venturing out into the unknown, where no one knows the way."[823] Second, Caputo, following Derrida's own ode to Augustine, ascribes prayer as the posture one adopts when living in the face of God, *Coram Deo,* "exposed to God by God, à dieu, in which God is the possibility of the impossible, the 'wholly other', the unforeseeable…the incoming of what we did not see coming."[824] Despite appealing to prayer as an event of the unknown, the church remains for Caputo little more than "a full staff of bishops, deans, pastors…bells, organs, offering boxes…hymn boards, hearses."[825] Frustratingly undeveloped is an ecclesial/political practice aside from a certain Derridean *via negativa.* Perhaps, however, Derrida does invoke a practice and a discipline around which a community—who wishes to

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[820] Caputo, *What would Jesus Deconstruct?*, p. 35.
[821] MacDougall, *Communion*, p. 141. Recall also his pillars of the eschatological ecclesia are tensiveness, openness, risk, trust, hope.
[822] Caputo, *What would Jesus Deconstruct?*, p. 38.
[823] Caputo, *What would Jesus Deconstruct?*, p. 55.
[824] Caputo, *What would Jesus Deconstruct?*, p. 55.
[825] Caputo, *The Insistence of God*, p. 75, quoting Kirkegaard, *Kierkegaard's Writings*, translated and edited Howard Hong, and Edna Hong, volume 22, *The Moment and Late Writings*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1998, p. 35.

be a community in the Derridean style—may embrace. Obliquely this is what the IATDC was struggling to articulate in early documents only to fall back, in the face of rising ecclesial pressure, to community as fortification and predetermination. Derrida does not simply leave faith suspended in *aporia*, nor does he advocate for an abstract openness that dissolves into indecision. Rather, he gestures toward a practice—a discipline of hospitality—that shapes a community willing to embrace its own provisionality, a community that resists foreclosure while remaining committed to an ethos of responsibility toward the other, not in a passive way but one that recognizes the discipline of discipleship, that is, the rigorous discipline of making space for what is unforeseen, what is unmasterable, what is yet to come. In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida calls for an ongoing vigilance, a form of ethical inheritance that does not merely preserve the past but remains attuned to the *revenant*—the returning specters that haunt our history and demand re-interpretation. Similarly, in *Of Hospitality*, he explores how true hospitality requires a renunciation of control, a letting-go of the power to dictate the terms of welcome. A community formed in the Derridean mode would therefore be one structured by its own incompleteness, by a faith that neither claims possession nor seeks guarantees but is willing to remain exposed to the other's arrival, to justice's summons, to a *Kingdom* that cannot be domesticated. In ecclesial terms, this translates to a Church that lives in the tension between tradition and expectation, a Church that does not presume to define the *Kingdom* but remains open to being continually reshaped by it. If faith always risks being misplaced, then the community that embraces this faith must also be willing to risk itself—to be undone and reconstituted by the demands of an unforeseeable future. This is not simply an idea; it is a discipline, a posture, a practice of deferring certainty for the sake of justice, of refusing closure in order to make space for the impossible demand of the *Kingdom* that remains always to come.

CHAPTER EIGHT A-Dieu Ecclesia: A Community of Différance

I pray to God to make me free of God…[826] *-Meister Eckhart*

8.1 Retracing steps

On many fronts it has been argued the "study of religion has already benefited greatly from Derrida's extensive contributions."[827] These include: Feminist Theology,[828] Negative Theology,[829] Ethics,[830] Atheism,[831] Rabbinic Interpretation,[832] Social Theory,[833] Biblical Interpretation,[834] the Evangelical Church.[835] The central argument of this dissertation revolves around an analogy—that law is to justice as the Church is to the *Kingdom of God*—which serves not only as a formal comparison between Derrida's political thought and the ecclesiology of Moltmann and Pannenberg, but also a framework for exploring the implications of Derrida's work on ecclesial identity directly. For Derrida, justice represents an infinite demand that exceeds all calculable expressions of law; it is "to-come" (à-venir), forever eluding presence and deferring full realization within any legal structure. Just as Derrida

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[826] Meister Eckhart, *The Complete Mystical Works of Meister Eckhart*, Translated and Edited by Maurice O'C. Walshe, New York, Crossroads, 2009, Sermon Eighty-Seven, p.424.
[827] Gil Anidjar, *Acts of Religion*, p. 2; theology, negative theology, Alms, circumcision, angels and archangels, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam and other religions, Kabbalah, the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, Paul, Augustine, The Talmud, messianism and messianicity, forgiveness, hospitality, prayer, and his prayer shawl, the spirit and the letter, and German Jews and Arab Jews.
[828] See, Ellen Armour, *Deconstruction, Feminist Theology and the Problem of Différance: Subverting the Race/Gender Divide*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999; Ellen Feder, Mary Rawlinson and Emily Zakin, eds., *Derrida and Feminism: Recasting the Question of Woman*, London, Routledge, 1997; Grace Jantzen, *Becoming Divine: Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Religion*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000.
[829] Jean-Luc Marion, Harold Coward and Toby Foshay eds., *Derrida and Negative Theology*, Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1992; Robert Scharlemann Robert ed., *Negation and Theology*, Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992.
[830] Simon Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1992.
[831] Martin Hägglund, *Radical Atheism: Derrida and the Time of Life*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008.
[832] Susan Handelman, *The Slayers of Moses: The Emergence of Rabbinic Tradition in Modern Literary Theory*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1982.
[833] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1998,—The World Made Strange: Theology, Language, Culture, Oxford: Blackwell, 1997.
[834] Theodore W. Jennings, Jr., *Reading Derrida / Thinking Paul*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006.
[835] Carl Rasche, *The Next Reformation: Why Evangelicals Must Embrace Postmodernity*, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004.

notes, justice remains perpetually "other" than law, a future promise that resists closure within any human institution, including the Church itself, which must "keep itself open to what cannot be anticipated or mastered."[836] Analogously, the *Kingdom of God* remains eschatological, always beyond, yet informing, the Church's historical, sacramental and ecclesial forms. This is not to deny the Church's witness to the *Kingdom* itself, but rather to position it, relative to the *aporia* Derrida proposes, as a provisional, self-reflective openness to an unknown future. Derrida's *à-venir* is not merely a state of deferral but a call to perpetual ethical readiness—a "justice" that resists finality even as it shapes the present.[837]

The thesis has proceeded through this analogy with a three-part inquiry: beginning with Derrida's distinction between law and justice, we examined how justice, as the incalculable, exists in perpetual tension with law, which structures society in calculable terms. For Derrida, law becomes both necessary and insufficient, functioning as a "guardrail" that must remain open to reformation in light of the always ungraspable demands of justice.[838] This led to an analogical comparison with the eschatological visions in Moltmann and Pannenberg's theologies, which similarly frame the *Church* within a horizon defined by the "not-yet" of the *Kingdom*[4]. Finally, these insights were applied to Anglican ecclesiology, suggesting that the *Church* must embody a form that, like Derrida's concept of law, is provisional and open-ended, always anticipating but never containing the *Kingdom* in its fullness; an eschatological ecclesiology.

In light of this argument, three main questions emerge to consider in conclusion, each essential for clarifying the implications of this analogy. First, how does the Church honor and receive the traditions and revelations of its past if it is all merely deconstructible? Derrida's

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[836] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, pp. 20-21.
[837] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 22.
[838] Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, pp. *15-17.*

notions of *legacy* and *inheritance* will be examined in light of ecclesial history and eschatological openness. For Derrida, inheritance is neither a mere reception of the past nor a seamless continuity with it; it is a *haunted responsibility* that acknowledges both *les arrivants*—those who are yet "to come"—and *les revenants*, those who return as unresolved presences.[839] This haunted inheritance allows the Church to honor its past without becoming bound or limited by it, embracing the ethical task of interpreting tradition as a call towards future transformation.[840] This is an ecclesiology that rests on the interplay of inheritance and openness, tradition and eschatological anticipation, seeking a unity that is, at every point, open to being undone and remade.

Secondly, what happens to the idea of unity and identity in light of the challenges posed to the traditional understanding of koinonia that Derrrida posits? How might the model of the "guardrail" assist a robust eschatological ecclesiology? Here, the guardrail is not a boundary that forecloses difference but a structure that sustains the Church's openness to its own eschatological reality. In this sense, unity is neither a monolithic uniformity nor an indifference to difference; it is a "unity in tension," anticipating the *Kingdom* by remaining open to change, bound not by where it stands but to where it is called.

Thirdly, how does the Church anticipate or imagine a future *Kingdom* that it may fail to recognize? How might the Church recognize "the impossible" breaking in of the *a-venir*, the promise, the adventus, justice…if or when it arrives? Perhaps it will be helpful to ponder some of the failures to recognize the Risen Lord at the heart of the resurrection narratives, while simultaneously recalling Heidegger's distinction between revelation (*Offenbarung)*, revelation as a concrete, identifiable event and revealability *(Offenbarkeit)* as a contentless condition of the possibility for revelation. Heidegger here mirrors Derrida's concept of

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[839] Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, pp. 92-95.
[840] Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida*, pp. 112-115.

Messainism, specific and determinate and Messianicity, a structural openness to the coming of something unknown, ungraspable, and unforeseeable. The unexpected appearance of the risen Lord prompts examples of individual (un)recognition which may prove analogous and fruitful for ecclesial reflection.

8.2 Legacy & Inheritance: Eschatology's Relation to the Past.

To explore the Church's relationship to an eschatological future, this dissertation engages with Derrida's notions of both "legacy" and "inheritance" concepts which reveal a nuanced dynamic between past and future, tradition and transformation. For Derrida, inheritance is neither a straightforward transmission of the past nor a linear continuity; rather, it constitutes a structure of *hauntology*—a framework that recognizes the past's unresolved presence within the present, even as it remains open to reinterpretation in the light of the future.[841] This understanding of inheritance as "haunted" enables the Church to embrace its historical identity without becoming rigidly defined by it, thereby allowing ecclesiology to inhabit the tension between fidelity to tradition and openness to an unforeseeable *Kingdom*.[842]

For Derrida, inheritance involves not only the reception of a past but a commitment to interpreting both its promises and failures.[843] This is particularly evident in Derrida's discussion of *mourning*—a process that acknowledges the influence of those who came before while also making space for the future. Derrida writes,

> I would say that there is no politics without an organization of the time and space of mourning…without an anamnesic and thematic relation of the spirit

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[841] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, pp. 92-95.
[842] Haddad, *Derrida and the Inheritance of Democracy*, pp. 54-57.
[843] Derrida, *Gift of Death,* pp. 81-83.

> as ghost [revenant], without an open hospitality to the guest as ghost whom one holds, just as he holds us hostage.[844]

In ecclesiological terms, "mourning" the Church's legacy involves grappling with the unfulfilled promises and unresolved injustices that haunt its history. This "dangerous memory" of past failures does not hinder the Church's future; rather, it renews its ethical responsibility to address these unkept promises as it moves forward which is, according to the structure Derrida suggests, the condition of the future's possibility for the Church. Thus, for the Church, inheritance is a demand to bear witness to both past transgressions and the eschatological promise that continually calls it beyond these limitations.

In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida introduces the idea of *les arrivants*—those who are "to come"—and *les revenants*, those who "return" as spectral figures influencing the present. For the Church, *les arrivants* might represent the eschatological future, the promise of the *Kingdom* as an always-unfolding horizon, while *les revenants* signify the traditions, doctrines, and unresolved ethical questions inherited from its history.[845] Ecclesiology, therefore, must engage with both *les arrivants* and *les revenants*, the future and the past, acknowledging each without allowing either to fully determine its future trajectory. This haunted inheritance forms the basis for a open and tentative Church that lives in the *aporia* of both honoring tradition yet also remaining open to future transformation.

Derrida's concept of *mourning* is not a passive act of remembrance or reception but an ethical stance requiring critical engagement with the past. In Derrida's view, true inheritance involves a kind of "responsible interpretation," where the past is neither abandoned nor uncritically accepted; it is instead constantly re-examined in light of contemporary ethical and

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[844] Derrida, *Gift of Death*, p. 61.
[845] Derrida, *Gift of Death*, pp. 81-83.

demands as well as the eschatological demands made on it by the coming *Kingdom*.[846] For the Church, this means a constant process of discernment, wherein tradition is honored as a living, interpretative act rather than a monolithic or even a fully historic structure. In *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida*, Caputo interprets this notion as an aporetic call for "faithful unfaithfulness"—a paradoxical stance that respects tradition without succumbing to its rigidity[847] while remining open to the eschatological future to which it is called.

This approach to inheritance aligns with Derrida's critique of essentialism. The Church does not possess an immutable essence or identity; rather, its identity is constituted through *différance*—the continual play of deferral and difference that allows for both continuity and change. In this way, the Church is called to sustain an understanding of tradition in which multiple interpretations coexist, contributing to an ecclesiology that is unified yet pluralistic. The Church, rather than being a singular institution with a single authoritative voice, becomes a community of difference, shaped by its past yet continually moving towards the *Kingdom* in forms it cannot fully anticipate. Thus, ecclesiology, when viewed through Derrida's lens of *hauntology*, does not negate the importance of historical identity but reframes it as an open-ended inheritance. The Chruch exists in a state of "eschatological mourning," acutely aware of the promises of the past and how those same promises remain unfulfilled, while remaining committed to reinterpreting these promises in light of an unforeseeable future. This approach enables the Church to embody a posture of humility and adaptability, where historical identity is neither abandoned nor fixed but continually reinterpreted through ethical engagement with both memory (past) and hope (future). Of course the question that

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[846] Derrida, *Gift of Death*, pp. 81-84. Remember that for Derrida the concept of responsibility does not create paralysis. "the concept of responsibility, like that of decision, would thus be found or lack coherence or consequence, even lacking identity with respect to itself, paralyed by what can be called an *aporia* or antinomy. That has never stopped it from "functioning," as one says. On the contrary, it operates so much better, to the extent that it serves to obscure the abyss or fill in its absence or foundation…"

[847] Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida*, pp. 155-158.

follows regards the unity of the same Church given the deferral and difference which mark the necessity of ethical and political decision making.

8.3 The Ecclesial Guardrail: Unity and Diversity

In considering the implications of an eschatological ecclesiology, Derrida's metaphor of the "guardrail" which functions as a provisional boundary—a structure that offers guidance while allowing for openness and adaptability becomes critical.[848] Applied to ecclesiology, the concept of the guardrail invites reflection on how the Church might sustain its identity and unity without imposing rigid uniformity. In this model, unity does not necessitate monolithic agreement; rather, it emerges from a communal openness to the unpredictable movement of the Spirit and the unforeseeable demands of the *Kingdom*. The guardrail metaphor reflects Derrida's broader philosophy of undecidability and *différance*. Just as law must remain open to reinterpretation in response to justice, the Church, too, must remain open to change and transformation as it seeks to bear witness to the *Kingdom*. This open-ended unity is neither a dissolution of ecclesial identity nor an indifference to doctrinal integrity. Rather, it is a "unity in tension," a multivalent gathering in which diverse voices and practices coexist within a shared eschatological orientation. The Church, then, becomes a site of both stability and change—a community that holds itself together by remaining open to the disruptive yet life-giving influence of the Spirit.[849]

The guardrail, then, as Derrida offers it, does not merely serve as a boundary but as an ethical safeguard against closure.[850] In the context of ecclesiology, this guardrail is not a

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[849] Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 178-180.
[850] Derrida, *Gift of Death*, pp. 37-39.

doctrinal line that excludes difference; rather, it is a structure that sustains the Church's openness to the *Kingdom* by allowing room for theological and liturgical diversity. As such, the Church's unity becomes an anticipatory reality, grounded not in conformity but in a shared commitment to the "to-come" (à-venir). Derrida's insight stretches the theological concept of *koinonia*—a communion of synods and diocesan votes, to a difference bound by a common eschatological hope for the *Kingdom*. Rather than enforcing rigid boundaries, the Church's unity is forged in its openness to difference, its willingness to live within the *aporia* of both belonging and becoming as articulated so well by Jürgen Moltmann as 'hope' as opposed to merely optimism.

However, this open-ended unity raises further theological questions about the Church's identity and boundaries. If the Church's unity is always provisional, how does it prevent fragmentation? Here, Derrida's guardrail offers a helpful metaphor. Just as law cannot become justice but remains guided by its demands, the Church's identity is shaped not by any definitive claim to the *Kingdom* but by its eschatological anticipation. This orientation toward the *Kingdom* provides a form of coherence, even as it resists fixed boundaries. In this way, the Church embodies a "guarded openness"—an identity that is maintained through its readiness to be disrupted and reformed.

This ecclesial guardrail thus functions as a dynamic boundary, a framework within which the Church sustains a commitment to unity that remains adaptable and responsive to that which haunts it (Spirit, *Kingdom*). By adopting this structure, the Church can honor its tradition without becoming enslaved to it, allowing its doctrines and practices to be informed by the ever-unfolding nature of the *Kingdom*. This is a unity that recognizes the value of theological and cultural diversity, a unity that is not threatened by difference but enriched by it. As Caputo notes, Derrida's understanding of "hospitality" further underscores this

openness to the other—a model for the Church to embrace a unity that is hospitable rather than exclusive.[851]

8.4 Unforeseeability and Recognition: Exploring Offenbarung and Offenbarkeit

Another fundamental question arising from this dissertation's analogy concerns the recognition of an unforeseeable *Kingdom*. If the *Kingdom of God* is, like Derrida's justice, perpetually "to-come" and radically open-ended, how might the Church recognize it, if or when it arrives? This tension between the unknowable and the knowable, the promised and the given, calls for an exploration of Heidegger's distinction between *Offenbarung* (revelation) and *Offenbarkeit* (revealability). In the context of ecclesiology, this distinction articulates an essential dynamic between revelation as a concrete, identifiable event (*Offenbarung*) and the Church's stance of continuous openness to revealability (*Offenbarkeit*), which affirms an eschatological future beyond fixed form or conditioned recognition.[852]

Offenbarung, as Heidegger frames it, designates a moment of disclosure where the concealed reveals itself definitively, often as an event or reality that is specific and identifiable.[853] In ecclesial terms, this might traditionally be understood as the *Kingdom's* manifestation within the Church's life and sacramental expressions. *Offenbarkeit*, however, signifies the potential for revealing, an openness to what is not yet manifest but may come forth. It denotes a state of receptivity, of openness rather than a completed act. Thus, adopting an eschatological stance of *Offenbarkeit* is to live in a state of radical readiness, attuned to what may come, even attempting to imagine it, without presuming to know its form or name in advance. Derrida's distinction between messianism and messianicity closely

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[851] Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida*, pp. 190-192.
[852] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 207-211.
[853] Heidegger, *The Event*, Translated by Richard Rojcewicz, Indiana University Press, 2013, pp. 93-96.

parallels Heidegger's distinction between revelation and revealability. Traditional messianism, much like *Offenbarung*, refers to a specific, determinable event—the coming of a Messiah who fulfills history, bringing about redemption in an identifiable way. This messianism communicates content, shaped by the expectation of a known figure, a known moment, a known resolution to the world's fragmentation. But just as Heidegger resists the idea that revelation exhausts revealability, Derrida resists the idea that messianism exhausts messianicity. His messianicity without messianism speaks instead of a structure of expectation, an openness to the coming of something unknown and unforeseeable, without content. It is not the promise of a particular messianic figure or event, but the perpetual deferral of closure, the insistence that the future remains radically open, never domesticated into a final arrival. This deferral is not merely conceptual. It has profound theological consequences, particularly in its resistance to fixity, finality, and possession. Both Heidegger's revealability and Derrida's messianicity insist that genuine openness is never reducible to a single historical moment—not because truth, justice, or the *Kingdom of God* will not arrive, but because what is to come always exceeds the categories through which one might attempt to receive it.

This eschatological openness raises further theological questions. If the *Kingdom* remains unforeseeable in both essence and form, how does the Church avoid lapsing into endless deferral, a waiting that risks emptying the present of its concrete witness? Derrida's engagement with the "to-come" offers insight here. In *The Politics of Friendship*, Derrida argues that the "to-come" of democracy may not resemble what we currently call democracy; it is the openness of democracy, not its present configuration, that matters. Analogously, the "Kingdom-to-come" certainly will not correspond to traditional or gender based images of king-ship, but rather to an emergent and unforeseeable divine reality of God's reign. Here, the Church's eschatological posture becomes one of faithful vigilance, attentive to a future it

cannot fully predict but which shapes its present practices.[854] *Offenbarkeit* for the Church, therefore, is not passive receptivity but active readiness—a form of "eschatological vigilance" that aligns itself with an unpredictable *Kingdom* rather than claiming it in fixed and final terms. The Church becomes a site of *Offenbarkeit*, a space that holds room for an unfolding divine promise without fully defining or containing it.[855] Such witness is neither a static possession nor an empty form, but a manifestation of the Church's eschatological orientation—a way of life that, though rooted in tradition, remains resolutely open to the "not-yet" that defines its calling. For an narrative example of this *aporia* perhaps it is instructive to ponder the resurrection narratives in which revelation and recognition are fundamental.

8.5 Recognizing the Risen Christ

In the resurrection narratives, the consistent failure to recognize the risen Jesus offers a profound theological and philosophical puzzle. The Gospel accounts of the disciples on the Emmaus road (Luke 24), Mary Magdalene at the tomb (John 20), and the disciples fishing on the Sea of Tiberias (John 21) repeatedly present moments where Jesus' closest followers, those who were intimately familiar with his physical presence, fail to recognize his resurrected form. This motif of unrecognition is not merely an incidental detail but rather a thematic emphasis that opens up a horizon for theological reflection on expectation and identifiability on any and every Easter moment. Each of these episodes reveals a paradoxical dynamic: the presence of Christ is real and tangible, yet it remains concealed, awaiting the conditions for recognition.

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[854] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, pp. 94-95.
[855] Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida*, pp. 143-145.

8.5.1 The Emmaus Road: Breaking Bread as *Offenbarkeit*

In Luke 24:13-35, the disciples on the road to Emmaus fail to recognize the risen Lord despite Jesus walking alongside them on the road, despite familiarity with Jesus and recent events in Jerusalem,[856] and despite Jesus' teaching and exposition of the Scriptures about himself to them as they walked together. Perhaps this familiar narrative begins to answer the ecclesial question, 'How will we know, how will we recognize the breaking in of the *Kingdom* if and when it arrives?' The resurrection stories suggest recognition it is not as straightforward as it might seem. The disciples faithfulness to hospitality and table fellowship primes them for recognition. 'Stay with us," they say to Jesus, "because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' It is around the table, in the breaking of bread that their eyes are finally opened. The *Offenbarung* of the risen Christ—his sudden appearance and revelation—is meaningful because the disciples are engaged in the practice of shared Eucharistic remembrance, which is itself an act of *Offenbarkeit*. Even though there is recognition of this messianic moment, it is fleeting and Jesus disappears from their sight – a testament perhaps that the content of messianism gives way to the reality of a messainicity beyond experience. The breaking of bread serves as the disclosure of divine revelation of the *Kingdom*—unexpected, unimagined, Adventus, being more than they "could ask or imagine."[857]

8.5.2 Mary Magdalene: Misrecognition and the Yearning Heart

John 20:11-18 presents another striking moment of non-recognition giving way to recognition surpassing understanding or facile conceptual grasping. Mary Magdalene, at the

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[856] 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?'

[857] Ephesians 3:20 NRSV, "Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine,"

tomb and overwhelmed by grief, mistakes Jesus for the gardener. Mary's love and devotion bring her to the tomb, creating perhaps a condition of openness to encounter, yet her grief and the expectation she would find Jesus' body, constrains her perception within palpable, historic, Good Friday categories—Jesus' resurrection is beyond her cognition and imagination. Only when Jesus speaks her name does her horizon expand, allowing her to recognize him. "Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher)."[858] This personal, relational revelation highlights the duality of divine self-disclosure: while Christ is present, the human capacity to perceive this presence depends on a transformation of understanding shaped perhaps by existential readiness but, more importantly on the gift of revelation of the other. Congruent to the table in Emmaus, Mary's recognition of Jesus doesn't allow for easy embrace literally or figuratively as her grasping is interrupted in this case with the request, "Do not hold on to me." Moltmann might argue that Mary's expectation on the way to the tomb was guided by her cognitive appraisal of what to expect that morning (futurum); what she experiences is unexpected, unpredicted, even unimaginable (adventus). The fleeting presence of the *Kingdom*, here embodied in resurrection, is made as gift and far exceeds Mary's ability to anticipate Jesus' resurrection as well as her ability to fully possess it or hold it.

8.5.3 "Who are you?" John 21:1-14

"Jesus said to them, 'Come and have breakfast.' Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, 'Who are you?' because they knew it was the Lord."[859] The Johannine disciples' hesitance to ask, "Who are you?" after Jesus appears to them by the Sea of Tiberias reflects another dimension of how recognition of an unexpected future may be revealed. After Jesus'

[858] John 20:16, NRSV
[859] John 21:12

resurrection, Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples spend an unsuccessful night fishing. At dawn, Jesus appears to them on the shore and speaks to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you? Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." The disciples at this point fail to recognize the resurrected Jesus by face or by voice. Only after following Jesus' directions to cast the net on the is met with a successful and abundant catch of fish does recognition of the risen Lord take place. Yet, even when the disciples are gathered face-to-face with the Jesus, who has prepared them breakfast, they remain caught in a tension between incredulity and recognition, as if they are uncertain whether the conditions of *Offenbarkeit* have been met. "Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, 'Who are you?' because they knew it was the Lord." The *Offenbarung* of Jesus as resurrected challenges their categories of understanding, prompting hesitation. Their silence reflects the existential awe of encountering the transcendent within the immanent, a moment where the horizon of disclosure expands beyond their ability to fully recognize it or articulate it. Even when the *Kingdom* is instantiated within history, if such a thing is possible, it can never be fully comprehended or articulated and exceeds any categories through which one might receive it without remainder.

8.6 Faithful Practices as the Horizon of Recognition

In *Aporias*, Derrida insists that the arrival of the other,

> surprises the host—who is not yet a host or an inviting power—enough to call into question, to the point of annihilating or rendering indeterminate, all the distinctive signs of a prior identity, beginning with the very border that delineated a legitimate home and assured lineage, names and language, nations, families and genealogies.[860]

[860] Derrida, *Aporias*, p. 34.

The ecclesia's suspension of its own identity and subjectivity, reliant upon the *Kingdom of God* (mystical ground) to which it is asymmetrically related, is analogous to Derrida's description of justice as unpresentable and incalculable.[861] The openness to this reality no doubt causes anxiety and angst, fear and trembling. To exist as Church is to be structured by the promise of the *Kingdom* without the ability to possess it. To acknowledge this *aporia* means being undone and remade by that which cannot be anticipated, controlled or even fully imagined. Such an existence is not merely a theoretical construct but a profoundly existential and theological reality: to be the Church is to be vulnerable to what is yet to come, to be exposed to the radical alterity and the asymmetrical relation of the *Kingdom of God*. If Derrida's justice remains unrepresentable and incalculable, if it is always to-come, then the Church's relation to the *Kingdom* must likewise remain unsettled, displacing any attempt to domesticate it within doctrinal or institutional certitude.

Yet, this tension is not cause for despair. If anything, it is the condition of the Church's hope, the necessary posture of a people who live in expectation rather than possession, in hospitality rather than closure, in vulnerability rather than control—an ecclesiology that refuses to betray the eschatological excess of the *Kingdom*. The Church does not exist to replicate the past or to secure its own permanence, but to testify to that which it cannot contain, to witness to a future it can neither predict nor master.

This is why faithful practices serve as the horizon of recognition but never as simple guarantees. Just as the disciples' recognition of the risen Christ was not immediate or straightforward but required a transformation of perception, so too must the Church cultivate practices that attune it to the coming *Kingdom*, even as its arrival remains beyond full apprehension. In Emmaus, it is breaking bread that opens the disciples' eyes; for Mary at the

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[861] Derrida, "Force of Law," p. 257.

tomb, it is mourning; for the disciples at the shore it was an obedience that gave way to abundance, each moment suggests that recognition is never merely cognitive, but relational, embodied, and ultimately given as gift.

The Church, then, does not discern the *Kingdom* by fixing its gaze exclusively on what is already known, but by dwelling within the conditions that make recognition possible—the sharing of the table, the welcoming of the stranger, the relinquishment of control, the refusal to grasp too quickly at what remains beyond comprehension. It is what Derrida describes as the hospitality that precedes the host—the willingness to be disrupted, displaced, and reconstituted by the arrival of the Other. The Church, if it is to remain faithful to its eschatological calling, must therefore hold itself in suspension, unmoored from the desire to finalize its own identity,[862] awaiting the arrival of a *Kingdom* that is always more than what it could ask or imagine.

Understanding the ecclesia in the absence of an unequivocal meaning, by the permanent deferral of its essence, the Church opens itself up to that which is excluded and other. It is the very nature of hospitality which is both risk, as well as the condition of the possibility of an eschatological identity of a Church which is open to the destabilizing forces the *Kingdom of God* may exert. The ground and authority of the church rests not as fixed or determined, but aporetic and eschatological; not as irenic or pure but as conflicted and often chaotic. Pannenberg reminds us "conflict gives birth to positive values."[863] Derrida names it *différance*, *aporia*, hostipitality, justice… While Moltmann reminds us, "No ecclesiology can

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[862] What Derrida calls at different times, the *cloture* or *ipseity* or the possibility of selfhood; See Simon Critchley, *Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas*, Especially Chapter Two, "The Problem of Closure," (in Derrida's Reading of Husserl), pp. 59-106; Derrida, *Rogues*, p. 11; where '*ipseity*' is defined as "the power that gives itself its own law, its force of law, its self-representation …of self in the simultaneity of an assemblage or assembly, being together or "living together."

[863] Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom*, p. 125.

stand on its own feet," but must be derived from "Christology and eschatology." Moltmann names this the church's "paradoxical identity" waiting for the Adventus, the promise.

> From first to last, and not merely in the epilogue, Christianity is eschatology, is hope, forward looking and forward moving, and therefore also revolutionizing and transforming the present.[864]

The historic church straining toward the future *Kingdom of God.*

8.8 Epilogue

A-Dieu Ecclesia- The greeting of the a-Dieu does not signal the end.'[865]

> *It seems to me that adieu Ecclesia can mean at least three things which are interrelated*
> 1. *The salutation or benediction given (before constative language "adieu" can just as well signify" hello,""" I can see you,""" I see that you are there," I speak to you before telling you anything else—and in certain circumstances in French it happens that one says adieu at the moment of meeting rather than separation);*
> 2. *The salutation or benediction given at the moment of separation, of departure, sometimes forever (this can never in fact be excluded), without any return on this earth, at the moment of death;*
> 3. *The a-dieu, for God or before God and before anything else or any relation to the other, in every other adieu. Every relation to the other would be, before and after anything else, an adieu*[866]

Jacques Derrida's *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas* records the manuscript of the spoken words he delivered at Levinas' funeral in Pantin, France on December 27, 1995. Derrida's eulogy for his friend and colleague acknowledges the interrelated meanings of the word 'adieu' as one given by Levinas himself:

> I knew that my voice would tremble at the moment of saying it, and especially saying it aloud, right here, before him, so close to him, pronouncing this word of adieu, this word a-Dieu, which, in a certain sense, I get from him, a word that he will have taught me to think or to pronounce otherwise.[867]

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[864] Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, p. 16.
[865] Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, p. 13.
[866] Jacques Derrida, *Adieu*, Werner Hamacher & David E. Wellbery Editors, Translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999, p. 127; also in *The Gift of Death*, translated by David Wills, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995, p. 47.
[867] Derrida, *Adieu*, p. 1.

In his book, *The Gift of Death*, Derrida recounts the meanings of 'adieu' by focusing on how the meaning shifts with the dislocation or association of the prefix "a" to the French word for God, *Dieu*, in three distinct ways: as salutation of greeting, a salutation of separation, and "for God or before God" to which he adds "before anything else or any relation to the other." The A-dieu then functions in three interrelated but aporetic ways in Derrida's usage as it moves toward and away from the God (Dieu) whose presence and absence are evoked. Hent de Vries transcribes these three modes of Adieu as "Adieu, à dieu, A-Dieu."[868] It is this last meaning that bears close examination for ecclesial self-reflection as the prefix "*a*" from the Greek indicates several other movements which may be applied to the Dieu especially when rendered as God. The *a-* may indicate movement, in opposing or contradicting directions: toward, away, and against and/or without. For example, the *a-* as motion toward or into, understood in the sense of affirmation, was a common, albeit older form of English such as a-foot, a-shore, or a-side. The *a-* as lacking renders a-moral or a-political, etc. When addressed to or against God, either directly or indirectly, this "a" renders a-theism. Ecclesial reflection which recognizes these alternative meanings of the prefix "a" in more dynamic motion, both towards and away, for and against God, may make a significant contribution for the Church in light of the *Kingdom of God* informing it. A self-reflective discerning church must accept the possibility, and the all too frequent historical evidence thereof, that what is in one era perceived as motion towards God's kingdom (a-Dieu in the sense of a-shore) was in fact the

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[868] Hent De Vries, "Adieu, à dieu, A-Dieu," *Ethics as First Philosophy: The Significance of Emmanuel Levinas for Philosophy, Literature and Religion*, Edited by Adriaan T. Peperzak, New York and London: Routledge, 1995, pp. 211-219. An à *Dieu* and an *adieu*, a going toward God and a leave taking—coincide in an enigmatic way. The a—with and without an accent grave, separated from and linked to *Dieu/dieu*—in the ambiguity of the à and the a, would stand as much for a turning toward as for a turning away from, and only thus constitute the very enigma, the "duration," "inspiration," and "prophecy" of time…The address marked by the *a* would also say farewell to the omnipotent, omniscient, and benevolent God of ontotheology and with the same gesture face the oblique or nether flip side of God, the other… "transcendence to the point of absence." Quoting Emmanuel Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers*, translated by Alphonso Lingis, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1987, p. 166.

opposite and against (a-Dieu in the sense of atonal or asocial). The ambivalence and uncertainty that lies at the heart of the A-Dieu must be addressed by any ecclesia purporting to speak in the name of God, for attempts to represent the *Kingdom of God* or justice, reveal the *aporia* that lies at the heart of any ecclesial identity. How might the church, both locally and globally undertake theological reflection, understood in the sense of Derridean undecidability? Recalling the *aporia* at the heart of Derrida's political thought in "Force of Law" while also being mindful the descriptions of any ecclesia is exposed to this structure, this question of decision making, and thus of self-identity, comes to the fore. The *Adieu* perhaps may inspire the kenotic gesture of a community to recognize even in the midst of ecclesial agreement, there exists a *Kingdom of God* before and beyond the concepts, laws, liturgy, structure, creeds and canons, before the I AM which is before being becomes determined. A-dieu Ecclesia.

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