

Forty Theses on An Ecozoics of the Deity : Delivered at Oxford (July 30, 2013)⁽¹⁾

Vindicating the Proposal of an Ecozoics of the Deity: In Dialogue with Thomas Berry, Sallie McFague, Anselm, Aquinas, Whitehead, and Nishida While in Tandem with Jesus' Theology and the New Cosmology

Tokiyuki Nobuhara

Introduction

1. In 2011 I delivered a lecture on “The Problem of the Two Ultimates and the Proposal of an Ecozoics of the Deity” at Eco-Sophia Symposium 2011: 8th International Whitehead Conference which took place at Sophia University, Tokyo, Japan, September 26-29, 2011 (see *Proceedings of Eco-Sophia 2011*, 51-72). In the lecture I began with noticing that one of the most important questions we have to ask and answer in the realm of theology (or philosophy of God, to refer to theology’s locus in philosophy) today might be one as to the relationship between the problem of God and ecology. Within this particular context, I took up in the lecture two topics I have recently been most strongly concerned with (namely, the “problem of the two ultimates in interreligious dialogue” and ecology the crux of which has been termed “the Ecozoic Era” by Thomas Berry) and give a certain twist to them to deliver my thesis on “The Proposal of an Ecozoics of the Deity.”

Section I. My Proposal of an Ecozoics of the Deity: In Dialogue with Thomas Berry and Sallie McFague:

Thomas Berry on the Ecozoic Era:

2. “Ecozoic” is a neologism created by Thomas Berry himself for describing a geological epoch following the Cenozoic Era and it signifies something like “Eco or *Oikos*, standing in Greek for a house or a dwelling place, plus *Zoe* meaning life.” The reason for this neologism is that Berry as a geologist is deeply convinced that in view of the outrageous fact that our present modern

industrial petroleum civilization will have used almost 80% of fossil fuels, especially of petroleum, for our fuel and energy during recent three centuries (especially between mid-19th century and mid-21st century). We need to transcend the present civilization in such a way that humans might be able to live in conformity with the entire life community of the Earth.

The Two Ultimates (God and Emptiness/Creativity) As Twisted into an Ecozoics of the Deity: My Proposal at its Core:

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

4. In this case, what is crucial is to think that God’s mode of being within the place of the metaphysical ultimate would define our ecological thinking at its core. In other words, the problem of the two ultimates are now to be incorporated into ecology, thus being “ecologized,” as it were. Thus, it is possible for us to “substitute” the “problem of the two ultimates” for the framework of ecological thinking. Especially, as in my own case, when we designate ecology in terms of Thomas Berry’s rendering of “Ecozoic” (namely, in the sense of “*Oikos=Zoē* or the Dwelling Place giving rise to Life), this possibility of “substitution” might be regarded as persuasively appropriate.

5. When it comes to substituting the “problem of the two ultimates” for the Ecozoic thinking, there is, however, an important presupposition. That is the fact that I think it proper to consider the “ecology of the Deity” prior to the “ecology of the world.” Usually, we make it a rule to consider the ecology of the world under the heading of ecology. However, this would not

be sufficiently proper when we think about ecology at least theologically. We should rather think of the ecology of the Deity before considering the “ecology of the world”—and this as its presupposition. And specifically, when we have learned from Thomas Berry the “Ecozoic” way of thinking as the deeper level of ecological thinking, we are led to a new science which I might designate “an Ecozoics of the Deity.” This is what my proposal is all about.

An Ecozoics of the Deity and Jesus’ Theology:

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

Descartes on Res Cogitans, God’s Naked Spirituality, and an Ecozoics of the Deity:

7. At the beginning of the Modern Age René Descartes is said to have awakened to the human self in the form of “pure spirit” which he termed “*res cogitans*.” This self was perceived as a subject who exists apart from the body-world (or *res extensa*) and sees it as object. The human subject for Descartes was one that needs nothing other than itself in order to exist—namely, a substance.⁽²⁾ Viewed from this viewpoint analogically, it appears that God in God’s pure aseity might well be conceived as a bodyless or placeless “naked spirituality.” We might proceed to think next that God as a pure spirituality can be housed for the first time in the world as God’s body, a vision which opts for the idea of a theology of the body of God. My proposal of an Ecozoics of the Deity denies such a theology of God’s body insofar as it lacks in the vision of the Original Dwelling Place for God.

The Formation of an Eco-Zoics (or Eco/Life Science):

8. Hence, when we reflect upon theology as the Ecozoics of the Deity while

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

The Problem of the Two Ultimates as Interpreted in Terms of the Theology of Loyalty:

9. In my 2011 lecture at Sophia University (which constitutes Part I of my entire project) the problem of the two ultimates (namely, the question of how the Christian God and Buddhist Emptiness or creativity in Whitehead's metaphysics are interrelated to each other) has been taken up to consider through the history of interreligious dialogue since mid-20th century and I have presented my solution by means of a theology of loyalty. My proposal in the present essay (Part II) aims at initiating what I call an Ecozoics of the Deity, which might be far more strictly theologically articulate than a theology of ecology, in such a way that we can incorporate the problem of the two ultimates into the core of the "Ecozoic Era" that Thomas Berry invented. My reflection in the previous lecture (especially on the problem of the "Two Ultimates") gave me a clearer rationale for my proposal of an "Ecozoics of the Deity" than the so-called theology of ecology By this I mean the possibility that my vision of a theology of loyalty would be valid for showing an interrelationship between the two ultimates, God and Buddhist Emptiness (or Whitehead's creativity). Let us recall three principles inherent in my theology of loyalty:

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

Berry's Vision of the Ecozic Era and My Proposal of an Ecozoics of the Deity with a Critical Revision of McFague's Ecological Theology:

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

Berry’s View of Consciousnesses: A New Analogia Entis?

11. The global crisis Berry is concerned about is related to the macrophase biology consisting of five basic spheres: (i) land, (ii)water, (iii)air, (iv) life—and (v) how these interact with one another to enable the planet Earth to be what it is—and a very powerful sphere: the human mind. However, Berry thinks that consciousness is certainly not limited to humans. For every living being has its own mode of consciousness. It is important for Berry to be aware that consciousness is an analogous concept, in the sense that “it is qualitatively different in its various modes of expression.”⁽³⁾ I think this way of grasping consciousness is quite akin to Thomas Aquinas’s notion of Analogia Entis (analogy of being). However, Berry’s grasp of consciousness is unique in that it is centering around the inter-subjectivity of consciousnesses, even going beyond the Cartesian type of objectifying cognition.

Berry’s Critical View of the Industrial World As Bankrupt:

12. Berry thinks in this connection that our present system, based on the plundering of the Earth’s resources, is certainly coming to an end. He even declares: “The industrial world on a global scale as it functions presently, can be considered definitely bankrupt.”⁽⁴⁾ This harsh statement sounds as if Berry had warned in advance the imminent coming of the Lehman Crisis of

September 15, 2008—already almost seven years before the incident. We have to be well prepared for the future which turns out to be severe enough, realistically speaking, before being changed into a great age named the Ecozoic Era which might come into being by what Berry calls the “Great Work” of humans in cooperation with the entire Earth community while led by what I designate as the “Ecozoics of the Deity.” Cruel as these words are, Berry further states quite frankly: “The petroleum at the base of our present industrial establishment might at its present rate of use last another fifty years—probably less, possibly more.”

Ecozoic Better Than Ecological:

13. Berry suggests the name “Ecozoic” as a better designation than “ecological.” For him, while eco-logos refers to an understanding of the interaction of things, Ecozoic is a more biological term that can be used to indicate the integral *functioning* of life systems in their mutually enhancing relation. In other words, what the Ecozoic means is the salvation of the entire Earth-life community. Then, in what sort of mode the Earth-life community is to be saved? Berry replies: “The Ecozoic Era can be brought into being only by the integral life community itself.”

Six Conditions of the Integral Life Community:

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

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

Of these I think the second condition manifesting the “integral functioning of Earth life” and the fourth condition indicating “the primary Earth and the derivative human” have to be ontologically unified. In my own view, ontologically speaking, there have to be in the universe that which enables the “second condition” to appear, as its dynamics; and when it comes of speaking of the unification of the second and the fourth conditions, we have to be aware that the principle of order functioning between the dynamics of the universe and all things is to be found at the base of the “relationship between the Earth and humans.” In his earlier book *The Dream of the Earth* (1988) Berry describes beautifully the dynamics of the universe; and in his later work *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future* (1999) there is a reference to the fact that the universe is self-referent while all things in the universe being universe-referent. Let me thus quote his famous passage on the dynamics of the universe:

If the dynamics of the universe from the beginning shaped the course of the heavens, lighted the sun, and formed the Earth, if this same dynamism brought forth the continents and sees and atmosphere, if it awakened variety of living things, and finally brought us into being and guided us safely through the turbulent centuries, there is reason to believe that this same guiding process is precisely what has awakened in us our present understanding of ourselves and our relation to this stupendous process. Sensitized to such guidance from the very structure and functioning of the universe, we can have confidence in the future that awaits the human venture.⁽⁶⁾

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

The Ontological Integration of the Universe with Its Ground of Dynamism: Kitaro Nishida's Case

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

Though [Bergson says that] pure duration is unrepeatable, in creative evolution the entire past acts as present, and the more we attain the deep foundation of the self, attaining a state of creative evolution, the more we are able to transform the past into the present. Bergson compares memory to a cone, with the past as its base and the present as its apex: this cone continually advances at its apex. Developing this image, we can say that the farther back we go toward the broad base of the cone, and the more concentratedly we assume the movement from base to apex, the more the entire past becomes the present, so that the present becomes the center of gravity of the totality.⁽⁷⁾

Ryokan's Zen Poetical Vision of The Turning Point:

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

Waga nochī o
Tasuke tamae to
Tanomu mi wa
Motonō chikai no
Sugata narikeri
 While beseeching thee
 For Mercy after my death
 Lo I find myself
 Already embodying

The Original Vow now!⁽⁸⁾

Ryokan's original intention in this *tanka* is to say something like this: "While getting sick in bed and feeling pain so much that I cannot but roll over again and again in bed with a prayer asking Amida for mercy upon me after my death, I am nevertheless aware of myself as embodying the Original Vow here-now!" Here at this juncture I would like to incorporate into this self-expression of Ryokan's in terms of "**sugata narikeri**" ("already embodying"), the entire vision of my theology of loyalty. What happens, then? An event of the cosmic renewal happens, ontologically-integrally.

Already Embodying Amida's Vow Now!:

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

The Self-Referent Analogy As Inherent in the Universe:

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

The Threefold Structure of My Theology of Loyalty:

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

A Critique of McFague’s Concept of the Body of God:

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

In this body model, God would not be transcendent over the universe in the sense of external to or apart from, but would be the source, power, and good—the spirit—that enlivens (and loves) the entire process and its material forms. The transcendence of God, then, is the preeminent or primary spirit of the universe. As we are inspirited bodies—living, loving, thinking bodies—so imagining God in our image (for how else *can* we model God?) , we speak of her as *the* inspirited body of the entire universe, the animating, living spirit that produces, guides, and saves all that is.⁽⁹⁾

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

The Transcendent Source of the Inspired Bodies of the Universe As Found in the “Field” of the Deity:

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

The Logos As the Field:

22. This whole discussion of the Logos entails the all-inclusive Logos or the Divine field as the ultimate place whose Divine poles we call “Father” (God) and “Son” (the personal Logos).⁽¹⁰⁾ Further, when the Divine field or the ultimate place is viewed at the same time as the ground of the world,⁽¹¹⁾ it is to be called the “Place of absolute Nothingness,” as by Kitaro Nishida. This state of affairs is commensurate with the truth as inherent in our theology of loyalty we discussed at the outset of the present essay, namely, the dynamics that arises in the fact that the Deity, *qua* the religious ultimate, such as the Christian God or the Buddhist Amida, being loyally within the “Place of Emptiness or Dharmata Dharmakaya,” *qua* the metaphysical ultimate, is entitled to call forth loyalty in the bodies of the universe, saying, “You too should be loyal.” This state of affairs is at the core of my proposal in the present essay for an Ecozoics (i.e., Place/Life science) of the Deity, as has already been mentioned.

Metaphorical Analogy or Inverse Analogy?:

23. At this juncture we need to pay enough critical attention to the above-cited passage of McFague’s:

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

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

Creation spirituality suggests an ungrounded optimism, based in part on its reading of evolutionary history but also on an illumination mode of how human beings change: to know the good is to do the good. If we learn about the common creation story and when we fit into the scheme of things, we *will* change.⁽¹²⁾

Is this critique justifiable? I think not. Is the fact that Berry in his *The Dream of the Earth*, as mentioned before, looks back upon the past of the universe to acknowledge its underlying dynamics thereby paradoxically looking forward to the future, really an "ungrounded optimism"? I think not, either. What if that which works at the bottom of the past (especially at the bottom of the Big Bang of 13. 7 billion years ago) is not derived, as McFague imagines, merely in a linear fashion from the act of inspiriting the bodies of the universe by virtue of the "spirit of God"? According to my vision of a theology of loyalty, there might be the turn of the Deity from the "phase of loyalty" into the "phase of evocation" by virtue of the double structure/dynamics of the Ecozoics of the Deity, in the sense that inasmuch as God dwells loyally within the secret place *ad intra* (Matt. 6: 6a) God is capable of getting God's own spiritual force of seeing and calling creatures (Matt. 6: 6b) *ad extra*. Isn't it, in other words, the case of a reverse analogy as found in the theology of Jesus (especially in the third prayer of the Lord's Prayer) in terms of the expression "on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6: 10b) rather than the case of a metaphorical analogy like one McFague imagines in accordance with human-created images—and this regarding the reference (or analogicity) inherent in the universe?

I might say that Berry's view of the universe as "self-referent" is nearer to Jesus' theology than McFague's in that it implies that all things in the universe are "universe-referent." What is central to the case of McFague is her vision of the universe plus her construction of God-model as they are based upon

the enterprise of culture (one of whose elements is theology) as this is merely universe-referent. The order in the matter of reference (or analogicity) is totally upside down, I might say.

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

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

Radicalizing the incarnation, therefore, by using the model of the universe as God's body is neither idolatry nor pantheism: the world, creation, is not identified or confused with God. Yet it is the place where God is present to us. Christianity's most distinctive belief traditionally expressed in the Chalcedonian formula that Christ was "fully God, fully man." For our time when we understand human existence in continuity with all other forms of life and hence must think of our relation to God in an ecological context, that mediation is appropriately radicalized and expanded to include the entire cosmos. In both instances, the Word is made flesh, God is available to us only through the mediation of embodiment. We are offered not the face of God, but the back. God is neither enclosed in nor expanded by the body shown to us, but it is a body that is given.⁽¹³⁾

If there is anything to say regarding this passage, it is the fact that even if she expanded the incarnation of the Word to include the entire cosmos, it is the matter of what my mentor Katsumi Takizawa referred to as the "secondary contact of God and humans," but not the matter of the "primary contact of God and humans" or the *Proto-factum* Immanuel. For Takizawa the former contact signifies the awareness or satori or belief of the latter contact which exists at the base of all beings (including human beings).⁽¹⁴⁾ In my own opinion, the fundamental unity of God and humans resides in the Place of Emptiness. I might depict this unity by saying that the relation between (or the Between) God and humans (or, more inclusively, the universe) is more fundamental than either of God and humans (the universe) in such a way as to include them in

itself. This understanding of the *Proto-factum* Immanuel is not the same as my mentor Takizawa's⁽¹⁵⁾; it is rather a new formation coming into existence by reforming his original doctrine.

The Void in Gen.1:2 As the Place of Emptiness:

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

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

Our Modern Industrial Petroleum Civilization and the Threefold Problem of Tenses: Sequence, Robbery, and Transmutation:

26. My proposal of an Ecozoics of the Deity has been necessitated to arise in view of the fact that our Modern Industrial Petroleum Civilization has been promoted ever since the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century by the modern consciousness, but it is bankrupt, as Thomas Berry critically declares. I might call the modern consciousness the consciousness of the “Sequence of Tenses,” in the sense that as long as the industrial productivity is capable of growing, we sense that our Modern Age has been and is sequentially in progress. However, the truth of the matter is, rather, the “Robbery of Tenses,” in the sense that our Modern Industrial Petroleum Civilization has only been made possible through the use of fossil fuels, especially of petroleum, for our

fuel and energy—namely, by the robbery of the riches of past sixty-five million years.⁽¹⁶⁾ Now, people are warning that “Peak Oil” is imminent. Accordingly, we have to get rid of this impasse of the erroneous relation to the Tenses of our Civilization. But how?

Transmutation of Tenses As Penitence:

27. What is urgently in need is what I might call the “Transmutation of Tenses,” in the sense that we look back to the past in reflection and penitence, which, however, brings in paradoxically creative evolution in which the entire past acts as present because the more we attain the deep foundation of the self, the more we are able to transform the past into the present, and further into the future.⁽¹⁷⁾ In my proposal of an Ecozoics of the Deity this transformation of the past into the present, and further into the future, is based on the Deity’s looking back on the self, the Place of Emptiness. What Nishida writes is very true : “When absolute free will turns and views itself, or, in Boehme’s terms, when the objectless will looks back on itself, the infinite creative development of this world is set up.”⁽¹⁸⁾ I need to verify and consolidate the truthfulness of my proposal of an Ecozoics of the Deity in relation to the thoughts of Anselm, Aquinas, Whitehead, and Nishida—in more detail; but that is the task of Section II.

Section II. Vindicating the Proposal of an Ecozoics of the Deity: In Dialogue with Anselm, Aquinas, Whitehead, and Nishida:

28. Thus in what I have discussed in Section I of the present essay it has turned out that an ecozoics of the Deity signifies that the more we perceive God as loyally dwelling in the hidden place, the surer we can recognize that God’s spirituality/life is encouraged to appear and function dynamically only by God’s being located within the Eco/Place/Ground. This state of affairs I might call the ecozoic paradox of God’s being. God has God’s own Eco/Place/Ground while God gets in touch with the world creatively. Within the Eco/Place/Ground God is potentially “with” all creation even before God works in the world creatively. Without thinking of God’s “Eco”-zoic paradox in this manner, we cannot properly understand how God’s being within the world as God’s body, as is discussed by McFague, is ecologically viable in a twofold manner, hidden and open. To use Jesus’ phraseology, thy

will be done “on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10). You cannot give a location, like McFague’s idea of the “body of God,” to the Deity if the Deity is already potentially endowed with the Deity’s own place within the realm of ultimacy (which Nishida calls the place of absolute Nothingness). Since God is loyal to this mode of God’s being within the realm of ultimacy, God is capable of calling forth worldly beings’ loyalty to the same realm of ultimacy and Godself. Things are quite upside-down, compared with McFague’s order of theological analogy which she calls metaphorical. In opposition to metaphorical analogy I might call attention to what I designate as the “ecozoic paradox” inherent in my idea of an ecozoics of the Deity.

Anselm’s Notion of Nihil Maius:

29. In the scheme of Anselm’s thinking what is crucial is the fact that Nihil Maius presents itself as the Eco/Place/Ground of God’s being whose proof is developed from within this source: first, there is a firm conviction, revealed and given in terms of “donare,” of the source of argument for the Existence of God: namely, the Name of God signifying Nihil Maius surpassing God; and second, the development of the proof as a process of illumination (“illuminare”) about the Existence of God by way of a reasonable argumentation for an Eco-zoic paradox of God’s being. At the crux of Anselm’s argument for God’s Existence the following culmination of his insight arises:

Deus enim id quo maius cogitari non potest. Quod qui bene intelligere, utque intelligit id ipsum sic esse, ut nec cogitatione queat non esse. Qui ergo intelligit sic esse deum, nequit eum non esse cogitare.

For God is that than which a greater [being] cannot be thought [because Nihil Maius can only be thought]. Whoever really understands this understands clearly that this same being so exists that not even in thought can it not exist. Thus whoever understands that God exists in such a way cannot think of Him as not existing.⁽¹⁹⁾

Nihil Maius Stands For Eco:

30. Viewed in this manner, Nihil Maius requires God’s being as the greatest in the realm of being simply because Nihil Maius doesn’t want to be a being,

even a supreme being, so it negates its own becoming a non-Nihil character by the name of “Nihil.” Since it is at work as that which is absolutely Nothing side by side with God as the supreme being, God can be thought as not having a greater in the realm of being: namely, God does not not-exist. Which is to say that God exists by containing in his being “not-not,” i.e., the negation of the mere concept of Nihil Maius, thus the movement of Nihil Maius requiring God’s being which is the process of the argument for the Existence of God. Here the Eco-zoic paradox is supremely at work. The Eco stands for Nihil Maius within this particular context.

Aquinas Is Critical About the Analogy of Attribution Duorum Ad Tertium, Whitehead Answers:

31. It is famous that Thomas Aquinas discarded the analogy of attribution Duorum Ad Tertium (two to the third) because he sensed that there might be no tertiary reality beyond and above the realities of God and the World.⁽²⁰⁾ I think nowadays we have already overcome Aquinas’s level of metaphysical thinking by the recent history of Buddhist-Christian dialogue clarifying the importance of Buddhist emptiness vis-à-vis the Christian God. It is important that Buddhist emptiness signifies that emptiness empties itself and that thus and only thus emptiness never wants to become another being/character/bhava or whatever. However, emptiness wants to have beings around it by relinquishing itself as a mere concept of emptiness; thus transforming itself into the instrument of novelty, namely, it loves to be at work in the field of being while facilitating the function of beings to become more dynamically loyal to their duty of being.

Viewed within this recent context, it appears that Aquinas’s disinterest in the analogy of attribution Duorum Ad Tertium is untenable. However, it seems to me that he raised a good question which is so valuable in the history of theological analogy in the West and beyond. I have written about this issue amply enough over the past three decades.⁽²¹⁾ I would appreciate if some intuitive thinkers would arise to think seriously what I thought.

However, I am happy to report that it is the process philosopher Alfred North Whitehead who responded intuitively to what Aquinas was required to think metaphysically-analogically. Would you please pay a due attention to the following lines of thought in his magnum opus while recalling Aquinas’s

analogical question anew? Thank you very much for your thoughtful consideration.

Neither God, nor the World reaches static completion. Both are in the grip of the ultimate metaphysical ground, the creative advance into novelty. Either of them, God and the World, is the instrument of novelty for the other.⁽²²⁾

Whitehead’s Metaphysical Vision:

32. From the viewpoint of theological analogy Aquinas espoused, it is very clear that what Whitehead has in mind is the vision of the analogy of attribution Duorum Ad Tertium with God and the World being loyal to the ultimate metaphysical ground, the creative advance into novelty, or creativity, in whose grip they both are. For Aquinas the metaphysical principle of “esse” was identifiable with God as *Ipsum Esse Subsistens*; thus giving rise to the idea of He Who Is. For Whitehead, however, the metaphysical principle of “creative activity=creativity” is distinct as that which is devoid of character from God as its primordial characterization/exemplification. I firmly believe this way of novel thinking that was at work in the mind of Whitehead is inherently affirmative of the analogy in question.

In this metaphysical vision both God and the World are apparently in the grip of the ultimate metaphysical Eco/Ground/Place, creativity; and thus and only thus God is entitled to move toward the World as life-giving Love creatively. While, on the other hand, the World can play the role of the Body of God functioning as recipient of the Divine spirituality in order to vivify and enliven all creation.⁽²³⁾ Fulfilling this twofold vision of God as life-giving Love and the World as the Body of God as recipient of the Divine spirituality, I think Whitehead has come up with the concept of an “Adventure in the Universe as One” (AI, 295)⁽²⁴⁾. Whitehead writes:

The incompleteness of the concept [of Adventure] relates to the essence of Transcendence, the feeling essential for Adventure, Zest, and Peace. This feeling requires for its understanding that we supplement the notion of the Eros by including it in the concept of an Adventure in the Universe as One. This Adventure embraces all particular occasions but as an actual

fact stands beyond any one of them. It is, as it were, the complement to Plato's Receptacle, its exact opposite, yet equally required for the unity of all things. In every way, it is contrary to the Receptacle. The Receptacle is bare of all forms: the Unity of Adventure includes the Eros which is the living urge towards all possibilities, claiming the goodness of their realization.

Whitehead's Vision of an Adventure in the Universe As One and My Proposal of an Ecozoics of the Deity:

33. In this whole passage an important question is hidden, it seems to me. That is the question as to why Plato's Receptacle, while bare of all forms, is equally required for the unity of all things just as is the Unity of Adventure as this includes in itself the Eros which is the living urge towards all possibilities. My answer to the question is like this: since (i) God, according to my theology of loyalty, is loyal to the Receptacle as the Eco/Place/Ground of God's being (ii) God is paradoxically qualified to be the Eros urging worldly beings to be loyal to the ongoing business of the creative advance of the Universe as One, i.e., the Unity of Adventure. (iii) And this is happening by virtue of the self-transformation of the Receptacle as bare of all forms, including the form of formlessness, in such a way that it now becomes full of forms, thus appearing as an Adventure in the Universe as One. Here an Ecozoic paradox is happening in Whitehead's metaphysics. Hence, my proposal of an Ecozoics of the Deity is verified in Whitehead's argument for an Adventure in the Universe as One.

Nishida's Case: Logic of the Place of absolute Nothingness:

34. Now our last task is to see Nishida's case of Ecozoic paradox. Here I think it is in order to quote a very important passage from his last essay "Logic of Place and the Religious Worldview" (written on April 14, 1945 about two months before his death on June 7, 1945 and published in 1946 by Iwanami Shoten, now contained in his *Zenshu [Complete Works]*, Vol. XI).

Because God, as the self-negation of the Absolute, faces Godself in the manner of an inverse correspondence and is inclusive of absolute self-negation in Godself, therefore God exists through Godself. Because God is absolute Nothingness, God is absolute Being. Because God is

at once absolute Nothingness and absolute Being, God is omonipotent and omniscient. Therefore, I hold that because there is Buddha, there are sentient beings, and that because there are sentient beings, there is Buddha. In Christian terms, this would mean that because there is God the Creator, there is the world of creatures, and that because there is the world of creatures, there is the Creator. (*Zenshu*, XI, 398)

I think I can repeat what I wrote in 1998 here again:

In the logic of the self-negation of the Absolute, the realm of pure potentiality (i.e., the place of absolute Nothingness) converts itself, ontologically, into the realm of actuality (i.e., the world of creatures) because it is, in Whiteheadian conceptuality, character-less in this throughgoing sense: you just cannot take the characterlessness to mean another character: hence, characterlessness is a dynamism, an ongoing movement. It is precisely along these lines that Nishida attends to the old phrase that that God is “nowhere and yet everywhere in this world” (*Zenshu*, XI, 398). For Nishida, it is a Christian expression of the Buddhist paradox that is called the dialectic of “is” and “is not” at the same time (*soku-hi* in Japanese). On the part of Buddhism *per se*, this dialectic is most manifestly expressed in these terms in the Diamond Sutra:

Because all dharmas are not all dharmas,

Therefore they are called dharmas.

Because there is no Buddha, there is Buddha.

Because there are no sentient beings, there are sentient beings. (*Ibid.*, 399)

Epilogue:

35. When we perceive that our task of ecological theology can get started from out of the place of Nothingness, as Nishida suggested, but not from the idea of “the world as the body of God,” as McFague espoused, we are certainly incorporating into the core of ecological theology, or, more correctly,

Eco-zoic theology, our precious knowledge about the problem of the “Two Ultimates” which we have learned from the history of the interreligious (in particular, Buddhist-Christian) dialogue since mid-20th century in which we are reminded of the importance of four classical philosophers representing the riches of wisdom in both East and West, Anselm, Aquinas, Whitehead, and Nishida: It is only due to God’s loyalty to the metaphysical Realm or Ground or Eco that God’s Life (*Zoē*) paradoxically emerges toward the world calling forth our creaturely loyalty to the task of self-creative activity or evolution. I might call this paradoxical function of emergence the “Eco-zoic paradox.”

36. Jesus’ Theology: “On earth as it is in heaven”

One of the most crucial wisdoms we have learned from these thinkers, I believe, is an “inverse analogy” which is very much reminiscent of Jesus’ phraseology : “...on earth as it is in heaven.” The notion of “heaven” has been clarified amply enough philosophically-theologically: in terms of *Nihil Maius* (Nothing Greater) in the case of Anselm, in terms of the analogy of attribution *Duorum Ad Tertium* in the case of Aquinas/Whitehead question and answer, and in terms of the place of absolute Nothingness giving rise paradoxically to absolute Being in the case of Nishida’s philosophy. Thus, we can say that our proposal of an Eco-zoic paradox in this essay has been verified reasonably well.

37. The New Cosmology: M.A. Corey, Brian Swimme, and Whitehead

Finally, let me address some serious questions from out of our proposal of an Eco-zoic paradox to the proponents of the New Cosmology, thereby expressing my wish to study their wisdom for the sake of the advance of our ecological theology.

- (1) Concerning Excerpts from M.A. Corey, *God and the New Cosmology: The Anthropic Design Argument* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1993, 102)

“In fact, this conception of a naturalistic Creator, who delegates as much creative responsibility onto the physical universe as He possibly can, is far more impressive than the parochial conception of a God who has to continually intervene in the world to make things happen.” Isn’t it the case

that Corey's "naturalistic Creator" is loyal in some way or another to the Eco-zoic paradox of emergence? I mean that the notion of "design" might involve in itself some element or elements of self-relinquishment or *Kenosis*. Thus it must be something more than just a mere design.

- (2) Concerning Excerpts from Brian Swimme, *The Hidden Heart of the Cosmos: Humanity and the New Story* (Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books, 1996, 85-86)

38. "A re-education of the mind is necessary to make sense of what we have discovered. The central archetypal pattern for understanding the nature of the universe's birth and development is omnicentricity. The large-scale structure of the universe is qualitatively more complex either than the geocentric picture of medieval cultures or the fixed Newtonian space of modern culture. For we have discovered an omnicentric evolutionary universe, a developing reality which from the beginning is centered upon Itself [capitalization Nobuhara's] at each place of its existence. In this universe of ours to be in existence is to be at the cosmic center of the complexifying whole." Isn't it the case that Itself is the Self of the universe, but not the ego of whatever kind? The Eco of the Eco-zoic paradox is Itself.

- (3) Concerning Excerpts from Alfred North Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* (295)

39. "In this Supreme Adventure, the Reality which the Adventure transmutes into its Unity of Appearance, requires the real occasions of the advancing world each claiming its due share of attention." Isn't it the case that insofar as there is the Adventure mediating between the Reality and occasions in terms of "transmutation" anything in the universe is Itself, the "individual of the Transindividual" (D.T. Suzuki)? This, I think, is a quantum grasp of Reality/Appearance. [/]signifies the Category of Transmutation.

Concluding Remarks.

40. The Eco-zoic paradox is permeating everything in the universe, including the Deity and worldly actualities. In the language of Jesus' theology, "Your

Father who is in secret" actively "sees in secret" (Matt. 6: 6). There *is* here. This is an Ecozoics of the Deity at its core/advance.

NOTES:

- (1) This document is attached as a resumé to my Oxford Lecture on "Vindicating the Proposal of an Ecozoics of the Deity: In Dialogue with Thomas Berry, Sallie McFague, Anselm, Aquinas, Whitehead and Nishida While in Tandem with Jesus' Theology and the New Cosmology," delivered at Oxford Round Table on Religion, at Brasenose College in the University of Oxford, Oxford, England on July 30, 2013.
- (2) While repudiating Descartes' substance philosophy severely, Whitehead does not fail to acknowledge and praise that he attended to the subjects enjoying conscious experiences as providing the primary data for philosophy. Whitehead writes: "This is the famous subjectivist bias which entered into modern philosophy through Descartes. In this doctrine Descartes undoubtedly made the greatest philosophical discovery since the age of Plato and Aristotle." (*Process and Reality*, Corrected Edition, eds. David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne, New York: The Free Press, 1978, p. 159; hereafter cited as PR). However, in place of the Cartesian proposition, "This stone is gray," expressing a primary form of known fact from which metaphysics can start its generalizations, Whitehead opts for the type of primary starting point, "My perception of this stone as gray." This is due to his new theory of the "reformed subjectivist principle."
- (3) Thomas Berry, "The Ecozoic Era" CES/Foundational Essays/The Ecozoic Era. 01-12-2003.final, 2.
- (4) Ibid., 3.
- (5) See ibid., 4-8.
- (6) Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1988), p. 137.
- (7) Kitaro Nishida, Trans. Valdo H. Viglielmo, Yoshinori Takeuchi and Joseph S. O'Leary, *Intuition and Reflection in Self-Consciousness* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), p. 132.
- (8) See Tokiyuki Nobuhara, *Ryokan in a Global Age* (Niigata: Kokodo, 2001), p. E35.
- (9) Sallie McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), p. 20.
- (10) Cf. "The Logos was Divine" (John 1: 1c).
- (11) If the Divine field is limited to be within the realm of the Deity alone, it must be a Being, a Concept, not all-inclusive Reality. It must be at the same time the ground of the world. For this reason, a Being or a Concept of the intra-Trinitarian Place is to be negated once in order to get in touch with the full Reality of Place, within (*ad intra*) and toward the world (*ad extra*), of the Deity. Hence, the Place of absolute Nothingness. To depict this state of affairs, Shizuteru Ueda uses the expression "World/Emptiness" in his book *Shizuteru Ueda's Works*, II (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2002), p. 144. On September 9, 2010 in the midst of my presentation at Kyoto Philosophy Foundation Symposium, I said, "What you mean by the / (slash) here is God, it seems to me."

Professor Ueda so gladly acknowledged my words. And we have had a very nice conversation. God belongs to Emptiness and to the World at the same time!

- (12) McFague, op. cit., p. 71.
- (13) Ibid., p. 134.
- (14) Takizawa criticized his mentor Karl Barth for thinking the coming into the world of Jesus of Nazareth as giving rise to the *Proto-factum* Immanuel, because he thought the truth of the matter is the other way round. See Katsumi Takizawa, *The Origin of Freedom: Immanuel* (Tokyo: Shinkyo Shuppansha, 1969), pp. 209-215. See also Tokiyuki Nobuhara, "Reflections on God Who Is 'With' All Creation: Phases of Mysticism in D. T. Suzuki's Zen Thought and Whitehead's Metaphysics," *Process Studies*, 34/2, Fall-Winter 2005, 240-263.
- (15) Takizawa's original doctrine of the *Proto-factum* Immanuel is shot through with the threefold idea of the "inseparable, non-identifiable, and irreversible relationship between God and humans." By the idea of inseparableness between God and us he pioneered in the Buddhist-Christian dialogue while, however, on the other hand, emphasizing the irreversible order of God's priority over against humans vis-à-vis the Shinichi Hisamatsu's, his disciple Masao Abe's and other Buddhist thinkers' insistence on the reversible nature of the ultimate in relation to the creatures, as is evident in his book *Buddhism and Christianity* (Kyoto: Hozokan, 1964).
- (16) See Thomas Berry, "The Ecozoic Era," 1.
- (17) See Kitaro Nishida, *Intuition and Reflection in Self-Consciousness*, pp. 129-132.
- (18) Ibid., p. 143.
- (19) See Gregory Schufreider, *An Introduction to Anselm's Argument* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978), p. 79.
- (20) See Aquinas, *S. Theol.*, I, xiii, 5c; S. c. G., I., xxxiv. See also E. L. Mascall, *Existence and Analogy* (London: Longmans, 1949), p. 101; Ralph M. McInerny, *The Logic of Analogy* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961), p. 80.
- (21) See Tokiyuki Nobuhara, *God and Analogy: In Search of a New Possibility of Natural Theology* (Ann Arbor, Michigan, U.S.A./ London, England: University Microfilms International, 1982); "Portraying 'Authentic Existence' By the Method of Analogy: Toward Creative Uses of the Analogy of Attribution *Durorum Ad Tertium* For Comparative Philosophy of Religion," *Bulletin of Keiwa College*, No. 1, February 28, 1992, 61-83; No. 2, February 28, 1993, 27-50; No. 3, February 28, 1994, 1-19; and "Reason and Intuition in Christian and Buddhist Philosophy: Anselm's *Proslogion* II and IV Reinterpreted in Light of D. T. Suzuki's Zen Thought," *Bulletin of Keiwa College*, No. 17, February 28, 2008, 1-35.
- (22) Whitehead, PR, 349.
- (23) Here I think Hartshorne's notion of God and the universe as a whole as one in terms of panentheism is to the point. See my article online: "Hartshorne and Nishida: Re-Envisioning the Absolute. Two Types of Panentheism vs. Spinoza's Pantheism" (which I presented at Twentieth World Congress of Philosophy Paideia) Philosophy Educating Humanity, Boston Massachusetts U.S.A, August 10-16, 1998: <http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papeers/Cont/ContNobu.htm>
- (24) Alfred North Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* (New York : The Free Press, 1967).