

# ○ REVELATION FOR SALE

## AN INTERCULTURAL READING OF REVELATION 18 FROM AN EAST ASIAN PERSPECTIVE

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The early Christians' radical critique of economy challenges both the inequality and reciprocity that were embedded in the Roman Empire. In particular, John the Seer saw economic exchanges between center and periphery, metropolis and the margins, imperial and colonial as doomed. These sorts of connections are also evident, today, by way of globalization – a process that reaches across diverse cultural, ethnic, and racial identities, while also creating 'inside'/'outside' boundaries within which our identities are contested, challenged, and often jeopardised at each turn by strife and scarcity, dealing death as often as life. For its victims, poverty often functions as the will of 'God'. In this regard, the Seer's oracle emerges not from a 'new heaven and earth', but from the midst of colonial space and time, infested with scarcity and hunger. For an East Asian postcolonial, the vision as such has renewed poignancy in light of the cross-cultural and trans-historical constraints of imperialism and colonialism. This essay is an intercultural economic critique of Revelation 18 from an East Asian global perspective.

### READING REVELATION 18 FOR DECOLONIZATION

The US-Korea (KORUS) Free Trade Agreement disturbs Korean laws and systems. And the lack of discussion and parliamentary review could affect not only the current generation of Koreans but also those in the future. (Chung Tain 2007)

It is well-recognised that Revelation represents an instance of anti-imperial literature of resistance.<sup>1</sup> It conveys one of the most powerful attacks on Rome with regard to its religious, cultural, economic, and political systems. In particular, the Seer's critique of Roman economy in chapter 18 constitutes the climactic convergence of eschatological woe that leads to the coming of the Kingdom of God. The economic critique of Rome, however, has received little critical attention.<sup>2</sup>

Several critical reflections have posited that hatred or personal vindictiveness is at least one element that motivated the composition of chapter 18. Others argue that the vision expresses joy in the triumph of God and not a personal desire for revenge. In contrast to those who find chapter 18 critical and vengeful, they discern elements of awe at the fall of Rome.<sup>3</sup> Either view of its literary construction, however, affirms the basic or 'impressionistic' character of the economy and its institutions, which, when regarded as a life condition in a colonial context, runs the risk of oversimplifying its complicated, and complicating, economic values and operation. Especially with regard to the contemporary neocolonial economy, such a construction of economy may not provide a chance for colonial and postcolonial subjects to be empowered with a new understanding of their personal and communal identity.

The relationship between the specific oracle proclaimed by the Seer and the established order of Rome deserves further attention. My reading will focus on the liberating effects of the Seer's revelation that serves as a source of hope to postcolonial communities of today. To accomplish

this, I will reconstruct a pattern of the Seer's counter-cultural, or transformative, awareness of living and interacting under the empire by treating Revelation 18 as an instance of postcolonial literature.

For the Seer, economic exchange is both construct and representation. In particular, the colonial construct of economy creates scarcity, forcing the powerless and have-nots into exile. This imbalance of power legitimates status, order, and identity, providing opportunities both to evade accountability and to develop a vast source of patronage. The Seer is attentive to the dominant power that colonial agents apply to every corner of the land, sanctioning wealth and poverty, life and death. Though such power – cultural or otherwise – is invisible, it nonetheless justifies human suffering, rationalises the present condition and deflates any aspiration or possibility of actual change.<sup>4</sup> Its pervasive control discourages the subject from crossing over the imperial-colonial boundary between center and periphery, metropolis and the margins – in effect, the imperial and the colonial.

## METHOD AND STRATEGY FOR READING

Since real readers contribute to the recuperations of meaning and reconstructions of history, it would seem crucial to consider what reading-constructs and reader-constructs stand as helpful or harmful to life, a life that has often been denigrated as the 'other' of the world. This undertaking inevitably inserts the voice of a real reader and brings to critical understanding her/his own interests and perspectives. Hence, I ground myself as a real reader, immersed in a specific historical, cultural, social, and geographical location.

My search for a critique of political economy conveyed in the Christian Apocalypse combines insights from cultural studies with colonial and postcolonial studies. This methodological pluralism allows for an awareness of economic relations brought to expression in Revelation and in today's economy and its expressions of values and policy. From an East Asian global space and time in particular, I advance such a model and strategy in regard to the people living in the empire at large. Listening to the voices of the colonial margins is significant to me on account of my own context: first, as a product of Korea, born and raised within one of the last territorial possessions of the Japanese Empire with separation coming only at the mid-twentieth century; second, as a subject of the Soviet-US imperial-colonial formation by way of a global outpost; finally, as a part of neocolonial sphere of the global market economy.

In a context such as mine, the presence of the Korean *Minjung*, or grassroots people, is highly significant. While much of the legacy of colonialism and the threat of neocolonialism that shape the lands of the Far East has often gone unnoticed, the consequences of colonialism can be seen readily at work in any number of instances in their lives – from the undocumented labourers to the imperial conscriptions of men and women as labour resources and/or sexual slaves. They have been subject to a long subordination and have borne the imprint of colonial oppressions.<sup>5</sup>

The social consciousness of the contemporary Korean *Minjung* first emerged in connection with 22 year-old *Jun Tae-il* in the early 1970s. He immolated himself on a street in the front of the Peace Market in November 1970 in a protest against the labour conditions to which he and his coworkers were subjected. Sweatshops were densely packed into the market where he toiled as a garment worker. What particularly caused his suicidal protest was the miserable lives of the *See-da*, who worked in a sweatshop covered with dust, from dawn to midnight, day after day.

The term *See-da* mostly refers to downcast labourers, especially women as young as thirteen. The Japanese colonial etymology of the word, however, points to a different meaning, that is, ‘assistant’ or ‘colleague’, *See-da-ba-da-rakee*.

These *See-da*, who were never known by their own names or capacities, frequently fell victim to abrupt deaths or fatal diseases due to the hazardous working circumstances. Feeling that there was no other way to bring attention to their plight, Jun Tae-il decided on a more radical course of action. He left his world shouting, ‘We are not machines!’ He uncovered the deep pit in economies and labour that normalise the human lives and bodies.<sup>6</sup> A story of *See-da*, which considers the plight of the downcasts, is still transmitted within Korean social memory.

Much the same could be said about the consequences of the Japanese imperial conscriptions in Korea. The imperial Japanese enlisted young women into *Chongshindae* as sexual slaves and also forced men into *Chingyong* as labour resources at the war fronts. While both colonial terms denote a military use of bodies, these bodies were propagated as a ‘voluntary’ labour force for the imperial enterprise. Hundreds of thousands of grassroots Korean people were then sent to Japan or to other parts of Asia for various sectors of the war industry. Nora Keller describes the poignant cries of a woman in *Chongshindae* in her work, *Comfort Women*:

She denounced the soldiers, yelling at them to stop their invasion of her country and her body. Even as they mounted her, she shouted: I am a Korean, I am a woman, I am alive. I am seventeen, I had a family just like you do, I am a daughter, I am a sister ...<sup>7</sup>

Once the war was over, none of the *Chonshindae* or *Chingyong* were noticed or visible, much less remembered or compensated by the contemporary capitalist Japanese, until recent years. To be of the *Minjung* was to wear a mark of exclusion over their own bodies and lives, subject to the arbitrary excesses of those in power. In his famous poem, ‘Letter to the Tuman River’, Ko Un expresses his resentment of the anonymous suffering of the *Minjung*:

My sister dear, one hundred times dear, ever dear sister, suppose that you die up there one day and I down here? But that’s our people’s life, age after age, that kind of hidden, nameless death.<sup>8</sup>

Such a variety of colonial and postcolonial exploitation of the people and the land functions as a signifier of the problems involving contradictions and gaps in the cultural text. From ‘antiquity’ to ‘postmodernity’, the collective dimensions of life of the people at the grassroots should be seen as a fundamental phenomenon in the world in general and in the world of imperialism in particular. For an East Asian postcolonial reader, recourse to the grassroots *Minjung* serves not only as a ‘point of contact’ but also as a tremendous resource for trans-historical and cross-cultural reflection on the economy and economic integration.

Hence, I attempt to read the text of Revelation in terms of this present cultural, socioeconomic context and also to read such context in terms of the text.<sup>9</sup> Both ways of reading and assessing are not completely unfamiliar to the Seer himself. In the negative portrayal of Rome as Babylon, he calls attention to traditional elements of self-glorification and arrogance (18:7), which have long been condemned by the ancient prophets. A critique of wealth as an occasion for judgment (18:3, 15, 16, 19) also has parallels in the ancient oracles against foreign cities and nations.<sup>10</sup>

For the Seer, the political-economic constructions of his time cannot be dissociated from the social memory of the past. The application of such a traditional motif to Rome would stand out the most when viewed against Roman propaganda and its claim of universal, timeless dominance of *Pax Romana*.

This essay will present how political supremacy creates scarcity in such a way that it carries all the oppressive force of ‘this is the way things are’ or ‘should be’ and how this kind of dominance bears on constructions of the economy and its system as critiqued in Revelation 18. Reading the economic critique in Revelation from a contemporary neocolonial context gives rise to questions such as: Does this critique also involve critique of our present economy and its rationality? How does the Seer’s vision help us to confront our biases, if any, over colonial and neocolonial constructions of economy?

## **DOMINATION MASKED: READING PRESENT FROM REVELATION**

In chapter 18, the Seer of Revelation addresses the destruction of ‘Babylon’. Since Rome is still at the height of her splendor and power, the denunciation of the monumental empire as such appears most unexpected. Specifically, what the Seer’s prophetic pronouncement was made against was an economic system adorned with divinization of the empire.

The sacralised economic system was entitled to wield enormous power over the subjects in the empire. In particular, the Roman emperor, referred to as the ‘supreme father of the empire’ or the ‘father of the fatherland (*Pater Patriae*), became a model figure of property owner, slave-master, and patron to clients. With this power (*patria potestas*), scarcity was justified, and lands such as Palestine were invaded and appropriated.<sup>11</sup> People easily lost their wealth and their access to basic resources. When typical peasants became landless tenants and debtors because of colonial exploitation, some may have been imprisoned for their debts, and others sold into labour and made slaves.<sup>12</sup>

Modern capitalism is quite different from this, based as it is on an economic system in which production and distribution are determined through the operation of a ‘market’, usually considered to involve the right of individuals, groups and corporations as to capital goods, labour, land, and money. Economic anthropologists have described that the dynamics of the economy and its systematic construction are embedded in the exchange of products, goods, services, and people. However, this exchange cannot be merely ‘economic’, but must also include a ‘synthesis of self and other’ through the making of connections and relations of reciprocity. Levi-Strauss views this exchange relationship as a universal rule or principle that governs and even creates society.<sup>13</sup> Stephen Gudeman also points out that there exists a tension within the reciprocity, because it is in nature an exchange of unequals, ‘a gesture of commensality not commensuration, yet filled at times with countervailing impulses of competition’.<sup>14</sup>

In light of contemporary global capitalism’s integration of economies and peoples, events of reciprocity carry out a similar, yet distinct, kind of social control that defines what is right and wrong. While the contemporary world sees a more nearly equal, ‘flat’ world, bringing with it ‘open markets’, ‘open trade’ and ‘open politics’, a lot of capitalist truisms are also frequently released to the nations, who strive to be globally competitive:

Make your corporate taxes low, simple and transparent; actively seek out global companies; open your economy to competition; speak English; keep your fiscal house in order; and build a consensus around the whole package with labor and management.<sup>15</sup>

It is notable, however, that the significance of both global capitalism and scripture stems from their engagement with human perceptions of, and reactions to, justice and injustice

Since globalization becomes a new world order, its own rule and conception has been able to influence virtually every space in the world. What is intriguing is the seemingly fixed and immovable permanence of capitalism at its core. Fernando Segovia observes that:

At each stage of imperialism in the modern and postmodern era, capitalism has prevailed and dominated the economic landscape, from mercantile capitalism in the 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, to monopoly capitalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, to global capitalism in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present.<sup>16</sup>

Throughout this period of time when capitalism is charged with domination and exclusion, poverty is deemed to be the result of divine will, though it is an inevitable consequence of the nature of the capitalist market. While it excludes those who do not have property from having a livelihood, it also reduces nature to the 'stuff' of technological production.<sup>17</sup> Capitalism has thrived at the cost of its devalued others such as wives, children, slaves, aliens, natives, and other disenfranchised human subjects and environment.<sup>18</sup> This leads to a number of issues, or problems to be resolved: first, the market itself as the mechanism of global domination; second, commodification as the reality of the mechanism as such; third, scarcity as the consequence of the domination and its justification.

*Market as Domination.* It has now become a cliché that the market offers human relationship without rulership. The market does not coerce because it is based on 'free choice'. Individuals' decisions are made impersonally in terms of their wants. One responds in the market system only if the proffered benefits are attractive. However, while the market promises a free and harmonious way of integrating and coordinating society, coercion enters exchange relationships by means of the determination of the actual relationships of property and work. As long as the market seeks universal justification for a 'rational' choice, it already reflects a domination system.

*Representation as Commodity.* In particular, capitalism revolves around the commodity chains. If produced for sale, the lands and labour are effectively reduced to rents (in place of lands) and wages (in place of human beings) in the whole process of commodification. Everything in the commodity chain is commodified in an impersonal market. This chain not only accompanies the production/distribution process, but also the social process.<sup>19</sup> Since the market renders all transactions inhuman, the place of the human being remains most problematic.

*Scarcity as Construct.* The ability to command comes from denying others access to the goods that constitute livelihood. Since livelihood is dependent on responsible exchange, those who have no claim to what can be exchanged are simply excluded. The implementation of these oppressive relations carries out the creation and authorization of insufficiency. Wealth is simply used as a means for gaining more wealth. If a few extract more wealth through an expansive use of surplus,

those on the periphery become merely means of supplying the needs of others, and a large number of contingent ‘others’ remain in destitution. They just remain deprived of their capability and agency.

Revelation and its awe-inspiring teaching tackle all these problems and needs while at the same time serving to foster a liberating new narrative for those living under global capitalism. Hence I turn to a reading of Revelation 18.

## **MY PEOPLE, MY PLACE: READING REVELATION FROM PRESENT**

The literary construction of chapter 18 contains many small units with some diversity in form, and the basic themes and some of the actual wording are borrowed from the Hebrew Bible. However, it is far from a mere mosaic of Scriptural allusions. Rather the Seer has selected certain key images, alluded to certain appropriate passages, simplifying and (re)interpreting them in the process, and created a unified and powerful new composition.

Interestingly, throughout the oracle, the Seer recalls ‘Babylon the Great’ and mocks its destiny. This parody reaches a climax in the depiction of the empire as a woman impure, adulterous, violent, and wicked.

For all the nations have drunk of the wine of ... *her fornication*,  
and the kings of the earth have committed *fornication with her* (v. 3).

Since Rome not only dominated the land, but also monopolised production and redistribution of goods and trade, its destruction would panic the overseeing masters of imperial Rome and its economy, such as the kings, merchants, shipmasters, sailors and traders.

And the kings of the earth...will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning ... in fear of her torment ... ‘Alas, alas, the great city, Babylon, the mighty city! ...’ (vv. 9-10)

And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore. (v. 11)

And all shipmasters and seafarers, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off and cried out...‘What city was like the great city?’ (v. 17-18)

All these colonial agents lament over their dispossession and rejection from the world they once ruled over.<sup>20</sup> As God’s judgment falls on Babylon, the power and construct of imperial economy breaks apart.

The chapter can be divided into four small thematic sections: 1) Dwelling of Demons (vv. 2-3); 2) Exodus of the People of God (v. 4); 3) Fall of Babylon the Great (vv. 8-17); 4) Redemption of the Faithful (v. 20).

### **DWELLING OF DEMONS (VV. 2-3)**

First, for the Seer, the place of ‘dwelling’ emerges out of the demons’ rendering of power and prosperity. This is most poignant when compared with the constructions of dwelling in the Gospel of John. Intertextual evidence in the Gospel reveals that God realises a dwelling of the

Word and promises a dwelling for the people: ‘The Word became flesh and dwelt among us’ (John 1: 14); ‘In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?’ (John 14:2). The Word, enfleshed in Jesus, announces the end of anxiety and fear of separation and the hope for participation in God’s ultimate home without evil and death.

In Revelation, however, the dwelling is dismantled by the demons.

Babylon the Great has become *a dwelling place* of demons,  
*a haunt* of every foul spirit, a haunt of every foul bird,  
*a haunt* of every foul and hateful beast (v. 2).

The demons not only advanced their own place within the world but began to radiate signs of glorification therein:

She *glorified herself* and lived luxuriously ... (v. 7);  
All your *dainties* and your *splendor* ... (v. 14);  
The great city, clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold,  
with jewels, and with pearls. (v. 16)

While in the Gospel of John the affirmation of the flesh and the ‘dwelling’ of the Word offer a life-giving, ‘truthful’ encounter with the divine (John 1:9), in Revelation the dwelling of the demons and haunt of foul spirits only serves as a site of denial to the divine:

In her heart she says, ‘*I rule as a queen*’ ... (v. 7)

The dwelling functions, for demons, as an embodiment of material force in its massive retention and defilement. They claim their absolute power and control over their possessions.

#### **COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE! (V. 4)**

The work of the demon known as Babylon justifies scarcity and coerces others in an ends-means relationship and its exchange system. Behind Babylon’s creation of scarcity and scarcity thinking, there emerges the concept of supremacy congruous with the universal reach of the empire through its extensive market, commerce and trade. Economy such as this disguises the sustained commodification. Indeed, human lives were hoarded and treated, like other commodities in trade.

And the merchants of the earth ... mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore, cargo of gold ... fine linen, purple ... all kinds of scented wood, all articles of ivory...all articles of costly wood, bronze ... spice, incense ... wine ... cattle and sheep ... horses and chariots, slaves – and *human lives*. (vv. 11-13)

While the colonial subordinates are forced to acquiesce to the imperial-colonial system, however, the Seer appeals to the agency substantially attributed to human beings instead of the system itself.

Come out of her, *my people* ...;  
Do not take part in her sins ... do not share in her plagues;  
Render to her as she herself has rendered,  
and repay her double for her deeds ... (vv. 4-6).<sup>21</sup>

This is a call not only to separate oneself from, but also to stand over and against, the economics that have long supported the empire. Being part of it is just to fall into sin and to make oneself subject to the judgment of God, a judgment that has been already made:

... For mighty is the Lord God who *judges* her. (v. 8)

... For in one hour your *judgment* has come. (v. 10)

... For God has given *judgment* for you against her. (v. 20)

By drawing the fall of Babylon from various biblical texts, the Seer urges his audience to hold to their own identities, while ‘the kings of the earth’ (v. 9), ‘the merchants of the land’ (v. 11), and ‘the shipmasters of the sea’ (v. 17) are immersed in the *zeitgeists* of the colonial economy. Ironically, as beneficiaries of the imperial economic system, they lack the freedom and capability to survive the impending afflictions and devastation. They panic and wail because their reality is different from what they had originally conceived. Colonial convention and conformity is seriously challenged in this regard.

### **IN ONE HOUR, YOUR JUDGMENT HAS COME! (VV. 8-17)**

Thus, for those who have accrued wealth from an exclusive exchange, the Seer’s oracle adds a sense of urgency.

Therefore her plagues will come *in a single day* ... (v. 8);

... For *in one hour* your judgment has come. (v. 10);

For *in one hour* all this wealth has been laid waste! ... (v. 17);

... For *in one hour* she has been laid waste. (v. 19)

The phrase, ‘in a single day’, intensifies the immediate fate of Babylon. The plagues will soon shatter the aspirations of Babylon to everlasting glory. A prolonged monopolization of resources will also end with the fall of Babylon.

Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, ‘With such violence Babylon the great city will be thrown down... and an artisan of any trade will be found in you no more ...’ (vv. 21-22)

As a grand narrative of power and control falls apart, the economy of Rome is no longer able to benefit the privileged at its discretion. Such is not the case with the faithful, however.



## REJOICE OVER HER! (V. 20)

The economic critique in chapter 18 concludes with a song of consolation to the faithful. These are the ones who continue not to show sympathy for the imperial economy. Hence, it is inevitable that they have deadly contact with the ruler of the demonic ‘this-world’:

In you was found the blood of prophets and of saints,  
and of all who have been slaughtered on earth. (v. 24)

In their midst, however, justice arises and gives rise to hope.

Rejoice over her, O heaven, you saints and apostles and prophets!  
For God has given judgment for you against her. (v. 20)

The atonement of the ‘saints’, ‘apostles’, and ‘prophets’ affirms that the colonial construction of the economy is not eternally fixed or immovable.

The Seer is direct in that he initiates an explicit conflict with the imperial-colonial economic constructs in a world that is simultaneously social, theological, cultural, and political. And yet, the Seer is indirect in that he does not provide an explicit description of his own economics. Rather, he lays his prophetic oracle by awakening imaginations, which are already emerging in this concrete time and place.

## CONCLUSION: A VIEW FROM AN EAST ASIAN POSTCOLONIAL

Eschatological visions of this sort can be understood as a ‘fitting’ theo-ethical response where a rhetorical situation similar to the Seer’s exists.<sup>22</sup> In this regard, it would seem that implicit and explicit scriptural allusions also abound in the contemporary neocolonial economy, some overt and some subtle.

For an East Asian global reader, the economic critique of Rome serves as a call for a transformative faith-vision over and against drastic economic convention and conformity. One of the East Asian cultural manuscripts provides an admirable record that confronts such a binding privilege and its oppressive constructions. In *Tao Te Ching*, Lao Tzu suggests that value distinctions cause problems, but ‘natural’ opposites complement and enhance each other.

When people see some things as beautiful, other things become ugly.

When people see some things as good, other things become bad.

Being and non-being create each other. Difficult and easy support each other.

Long and short define each other. High and low depend on each other.

Before and after follow each other.<sup>23</sup>

Consciousness, or construction, of the beautiful and the ugly, the good and the not-good, only splits the world into two objects clashing with each other. However, mutual interdependence goes beyond simply a concept of ‘utility’, or ‘disutility’, and affirms communion and liberation.

Since the economy is a historical product of time rather than of fate, all economic ‘laws’ are equally limited and historical. Revelation 18 is an excellent example of why imperialism is not immutable and also why it fails to endure the judgment of God.

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## ENDNOTES

- 1 See especially Stephen D. Moore (2007, 436–454). He states that critical commentators have commonly read Revelation ‘as the most uncompromising attack on the Roman Empire.’
- 2 See the discussion of Richard Bauckham (1991, 47–90). It was not until the early nineties that commentators began to place the critique of Roman economy at the center of their readings.
- 3 See the helpful discussion of Adela Y. Collins (1980, 185–204); M. Eugene Boring (1989, 185–86) points out that the chapter is rather a statement of the faithfulness of God, fulfilling ‘the words of the prophets expressing the purpose of God in history.’
- 4 See Fredric Jameson (1981, 281–99).
- 5 Jean Kim (2004, 5) points out that ‘Korean social memory is a product of colonialism in the sense that the Korean past was generated by colonial relations, [particularly with China and Japan]. Even after independence, the Korean social memory of [the grassroots] during colonialism has been ignored ...’ See her insightful discussion regarding colonialism in Korea.
- 6 Jun’s death serves in Korean history as a spark that started the democratic union movement, which led to the end of the military dictatorship in mid1986.
- 7 Nora Okja Keller (1997, 20); see also Jean Kim (2004, 5).
- 8 Ko Un (2003, 29).
- 9 In this regard, Pablo Richard’s assertion (1995, 11) is noteworthy that the Apocalypse is ‘indispensable for building a theological, prophetic, and apocalyptic analysis of our present situation.’
- 10 Cf. Isa. 23:1–12; Ezek. 26:1–28:19. Without a doubt, most of the motifs are drawn from oracles against foreign cities and nations in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. That is, the Seer relies heavily on traditional images, symbols, and myths to express his message. See Collins (1980, 201).
- 11 Horsley and Hanson (1999, 84) notes that the Roman armies treated brutally the inhabitants in the Jewish Palestine in order to induce their submission, destroying towns and enslaving the entire populations.
- 12 See the discussion of Jennifer Glancy (2002, 84). She opines that the practice of self-sale, however rarely or frequently practiced, offends against ‘all sense of propriety and decency.’
- 13 Claude Lévi-Strauss (1983).
- 14 Stephen Gudeman (2001, 92).
- 15 Thomas L. Friedman (2005).
- 16 Fernando F. Segovia (2000, 127); see also Immanuel Wallerstein (1995, 42–43); Earnest Mandel (1995, 76–96).
- 17 See the discussion of M. Douglas Meeks (1989).
- 18 See also the characterization of the lord/master/father/husband in the Greco-Roman household. Cf. Paul Veyne (1985, 71). This sort of relationship also resonates with the ancient Confucian system of East Asia. The Confucians respect natural hierarchy – such as age differentiation in the family, the importance of status and authority in society, and the necessity of the division of labour in the economic sphere.
- 19 See Wallerstein (1995), 15–17.

- 20 Interestingly, the seven urban churches which Revelation is explicitly addressed to were located in the Roman province of Asia (1:4, 11), which extended from the Aegean to the western Euphrates. Under the Roman establishment, the conquered cities and territory often sought to ensure the colony's survival by loyalty to Rome.
- 21 There is a similar call in Jeremiah 50:8ff.; cf. Isaiah 13:14.
- 22 See Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1998).
- 23 Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, trans. Stephen Mitchell (1988), chapter 2.

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