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**INTIMATE ALIEN:
AN IMMANENT CRITIQUE OF KOREAN PENTECOSTALISM**

by

DONG-HO CHO

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2002

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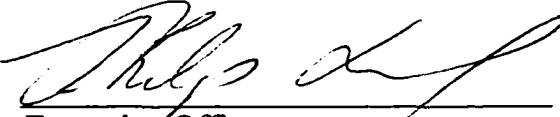
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Abstract

Intimate Alien: An Immanent Critique of Korean Pentecostalism

By

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Advisor: Professor Stanley Aronowitz

The present dissertation aims at social physiognomy of the South Korean society since 1960 through an immanent critique of the apparently most irrational form of Christianity, Pentecostalism.

During the period of rapid economic development led by authoritarian state from 1960, South Korea witnessed no less enormous expansion of Christianity. Now around a quarter of the South Korean population identify themselves as Christian. Amid general religious fervor in South Korea, the expansion of Pentecostalism excelled. The present dissertation focuses on a Pentecostal congregation, the Yoido Full Gospel Church, which started from a shabby tent church with mere five members but has grown into the largest single Christian congregation with over 700,000 members and extensive overseas mission network. Pentecostalism began at the margin of Korean society but has now come close to a dominant religious culture not only in the South Korean Christianity but also in Christian world in general with its multinational operation.

Pentecostalism in general, features seemingly pre-modern religiosity such as belief in the supernatural, miracle, magical practice, and literal reading of the scripture. Pentecostals all over the world see their unprecedented global expansion as the second coming of Holy Spirit, which presages a new era. Even liberal and radical theologians, amazed at the popularity of Pentecostalism, start to see in it a new paradigm of the 21st

century religion based on “primordial religiosity,” which is not contaminated by doctrinal dispute, ecclesiastical politics, bureaucracy, and capable to simply address the most pressing needs of the multitude of dispossessed individuals in modern society. Not denying the grain of truth in these observations, the present dissertation challenges them by arguing that the seemingly primordial religiosity dialectically embodies cultural and psychological regression, which progressive enlightenment paradoxically leads to as rationalization turns into a new form of domination through technology and bureaucratization.

Pentecostalism in South Korea as embodied in the beliefs and practices of the Yoido Full Gospel Church is not so much “Christianized shamanism” or “shamanized Christianity” as thoroughly modern or even post-modern in its form and content. Second-handedness in its “recycling” of the obsolete magic to meet “today’s needs” can be seen by the fact that while Pentecostalism dogmatically claims to an absolute truth, it makes religion into something other than religion, i.e. psycho-technique of autosuggestion or “applied religion,” a divinely guaranteed method to acquire wealth, health, and happiness. The enigmatic popularity of Pentecostalism lies in its capacity to get in touch with the deep-seated longing of modern subjects for reconciliation, authentic language, material security, meaningful life and death, and autonomy, while manipulating their impotence for the church’s own gain by offering an imaginary answer based on narcissistic wish-fulfillment like the culture industry does. Contemporary Pentecostalism intentionally confuses religion with economy, and thus illustrates the wider post-modern development of “de-differentiation” of the previously differentiated spheres. Pentecostal universe reflects modern world in which the most intimate becomes utterly alien as the

most alien occupies the place of the sublime as the automatic vocalization of nonsense syllables is believed as “angelic tongue.”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is sociologist's maxim that everything under heaven is socially mediated. The dissertation, however it may appear original, is no exception. It is indeed profoundly indebted to countless institutions and individuals, academic and non-academic, personally known and unknown to me. No word is available for me to express my sense of gratitude toward all that have sustained, nurtured, fashioned my life – both physical and intellectual - except the traditional formulation: Thanks to heaven and earth.

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The members of the dissertation committee deserve my thanks. Professor Stanley Aronowitz the chair's advice helped me elaborate the method of immanent critique of religion, as well as take up as the dissertation topic what I am familiar with. Professor Patricia Clough guided me into the strange world of the unconscious and her lively interest in Pentecostalism, to which she was not an alien, has always rekindle the flame of my own interest. Without Professor Juan Flores's rigorous and detailed comments on my proposal, the completed dissertation might have become shapeless. Professor Chung, Hyun-kyung at Union Theological Seminary in New York City encouraged my project not only by sharing her own personal experience with a Pentecostal ex-husband but also by asking perplexing questions.

There are also many individuals who read my proposal and provided valuable criticism and comment: Dr. Moon, Tong-whan, Dr. Suh, Kwang-sun, Dr. Park, Sung-

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The generous research grant from International Foundation for Ewah Womens University Fellowship relieved me from financial concern at the decisive moment of intensive writing.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Problem

The present study aims at a social physiognomy of South Korea during the three decades of the state-led economic development since 1960 through an immanent critique of modern Pentecostalism, an anti-rational form of Christianity, as believed and practiced at the Yoido Full Gospel Church known as the largest single congregation in the world. By deciphering one of the most anti-rational forms of modern Christianity, it tries to reveal the larger social tendency embodied in the religious phenomenon in question. The present study can, thus, be best characterized as what Theodor Adorno calls the “rational derivation of the irrational” or the “objective derivation of irrationality”:

While the means used by society are rational, this rationality of means is really – to borrow Max Weber’s term – only a means-end rationality, that is, one which obtains between the set ends and the means used to achieve them, without having any relation to the real end or purpose of society, which is the preservation of the species as a whole in a way conferring fulfillment and happiness. That is the reason not only why irrationalities survive, but why they reproduce themselves even further. And, incidentally, it is the deepest explanation why so-called psychological moments and socio-psychological moments have such importance in this society. I believe that this objective derivation of irrationality, or if you like, the rational derivation of the irrational, should be a centerpiece of sociological work today. (Adorno 2000 : 133-134)

Precisely in those religious movements – Fundamentalism and Pentecostalism - that set themselves against the Enlightenment and claim to return to their pre-modern origins such as “the Apostolic Age” or “the earliest Christianity,” we witness the proliferation of the irrational in the midst of the progressive rationalization of the life world. These apparently “pre-modern” forms of religion, however, need to be regarded neither merely

as the relic nor as the revival of the bygone past. Rather they need to be seen as the symptoms that modern world produces and reproduces for its own reproduction, the reproduction of its own irrationality as a whole. As Adorno aptly puts it: "Irrationality is not necessarily a force operating outside the range of rationality: it may result from the process of rational self-preservation 'run amuck.'"(Adorno 1994: 34) The rational derivation of the irrational is, thus, nothing but an attempt to register the contradiction inherent to our current society as a whole or to show how our society falls short of its own notion. In such a sociological work, the immediate object of analysis, the modern Pentecostal movement in this case, serves as a cipher that displaces and condenses the structural antagonism of the societal whole. In taking the notion of fractured totality as the ultimate object of its theoretical reflection, the present study diverges from a garden variety of sociologies of religion, which omit reflection on society as a whole, "sociology minus society, the replica of a situation in which people have lost contact with themselves." (Adorno 1967-1968: 78)

Such a sociological study of contemporary religious culture as the objective derivation of the irrational has become even more urgent now than in Adorno's days. Today's world, often dubbed "post-modern," is witnessing even greater proliferation of the irrational culture in the forms of ethnic cleansing, New Age cults, various self-help practices, eastern philosophies, aroma therapy, Yoga, Tai Chi, natural healing, meditation, and religious fundamentalisms, etc. Many observe the return of religion as the sign of the new millennium, and drop or revise the thesis of secularization that the progressive Enlightenment will render religion obsolete. For instance, recollecting his career as a sociologist of religion, Peter Berger says: "The big mistake, which I share

with almost everyone who worked in this area in the 1950s and '60s, was to believe that modernity necessarily leads to a decline in religion.”(Berger 1998 : 782) Jose Casanova, another prominent observer of contemporary religious culture, distinguishes three different meanings of secularization – (1) secularization as differentiation of the secular spheres from religious institutions and norms, (2) secularization as decline of religious beliefs and practices, and (3) secularization as marginalization of religion to a privatized sphere. And he finds the second has become most problematic today and the third also problematic.(Casanova 211-234). But probably the most dramatic example would be Harvey Cox, the once out-spoken champion of the secularization thesis, who says, struck by the recent fever of religion: “Nearly three decades ago I wrote a book, *The Secular City*, in which I tried to work out a theology for the ‘post religious’ age that many sociologists had confidently assured us was coming. Since then, however, religion – or at least some religions – seems to have gained a new lease on life. Today it is secularity, not spirituality, that may be headed for extinction.”(Cox 1995 : xv) The most visible in Christianity includes, of course, a variety of liberation theologies, Fundamentalism, and Pentecostalism. Among them, Pentecostalism or “Charismatic Christianity” is one of the fastest growing religious movements today at the rate of 20 million new members a year and with some 410 million membership worldwide number in the mid 1990s.¹ Pentecostalism, once an idiosyncratic marginal sectarian movement, has been expanding beyond the traditional Pentecostal denominations into the mainline churches including Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist.(For a convenient report, see Quebedeaux 1976)

¹ This statistics is cited from Cox 1995 : xv.

Religious fever in South Korea since 1960 proves to be not so much a swan song of dying pre-modern culture in an industrializing country as a harbinger of global return of religion. The expansion of religion, particularly Christianity, in South Korea has not drawn, besides from the Christian world, as much attention from social scientists as the legendary economic growth has. The growth of Christianity in South Korea since 1960 has been no less remarkable than that of its Gross Domestic Production (GDP). It is noteworthy that both have happened in the same historical time-space. As a matter of fact, all religions including Buddhism and other popular religions gained during this period. But the fastest was Christianity, the Protestant among Christianity, and the conservative among the Protestant, and the Pentecostal among the conservative. The Christian population of South Korea including the Catholic grew from 500,198 in 1950 to 623,072 in 1960 to 3,192,621 in 1970 to 7,180,627 in 1980 to 13,768,672 in 1990. The growth rates marked 412 percent from 1960 to 1970, 126 percent from 1970 to 1980, and 91 percent from 1980 to 1990. These statistics are impressive enough, but the growth rates in the membership roll of the Yoido Full Gospel Church (henceforth the YFGC) far exceeded them: 580 percent from 1960 (1,218 members) to 1970 (8,252 members), 1700 percent from 1970 to 1980 (147,011 members), and 342 percent from 1980 to 1990 (650,000 members).² In 1979 the membership roll of the YFGC already hit over 100,000 persons to surprise the Christian world.(Hurston 12) In 1998 when the present writer visited the church, the membership roll was said to be over 700,000 with the recent introduction of the branch sanctuary system throughout the greater metropolitan area.

² The statistics on Christianity in general is taken from Noh, Chi-joon 1998: 12. The statistics for the Yoido Full Gospel Church is taken from Suh, Kwang-sun, et al. 1981: 192 and Hurston 1993: 196.

But the church's unprecedented growth rate is not the only thing that interests us. More interesting about this fastest expanding congregation is its open acceptance and practice of the most irrational type of religiosity whose defining features include speaking-in-tongues, faith healing, and literal belief in miracles and the supernatural. Needless to say, they are what characterize Pentecostalism or "Charismatic" Christianity in general. Even within the South Korean Protestant Christianity generally conservative and fundamentalist itself, Pentecostalism has been labeled, at least officially, as marginal, sectarian, idiosyncratic, fanatic, shamanistic, sometimes even heretic. But the church's "miraculous" success has cast spell on many Christians and non-Christians, and made them search for the secret formula. It is no accident that the church has been the most prominent research object for the so-called "Church Growth Studies" and the host of the "Church Growth Seminar." The global expansion of Pentecostalism and the dramatic shift in its recognition among the overseas mainline denominations and the ecumenical councils have gradually turned illicit love into open admiration. Suddenly almost all the spectrums of Christians start to reevaluate and rediscover the forgotten treasures of authentic, primordial spirituality in Pentecostalism. Harvey Cox's book, *Fire From Heaven*, certainly contributes to this trend, which sees in Pentecostalism the return of primal religiosity.(Cox 1995)

The present study sets out to challenge this widely held current view on Pentecostalism by way of an immanent critique. Such a view is based on the keen awareness of spiritual desertion modernity entails. Harvey Cox sees it in hunger for authentic language not manipulated for political or commercial gains, authentic experience of the sacred not prescribed by scientific procedure, for unhindered expression

of spontaneous emotions and feelings, and for genuine sense of holistic being, with which he sees Pentecostalism effectively gets in touch.(Cox 81-157, 299-321) Thus, he celebrates Pentecostalism as a model for the twenty-first century religiosity, though with partial reservation on some snobbish “underside” elements such as preoccupation with wealth and health.(op. cit. 271-272) But the wealth-and-health gospel is not merely an underside element but belongs to the central part of the YFGC’s teaching known as the theology of “three-beat salvation” – a triple blessing for soul, wealth, and health. It is a question to be examined whether the preoccupation with wealth and health is integral or merely contingent to modern Pentecostal religiosity.

What Harvey Cox sees “primordial” in the Pentecostal religiosity shows striking affinity to the characteristics of aesthetic postmodern culture, which Frederic Jameson enumerates in his famous article, “Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalism:” depthlessness, the waning of affect, pastiche, breakdown of temporality, euphoric intensity, and the emphasis on the Sublime.(Jameson 1991: 1-54) It is yet to be examined if this observation is valid. If it is the case, one can suspect that the (post-) modern revival of the “primordial” form of religiosity signifies not so much the new era of spirituality as the further penetration of the logic of capital into religion, creating everything in its image. Jürgen Moltmann, a radical German theologian, states that the frontline of today’s theological battle should move from the problem of the Church - State relationship to that of the Church - Market relationship.(Moltmann 1997B: 178) It is also precisely the central problem of critical sociology. Moltmann laments and expresses righteous indignation over the current state of things, the “creation subjected to futility,”³

³ Romans 8:20.

in which everything is enslaved to the alienating law of exchange relations. But in an essay on prayer, he repeats almost in verbatim the Pentecostal theology of Rev. Cho, Yong-gi, the Senior Pastor of the YFGC, on the mysterious power of prayer (Moltmann 1997A: 125-144), although not endorsing the latter's wealth-and-health gospel. It seems to indicate how the lure of primordial religiosity could fascinate a critical mind like Moltmann in the midst of the incomparably perfected "administered world," where even the unconscious is calculatingly manipulated. The present study seeks to liberate spirit from the spell of spiritualism by calling it by name through an immanent critique.

The Yoido Full Gospel Church: A Sketch

The Yoido Full Gospel Church is a church of spectacles. Crossing the bridge leading from the northern part of Seoul to the island of Yoido, two monumental buildings with huge domes catch eyes. One is South Korea's Congress and the other the main sanctuary of the YFGC. The dome on the cylinder-shaped wall rather resembles a covered stadium. Without the cross and praying-hands monument, and the relief on the external wall, which were added in the 1980s, one would wonder if it were a sports arena or a theatre for performing art. Its architectural style is completely modern, emphasizing the simple geometric structure. The original version of the building that was intended to accommodate 10,000 persons, was dedicated in 1973, but expanded twice in 1983 and 1986 to accommodate 25,000 persons at once. Besides the main sanctuary, the First Education Building, the Second Education Building, and the Kook-min daily news building muster on the same block. The location is symbolic. The neighborhood, in which the church complex is located, is the heart of politics, finance, and mass media.

Not to mention the Congress, the headquarters of two major political parties, the stock exchange, domestic and international banks, and national broadcasting networks surround the church.

On Sunday and Friday night the whole neighbor is crowded with worshipers, cars, and the church buses specifically assigned to transport people from all over the greater metropolitan area. Police maintains a special duty to keep them in order. The church holds eight services on Sunday. Since the main sanctuary, in spite of seven services every Sunday, cannot house over 700,000 worshipers, however, other halls within the complex and twelve regional chapels throughout the city of Seoul open simultaneously to them. The modern communication technologies from simpler tape-recording to radio broadcasting to closed circuit television broadcasting system and to satellite broadcasting for simultaneous screen worship defy the physical distance between the main sanctuary at the Yoido-island and regional sanctuaries. The church's satellite broadcasting also covers Japan, Hong Kong, and China. The recorded voices and images are also distributed, although not simultaneously, through the sprawling overseas networks, to Europe, North America, Latin America, Africa, and even to Russia. As spectacle moves on a screen, it goes global.

The church is fond of counting. Most of its history is accounted in numeric, not only in tabulated form but also in narrative form. The church's official account divides its history into three periods according to its three different locales it successively has gone through. The first period (1958-1961), the "Tent church" period, begins with a humble gathering of five persons at the founder Choi, Ja-shil's home at a periphery of Seoul. Most of the legendary stories of healing and conversion that are recounted in the

official history, have their background in this period. The tent church is said to have had 1,000 registered members in 1961. The second period (1961-1972), the “Seo-Dae-Mun church” period, is marked by the construction of the Full Gospel Revival Center (later renamed “the Full Gospel Central Church”) on a fairly busy crossroad at the Seo-Dae-Mun County, a semi-periphery of Seoul. The monthly magazine *Shin-ang-ge* (the World of Faith) inaugurated in 1967. In the same year, the much celebrated “cell system” was introduced to organize 7,750 members into 125 cells. At the end of the period, membership roll is said to have reached 10,000 persons. In the third period (1973-present) the YFGC with its new gigantic facility finally became a world celebrity as the largest and fastest growing congregation in the world.⁴ The church with 700,000 members in 1993 celebrated its entry in the Guinness Book of World Records.

Such a large congregation cannot be class-specific. According to a statistical research in 1979 based on 300 respondents (Choi, Syn-duk 52-53), 22.3 percent of them can be regarded as upper class, 34.7 percent middle class, and 41.7 percent lower class. Although the sample may misrepresent the real situation, the church’s own statistics on the years of education for the whole population shows that 15.5 percent got a college or higher education, 32.2 percent graduated a senior high school, 23.1 percent a junior high school, 23.2 percent a elementary school, and 6 percent got no formal education

⁴ The figures are taken from the history page of the church’s official website www.yfgc.com, which is now closed for an unidentified reason. (Probably it might be due to the recent scandals around Rev. Cho, Yong-gi and his family members’ illicit handling of church money) But an earlier independent source presents different figures for the membership rolls before the year of 1977 from which the church’s official statistics are available. Citing Byun, Chong-ho’s *A History of Korean Pentecostal Movement*, Choi, Syn-duk writes: “As early as in November 1961, the church moved to the Full Gospel Revival Center” at Seo-dae-mun. The membership was over 300 persons, and increased by 20-30 persons a week. ... At the time when the church changed its name from the Full Gospel Revival Center to the Full Gospel Central Church, its registered members counted over 500. It built a new sanctuary in the island of Yoido in 1973, when its membership roll reached to 18.000 persons.”(Choi, Syn-duk 54)

at all.(op. cit. 51) It means that the members of the YFGC as of 1979 were relatively well-educated people. Almost 80 percent of the whole congregation's households belonged to small business sector and office workers, professionals' households occupied 1.9 percent.(op. cit. 52)

As well known, middle-aged women were predominant and most active participants in worship, prayer meeting, training session, cell meeting, and evangelism. Over 85 percent of all cell groups was women's and only about 15 percent men's.(op. cit. 51) The official history appreciates women's role: "As Pastor Cho Yong-gi continued to search for solutions for the training of those who would be [cell-group] leaders, he learned another fact: that the men were reluctant to make home visits to other members. He realized that for this purpose, women were much more suited than the men. At the time, Korean society frowned upon women taking the role of leaders within groups containing both men and women. Even so, as the Holy Spirit moved the hearts of both men and women, such social obstacles were overcome and women played a critical role in the development and growth of the YFGC." (History page at www.yfgc.com, II. 1962-1972, p. 2 in the printed version) However, the active role of women in a church has been a commonplace in Korean Christianity. In a society like South Korea's where in 1960s and 1970s a working mother was rather an exception and thought as a misfortune, women have more time and reason to be active in a church. But male monopoly on major decision-making has not been shattered because their role is still limited to the subordinated areas. Rev. Choi, Ja-shil, one of the cofounders of the YFGC and the mother-in-law of the Senior Pastor Cho, Yong-gi, remains the only and last ordained minister in the church, which has 215 ordained ministers as of 1997.

As the church grew, it diversified its activity. Besides the establishment of the Prayer Mountain at O-san-ri in 1974, it launched the Church Growth International Ministry (CGI) in 1976 and has held a series of the CGI international church growth conference in Korea and abroad. It also founded mission churches, bible schools, and seminaries in Los Angeles (US), Berlin (Germany), Kobe (Japan), Sao Paulo (Brazil), Moscow (Russia) and so on. It also hosted many international Pentecostal conferences. The church in the late 1980s organized a lot of charity campaigns such as funding pediatric heart operation, blood drive, and “bread of love” for the starving. In the 1990s, the YFGC, with the Institute of Lay Education, the International Theological Institute, and Soon-shin University began to put greater effort in theological articulation and education.

There is no question in that such a large body requires an organizational genius to operate through the considerable length of time. A long-time observer notes the church’s increasing administrative sophistication over time in differentiation, complication, and standardization.(Chung, Chin-hong 1997: 2-3, 6-7, 14-15) In 1982, the church was organized in 9 committees, 4 divisions, and 16 sub-divisions. In 1994, it was organized in 41 committees, 10 divisions, 41 sub-divisions, and numerous sub-units, besides the no less complicated organization of the Prayer Mountain. The organizational units regularly meet for prayer or training at least once a week in addition to the official worship service and the midnight prayer meeting. To them are added special meetings at the Prayer Mountain. Seoul is divided into 40 major districts, which are again subdivided into 130 minor districts. Under each of around 500 minor districts, there are numerous home cell groups of women or men. A supervisory body monthly reviews the activity of each of

the minor districts. The activity of the major ones is also evaluated every three month. Church school is organized in the similar way with 23 major student districts and 17 branch church schools. The Division of Education sets the policies, trains teachers, provides standardized curriculum, and textbooks. It is reported that 76 kinds of standardized documentary forms are used only within the church school.(op. cit. 7)

The church belongs to the Assembly of God denomination. The two main leaders, Rev. Choi, Ja-shil and Rev. Cho, Yong-gi, graduated from the two-year Assemblies of God Bible School. Rev. Cho, Yong-gi was elected in 1992 as the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the World Pentecostal Assemblies of God Fellowship now known as the World Assemblies of God Fellowship, symbolizing his worldwide influence. His global influence consists in his peculiar kind of Pentecostalism known as the three-beat salvation theology or the theology of the fivefold gospel and the threefold blessing, a detailed analysis of which constitutes the main body of the present study.

Method

Those studies practiced under the general rubric of “sociology” notoriously vary or sometimes contradict each other in their research objects, methods, and theories. However it is not necessarily taken to be the fault on the part of sociology. Such diversity and contradiction among sociological inquiries reflect those of something indefinitely vast and complex that we call “society.” As far as everything under heaven is socially mediated, then, there is nothing that cannot be the object of sociological research. As far as “society” ultimately refers to society as a whole, its manifestations have to be diverse

and often conflicting. As far as societal totality remains antagonistic, then, its inherent contradiction is bound to leave its mark on every part. Sociology in a rigorous sense is a theoretical endeavor to bring into light the mediation through which any given phenomenon chosen as the object of analysis embodies the antagonistic societal whole in its form and content.

But societal totality cannot be directly observed. It is not immediately given in sense data. It is an “absent cause,” so to speak. It can be approached only through conceptual reflection on the social mediation embodied in a given observable phenomenon. This means that any sociological study has to choose an observable phenomenon as an immediate object of analysis and then proceed, if it is to be sociology at all in the sense of critical reflection of society itself, to comprehend its ultimate object, society as a whole, through an immanent critique of the chosen phenomena. The present study chooses as its immediate object of analysis modern Pentecostal movement in South Korea since 1960. But its interest lies not so much in the religious phenomenon *per se* as in its symptomatic meaning for the contemporary society as a whole. What I hitherto call “immanent critique” without explanation means such an attempt to decipher the meaning of Pentecostal beliefs and practices as the symptoms that displace and condense a certain larger societal tendency, which is inaccessible otherwise.

Immanent critique as symptomatic reading contains the moment of interpretative sociology in taking into account the subjective meaning seriously. First of all, both try to listen to what the object has to say instead of imposing their own preconceived categories upon it, thus remaining external to what is to be known. The Phenomenological motto to “return to the thing-in-itself” or better to “fearlessly passive entrusting oneself to its

experience of the object”(Adorno 1982B: 506) is shared by immanent criticism, although the latter does not believe in the possibility of pre-conceptual knowledge, or “intuition,” as phenomenology claims. While immanent critique starts with immersing itself in its object without slightest reservation, it needs to transcend the immanence, illusory self-containment, of the object in itself insofar as it is to be a critique. Thus, immanent critique has to meet two contradictory demands at the same time: being immanent and transcendent at once. It can assume neither a transcendental standpoint, an Archimedean point, such as moral criteria, cultural ideal, theological orthodoxy, or canonical legitimacy outside the object. Nor can it be satisfied merely with reproducing what the object claims to be as if it were self-contained, autonomous, fixed, and finished. Immanent critique can meet the apparently contradictory demands because the object itself, when looked at as being always already socially mediated, points to something other than itself as the condition of possibility of its own being. Immanent critique can thus be characterized as an analytical process to implode its object by its own logic, or to use a Lacanian psychoanalytic term, “traversing fantasy.”(Zizek 1989: 124-129, 193-199)

The object loses its appearance of immanence when its mediation is un-concealed through conceptual labor. To bring mediation into light, one must be able to look at the object with two eyes, as it were. While attending with one eye what is spoken, what is written, one must attend with the other eye what is unspoken, what is unwritten.

But mediation is, it must be emphasized, not something that happens *between* the object and society. This misunderstanding presupposes the unbreakable immanence of both and tries to relate them merely in an external way. It is conceptual reification uncritically reflecting reification in wider social life, which is precisely what immanent

critique or dialectic theory has to deconstruct. Society is “immanent in experience, not an *allo genos*. Nothing but the social self-reflection of knowledge obtains for knowledge the objectivity that will escape it as long as it obeys the social coercions that hold sway in it, and not become aware of them. Social critique is a critique of knowledge, and vice versa.”(Adorno 1982B: 503) The so-called sociology of religion tends to succumb to the disciplinary division of intellectual labor, and, as a result, to leave the religious proper, its very object, out of its critical reflection, while being preoccupied with “scientific” data collection about “social” conditions and effects of a given religion, and its influence on economic, political, educational, interpersonal, ethical behavior or identity formation, etc. For instance, a sociologist, who is also personally involved in charismatic Christianity, says: “Although it is outside of the province of sociology to ascribe to the fire that is setting the Christian world ablaze, it is the task of social science to place as much as possible within a natural context without destroying the essence and meaning the renewal has for the millions who have been touched by it.”(Poloma 1997: 4) Phenomenological study of religion attempts to free religious studies from any preconception by immersing itself in the object, but ends up with the metaphysical notion of pure religiosity. Dogmatic theology, not to mention the so-called “practical” one, hardly resists its impulse toward setting up a transcendental norm, by which it judges the authenticity of any given religious phenomenon. Immanent critique takes this disciplinary division of intellectual labor as a form of domination, and seeks to dismantle it by means of critical reflection. Synthesis of diverse specialized knowledge into a coherence system as interdisciplinary studies purport to do merely strengthens domination through division, producing an illusion of harmonious collaboration within the fractured society.

Immanent critique is rather anti-disciplinary in trying to neutralize the power of domination by reminding the object of its own genesis in society, setting it free from its amnesia of whence it comes, breaking its accustomed immanence which specialization imposes upon it, and thus ascribing domination by specialization to critical scrutiny.

Sociology of modern Pentecostalism as an immanent critique has to deal directly with the specifically religious, theological concepts and practices. But it is by no means self-evident what constitutes the specifically religious. For instance, Emile Durkheim, in his research on simplest forms of religion, wants to find out what religion in general is, “the permanent elements which constitute that which is permanent and human in religion,” or “all the objective contents of the idea which is expressed when one speaks of *religion in general*.”(Durkheim 1915 : 17. Durkheim’s own italics) His attempt to discover what is common among extremely diverse religions leads to the particularly Durkheimian notion of religion as the social *par excellence*. As well known, the social, for Durkheim, is not merely an abstract category but a real force one can actually experience as coercion in everyday life. It is a higher reality *sui generis*, not only the source of social bond and norms but also the order of things and knowledge.(op. cit. 474-496) It is the ultimate, ontological horizon of all beings, so to speak. Thus, it is no accident that the social in Durkheim’s sociology is given transcendental dignity, which is usually given to religious symbols. Like transcendental deity or taboo, the social is something impenetrable and incomprehensible but as such the condition of order and meaning. Durkheim reduces specific contents of diverse religions to what he thinks the essence of religion in general, the least common denominator, i.e., the social. In a similar manner, he measures diverse societies only in terms of social integration and regulation

regardless of their specific contents. Durkheim's functionalist view of society contains a grain of truth to the extent that individuals actually experience society as something hurting, alienating, and opaque, in other words, living interactions among individuals congeals into machinelike automatism and loses any connection the individuals' subjective meaning. Durkheim's theory fails to recognize living individuals are more than mere social functions (Cf. Durkheim 1984: 338), and thus succumbs along with its close kin, Ferdinand Saussure's theory of language, to the objective tendency of reification, as V. N. Volosinov observes. (Volosinov 1993: 61)

The question on the essence of religion has no place in Weber's theory. Instead of reducing diverse religions to their essence such as collective representation, Weber painstakingly registers the unique socio-historical conditions and effects of such a variety of religious beliefs and practices with remarkable combination of sympathy and detachment. It is no accident, therefore, that his sociology of religion with its encyclopedic scope and incomparable depth should be a history of religion, nay, of civilization, utterly non-linear and un-deterministic. The so-called *ad hoc* explanation, about which Talcott Parsons keeps complaining in his introduction to Weber's sociology of religion (Weber 1964: xix-lxvii), indicates not so much the theoretical weakness as the enormous fruitfulness of interpretative approach, which shares respect for the particular with immanent critique.

Notwithstanding non-linear and un-deterministic socio-religious history, Weber's apparently static schema of social action (Weber 1978: 24-26), which constitutes the foundation of his interpretative sociology as a whole, contains a clearly discernable narrative structure, according to which instrumentally rational (*zwekrational*) action

becomes historically predominant over other types such as value-rational, traditional, and affectual, as Frederic Jameson analyzes.(Jameson 1998: 3-34) At the culmination of the historical development, Protestant ethic, the idiosyncratic combination of asceticism and profit making, played the role of vanishing mediator, which had incubated the spirit of modern capitalism and has been later abandoned when the latter has outgrown of religious ethic. Weber's insistence on "value-free" science itself reflects his hard-boiled realism toward the completed desacralization of life, which his contemporary, Friedrich Nietzsche also shares, calling for a "revaluation of all values," critical evaluation of values themselves instead of taking them as the criteria of evaluation. (Cf. Heidegger 1991: 15-21) Weber's encyclopedic sociology of religion can be regarded as another version of Nietzschean transvaluation. However one should not miss the peculiar ambivalence toward modernity that colors his sociology of religion as a whole. Weber by no means celebrates dreariness of rationalized and bureaucratized life in modern society but at the same time takes it inevitable. This love-hate relationship toward disenchantment may be productive in registering the dialectic of enlightenment that liberation from fearful nature's whim leads to imprisonment in an iron cage, and rationalization, intellectual control over the pattern of life, ends up with the repression of everything spontaneous and unpredictable such as sexuality and art. (Cf. Weber 1964 : 236-245) It is also this ambivalence that makes a "religiously unmusical" like Weber compulsively sojourn through the vast world of religions.

But Weber seems to fail, notwithstanding his almost heroic effort to master his spiritual predicament both personal and social, to overcome it conceptually. It is because his notion of rationality itself is entrapped in that of instrumental rationality, which leaves

other types of action such as traditional, affectionate, and value rational actions in the dark realm of the irrational, which allows no clear understanding. His fundamental interpretative schema, thus, precludes the possibility of understanding irrationality of the currently dominant mode of rationality, and rationality of what the scheme sets aside as the irrational. This philosophical limit of Weber's theory imposes historical limit on his method. Weber's interpretative sociology might have been meaningful in a historical period when actors took their action with clearly demarcated subjective meaning, as his method implies. But are the agency of actors and their subjective meanings not precisely the obstacles to be eliminated for further rationalization and bureaucratization? Weber's theory structurally excludes, for instance, mass social movements, an analysis of which might illuminate important characteristics of rationalized world: "It is not proposed in the present sense to call action 'social' when it is merely a result of the effect on the individual of the existence of a crowd as such and the action is not oriented to that fact on the level of meaning."(Weber 1978: 23) However much Weber's interpretative sociology helps the later development of Marxist critique of the superstructure, his incapacity to name the structural irrationality of modern society as such makes him a cynical scientist of self-destructive rationality, almost approaching to madness.

It belongs to the legacy of Karl Marx's critique of ideology and political economy to note the structural contradiction inherent to modern capitalist society as a whole. Notwithstanding his famous, but casual, remark of religion as people's opium, religion has never been a central interest in any of his entire work. Assuming critique of religion has already been completed by young Hegelians, particularly Feuerbach, he rather concentrates on critique of philosophy and political economy. Yet Marx's critique of

ideology in those spheres heavily relies on the analogy of religion, ideology *par excellence*. If Durkheim sees at the innermost core of any society, primitive or modern, the religious, transcendental order of being embodied in sacred symbols and rituals, Marx sees at the innermost core of modern capitalist society what modernity claims to surpass, idolatry in the forms of commodity and alienated labor. It is no accident that the critique of alienation in capitalist society finds its paradigm in religion.(Marx 1975: 322-334) Marx's *Capital : A Critique of Political Economy* (Marx 1977) can be understood as an immanent critique of contemporary religion, that is, capitalism, in which he ruthlessly debunks how the modern theology, i.e., bourgeois political economy, reproduces in its fundamental concepts the logic of capital and thus maintains fetishism. Already in his early writing entitled "On the Jewish Question," he sees "Jewish question" not as much a matter of religious freedom for Jewry as a matter of liberation of "civil society," namely economic sphere, from Jewish religion in practice, money worship.(Marx 1975 : 212-241)

But as Marx's "critique" of political economy turns into Marxist political economy, a positive science, dialectic thinking free and anti-methodic by its nature turns into a stultified worldview called Dialectical Materialism. Marx's ingenious architectural analogy of the base and the superstructure tends to be applied mechanically, resulting in much denounced economic determinism and class reductionism. Engels only belatedly in his famous letter to Schmidt confesses the one-sidedness of materialist conception of history in emphasizing on the influence of economic base: "And if this man has not yet discovered that while the material mode of existence is the *primum agens*, this does not preclude the ideological spheres from reacting upon it in their turn, though with a

secondary effect, he cannot possibly have understood the subject he is writing about.” (Marx and Engels 1986: 689) Nevertheless Engels’ own works on religion, particularly German Peasant War (Engels 1956) and Calvinism (Marx and Engels 1957: 298-302) are notorious for their class reductionism, rather immediate connection of a religious idea to a class, for their epiphenomenalism, religion as the mere “cloak” of class interests, and for their anachronistic projection of contemporary political struggle to the past religious conflict. (Cf. McLellan 1987: 44-50) However modified or refined (most famously Sartre 1968; Althusser 1996: 89-127, 163-218; Williams 1977: 75-141), Marxist theory of determination of the superstructure by the base would remain external to the cultural object in question unless mediation is to be found within the form and content of the very object in its irreducible specificity.

The social should not be thought to reside merely in the wider social context of the religious phenomenon in question or, society’s influence on it, say demographic, technological, economic, political, cultural, etc. Those influences are yet external to the religion proper. Immanent critique should register the social within the religious by cracking the socially necessary illusion of its autonomy and uncovering its mediation. But mediation should not be thought to be harmonious as Gestalt theory and structural functionalists assume like German idealists before Hegel did. Society is not merely “riven and disturbed by contradictions and disproportionalities; rather, society becomes a totality only by virtue of its contradictions. The societalization of society, its consolidation into what – in vindication of Hegel – is truly more like a system than an organism, has resulted from the principle of domination, the principle of division itself, and it perpetuates it. Society has survived, reproduced, and extended itself, and has

developed its forces, only through its division into the opposing interests of those who command and those who produce.” (Adorno 1993: 79) Thus, mediation is rather characterized by contradiction, gap, or discontinuity, as far as totality remains false, the universal and the particular are yet to be reconciled, or the truly socialized and individualized subject is yet to be achieved in history. It is how the irrational in an enlightened world can be “rational” for the uninterrupted functioning of society as a whole in spite of its obvious irrationality in running against its own destruction.

Theodor W. Adorno also insists on the need to historicize traditional Marxist ideology critique, which seeks to debunk material interests hidden within a particular ideology. (Adorno 1967: 29) Marxist ideology critique was conceived against idealism of the bourgeois era, which has been surpassed by a new era of positivism and pragmatism where no theory, speculation, even a single concept without explicit mention of its beneficiaries, is allowed. Here it becomes meaningless to expose the not-quite concealed material interests in ideology insofar as the ideology is adhered not for its own value but for its social function. “In an epoch in which bourgeois social science has, in Scheler’s words, ‘plundered’ the Marxian notion of ideology and diluted it to universal relativism,” Adorno says, “the danger involved in overlooking the function of ideologies has become less than that of judging intellectual phenomena in a subsumptive, uninformed, and administrative manner and assimilating them into the prevailing constellations of power which the intellect ought to expose.”(op. cit., 29-30) In addition to it, Adorno suggests that today’s ideology critique needs to go beyond the analysis of discourse and penetrate into libidinal dimension because under the sway of the culture industry, or “consciousness industry,” the particular content of an ideology becomes less important

than the mere filling-up of the psychic vacuum with the most regressive kinds of libidinal satisfaction to distract mind from recognizing the most obvious contradiction of society. It is no accident, therefore, that he relies significantly on psychoanalysis, although always secondary to Marxist critique of capitalism, particularly in his analysis of mass culture such as fascist propaganda or astrology column, whose key, as he sees, lies in psycho-technique rather than in discursive content.

Slavoj Zizek refines this line of ideology critique with Lacanian psychoanalytic concepts. (Zizek 1989, 1991, 1992A, 1992B, 1993, 1994) Like Adorno, Zizek emphasizes on the necessity for contemporary ideology critique to go beyond discursive analysis in order to grasp unconscious psychic gratification, *jouissance*, as the crucial binding force drawing individuals to a phantasmatic community: "The element which holds together a given community cannot be reduced to the point of symbolic identification: the bond linking together its members always implies a shared relationship toward a Thing, toward Enjoyment incarnated." (Zizek 1993: 201) Cultural analysis, which takes into consideration fantasy support as well as discursive formation (Zizek 1995: 213), should throw light on the secret why so crude a discursive formation like the Pentecostal theology of the Yoido Full Gospel Church could draw so many individuals. But unlike Adorno, Zizek in his effort to reach existential dimension through the notion of trauma, tends to fall into a-historical psychologization. Judith Butler warns: "... the historical becomes what is most indifferent to the question of trauma, and the political or historical effort to understand the institution of the family or the formation of concentration camps or Gulags cannot account for the 'traumatic' character of these formations; and, indeed, what is properly traumatic about them does not belong to their

social domination.”(Butler 1993: 202) The primacy of libidinal satisfaction over symbolic meaning in contemporary ideology needs to be understood as specific historical disintegration of an individual’s psyche in contemporary society.

The historical development of capitalism since 1960, what Jameson characterizes “de-differentiation,” mutual-penetration of economy, politics, and culture through the very logic of capital (Jameson 1998: 86-87), renders obsolete Marx’s figure of the base and the superstructure, which assumes the historical differentiation of those spheres. From the hindsight, the period, often called “post-modern,” proves to be the one in which the rule of exchange relationship has become totalitarian and global in every sense, world capitalist system has become “purely” capitalist, overcoming the obstacles such as labor movement, the so-called existing socialist regimes, and national liberation movements. Adorno’s presumed pessimism expressed in his notions of “totally administered life,” “total domination,” or “socialized society,” seems to come true. An immanent critique of contemporary mass religious movement can be a critique of society as a whole only by deciphering the general social tendencies it embodies in its innermost constitution and thus bringing them into light.

A Preliminary Reflection on Modernity and Christianity in Korea

This historical overview on modernity and Christianity in Korea is intended not only to help those readers unfamiliar with Korea’s broader historico-religious context locate modern Pentecostal movement. But it is also to delineate the contour of the central problematic, that is, dialectic of modernity embodied in religion in Korea, which will be recapitulated in the concluding chapter. The Yoido Full Gospel Church (the YFGC

hereafter), is indeed one of the most privileged objects for such critique of modernity in many ways. First of all, the YFGC has been remarkably successful for four decades since its foundation in 1959. Its uninterrupted rapid growth throughout the period of “modernization” refutes the naïve view that it is merely the remnant of pre-modern religious tradition in the guise of Christianity. It has grown with the pace of industrialization, rationalization, urbanization, and modernization, not in spite of them. Its geographical location in the Yoido Island, lies in the heart of South Korea’s mass communications network, politics, and finance within the metropolitan city of Seoul. Second, the church is not only located at the center of mass communications network but also is itself the forerunner of religious mass communications network with its press and satellite radio and television broadcasting system, and their multi-national distribution network through the church’s mission abroad. Its seemingly anachronistic religious message is distributed through the most advanced communication technology throughout the world. Third, being located at the center of multinational finance, the church itself is a multinational religious enterprise with its overseas mission network in North and South Americas, Africa, Europe, and Asia.

Besides these aspects of the church itself, Korea’s peculiar experience of modernity makes the present study more interesting. Like many parts of the world, Korea’s modern history began with its forceful incorporation into the modern capitalist world system, the so-called “opening” in 1896. By the standard of world historical time, Korea’s incorporation into the modern world system was very late. And Korea was colonized by a non-western, non-Christian Japan, which had managed to modernize itself only in the mid-eighteenth century. Japan’s colonial policy was to assimilate Koreans up

to the point that they finally became one people, as the colonial slogan had: “Oneness of the Inner Land (Japan) and Chosun (Korea).” Japan’s colonial project of assimilation was an impossible one from the beginning. Korea not only had lived under a well-developed state nearly for more than a thousand years and thus consolidated as something like proto-nation with the exceptional degree of homogeneity in ethnicity, language and custom.(Cf. Hosbawm 1990: 66) But also it had long boasted of being a cultural superior to Japan. In addition, although Japan went ahead several decades in modernization, it was yet more of a competitor rather than an absolute superior in the race to become a strong modern nation state in the mind of many Korean intellectuals at the time. Japan’s colonial rule over Korea spanned not over a generation, only thirty-six years. Very short compared to other colonized areas, it was far more intensive. Japanese imperialist, the latecomer in the jungle of competing imperial powers, was desperate to build a strong regional capitalist economy, what it called “the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Zone.” Thus it hastened to introduce modern land tenure and modern banking system, build physical infrastructure including railroads, highways, communication system, ports, power stations, and ideological infrastructure including modern school system and national religion of Shintoism. Cummings calls it “administrative colonialism.” (Cummings 1997: 148-154) But as he himself observes, colonial administration was executed by the quite sophisticate national organization of the colonial police, an armed force to impose colonial policy against Koreans’ will. Japan’s colonialism was violent as much as administrative.(op. cit. 152) Particularly during the period of the Great East Asian War from 1930-1945 the colonial administration had to rely upon naked violence in its desperate war mobilization of every possible resources from ordinary household

items like bowls and spoons to men and women. And the uninterrupted struggle for Korea's independence, both armed and unarmed in and out of the Korean peninsular, contributed to the further sophistication of the already fine network of surveillance. In Korea's experience, coloniality strengthened modernity and modernity deepened coloniality. If the alliance between enlightenment and domination was revealed in anti-Semitism under Nazi, so was it also in Japan's colonialism if in a different way. Thus, the experience of Korea's "colonial modernization" demands a fresh look into the nature of modernity.

Christianity had arrived well before Japan annexed Korea. But it could not take root in Korean soil until the early twentieth century when some desperate intellectuals and many common people, facing the threat of Japanese imperialism and the helpless Yi dynasty, converted to Christianity in the hope of independence, modernization, and some form of democracy. In the modern history of Korea, thus, the role of Christian mission was paradoxical. Missionaries, mostly North American Protestant, brought the anti-modern, de-politicized, and the Fundamentalist type of Christianity into Korea, but Koreans welcomed it as a medium of enlightenment and political independence. Their theological doctrine may have been "anti-modern" by the standard of the west, but their schools, clinics, and way of life unwittingly disseminated modern sciences and ideologies such as democracy and equality of nations, individuals, and sexes. To the embarrassment of the American missionary, Korean Christians read the story of Exodus as their own story of national liberation. Local churches were deployed as the organizational network of the independence movement that culminated in the 1919 massive national uprising. Japanese colonial government urged the western missionaries to de-politicize Korean

Christianity, and the latter partially succeeded in “purifying” Korean Christianity through the Great Revival Movement in the 1910s. After the 1919 uprising, a variety of secular political ideologies such as nationalism, anarchism, socialism, and communism took the leading role in Korea’s national liberation movement in theory and practice, particularly under the influence of the Russian Revolution. Being marginalized by both Japanese colonial government and secular social movements, Korean Christianity came to be largely regarded as anti-modern, anti-enlightenment, or even the opium of people by intellectuals and activists. But Christian missions and local churches still remained an important channel through which ordinary people could get in touch with the western science, languages, ideas, technology, and medicine, well through the 1960s.

An independent Korea, the first modern nation state, did not follow Japan’s defeat and withdrawal from Korea in 1945. The fate of the post war Korea was determined by the newly rising world hegemony of the United State. The initial division of Korea at the 38-degree parallel might have been merely a temporary arrangement for disarmament of Japan by the Allied Army. But it was solidified to contain or roll back the communist encroachment. The Korean War (1950-1953) played the critical role not only to make the division of Korea almost permanent but also to legitimate the cold war policy of the United States and its related state apparatus including CIA, NSC, not to mention the huge military-industrial complex. Aechison’s remark on the Korean War that “it came and saved us!” was too significant to be merely casual.(Cummings 1990: 408-438) Fire ceased but war did not end in 1953. Notwithstanding the unprecedented sacrifice, the war did not resolve the class antagonism accumulated during the colonial period and exacerbated by the U. S. occupation from 1945 to 1948. The Korean War in both hot and

cold versions, has sustained the military Keynesianism of the United States, if not the latter has continuously reproduced the former. South Korea can barely be called an independent state with its army directly under the command of the U.S. military chief and its political economic dependency. It was not even neo-colonialism which would allow autonomy in military and political matter, however nominal it is.

It was in this historical context that the second wave of South Korea's modernization since 1960 led to the so-called "miracle of the Han River." South Korea's successful economic development would help the military regimes compensate their weak legitimacy and lessen the people's aspiration for democracy. It was also important for the United States to keep the upper hand in the cold war. America's exceptional generosity in giving and lending money, opening its market, and consulting and overseeing the developmental plan only suggested how America was desperate in creating a successful capitalist economy at the border of the cold war. But South Korea's economic development was not combined with liberal democracy. It was a para-military campaign under the authoritarian rule of the military elite. War and economic development were hardly distinguished, as the official slogan had it: "Let us build while fight!" Modern science and technology, organizational and managerial skill were relentlessly developed and deployed for the utterly irrational purpose of domination at the world systemic level and the half-nation state level.

This paradoxical experience of modernity in Korea makes some regard modernity as something to achieve and overcome at the same time.⁵ It does not mean a linear process

⁵ South Korea's prominent quarterly, *Changjak-kva-bipong* (Creation and Criticism), has pursued this question at least since the 1993 Winter issue, where it featured the problem of modernity in Korea. Paik, Nak-chung, the journal's chief editor and leading literary and social critic, raised the question of unique combination of modernity and post-modernity in works of art and progressive social movement, looking at

in which modernity must be first achieved and then overcome. It is yet to be made clear precisely what the enigmatic expression means, but it seems to be an attempt to register the contradiction inherent to modernity. Some accept Immanuel Wallerstein's distinction between the modernity of technology from that of liberation.(Wallerstein 1995: 126-144) Such a distinction is convenient as much as simple. It is not at all obvious, however, how the former can be distinguished from the latter at a particular moment of history. The notion of modernity as something to achieve and overcome at once can be meaningful only when it conceptually grasps the modernity's inherent contradiction that its very capacity of emancipation contains that of domination, as dialectical thinkers such as Karl Marx, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno try to do. It is also immediately evident that the paradox of modernity is not confined to the areas, which went through the colonial rule, but extended to the imperialist powers, although the ways in which the paradox manifests itself, of course, differ according to the particular time-spaces. However, one might say that the inherent contradiction of modernity appears more clearly in the experience of colonial modernization. In this sense, the historical course Korea had to go through may be said to be "typical" than exceptional. The seemingly aberrant phenomena in modern Korea such as the extraordinary economic growth, the no less extraordinary degree of dependency on the United States in politics, the extremely oppressive state apparatus, the persistent revolutionary movements, and the unheard-of expansion of Christianity, especially Pentecostalism, tell more about the contradiction of modernity unfolding on the world-systemic scale.

modernity as something to realize and overcome at the same time. See Changjak-kwa-bipyong 1993 Winter. Some articles by Paik, Nak-chung, the founder and editor of the journal, on this topic are also available in English. Paik, Nak-chung 1990, 1993A, 1993B, 1996, 1998 and 2000.

Modern war differs from pre-modern war in that the former involves society as a whole, hence the saying that modern war is a total war. It means that war creates politics, economy, culture, and everyday life according to its image. This proposition applies to any country, which experienced modern warfare, say, the two great world wars and numerous local ones. But perhaps no society in the world than Korea – both south and north – has been shaped more thoroughly by the modern wars for a prolonged period. Korea's first involvement, although involuntary in most part, in modern warfare was through Japan's desperate war mobilization in the peninsula. The scope of mobilization covered all segments of the population from children to young men and women to the elderly. Their soul and body were to be disciplined and deployed at schools, factories, other workplaces, civil organizations such as women's clubs, etc. as well as army, for the "holy war" against the European and American devils. Material resources up to those personal items like spoons, chopsticks, or wedding rings, were of course offered "voluntarily" out of loyalty toward the Emperor-Sun-God. Artistic, literary talents were also mobilized to agitate people to sacrifice their lives for the noble cause of the war. Many of what Cummings sees as the legacy of Japanese colonialism still remaining in both of the contemporary Koreas - strong bureaucracy at the center, lack of decentralization of power, economic development led by the strong state, and highly centralized national police and army - may be that of war mobilization.(Cummings 1984)

It goes without saying that the antagonistic division of the nation and the subsequent war has reinforced the system of war mobilization to the degree of madness. But this situation should be regarded as typical rather as exceptional in the sense that the global tendency of modernity manifests itself in the seemingly exceptional situation of

Korea. Not only that the antagonistic symbiosis of North and South Korea has been something like a miniature model of the global regime of the cold war, in which the western bloc and the eastern bloc have actually coexisted precisely through their supposed antagonistic relationship.(Wallerstein 1995: 10-45) But also that the global tendency toward “totally administered society” witnesses its exemplary manifestation in South Korea, where perennial war, authoritarian state, and market have allied to create and maintain the total domination over the whole population. Particularly instructive at the moment is Futsitah Shojo’s penetrating analysis of the relationship of totalitarianism and “total” war, modern politics, and market (Shojo 1995), which reminds the works of Frankfurt School in many respects. According to him, indiscrimination characterizes modernity: modern war, being “total,” does not distinguish civilians from soldiers, the front from the behind, officers from the rank-and file; modern politics and market never count individuals as autonomous beings but merely as anonymous members of the collectivities classified, categorized as in opinion poll or market research. Thus, democracy and market in peacetime are no less totalitarian than the battlefield of mass slaughter by modernized killing machines. In addition, democracy, market, and war inseparably interlace in the modern society, in the way in which each of them tends to facilitate the other. Such a society can be compared to a skull with blank eyeholes and crunched teeth, the eerie combination of meaninglessness and extreme aggressiveness. It produces those highly efficient executives with no sense of an ultimate meaning, hence Captain Ahab and his incredibly able crew pursuing after Moby Dick, the mysterious white whale.

It was precisely in the period of the great social transformation led by the authoritarian wartime state that Korea has become what some journalists call the “Christian South Korea,” where a quarter of the total population claims to be Christian. In the period, Korean Christianity not only enormously expanded but also bifurcated into two large camps: the progressive versus the conservative. The progressive, mostly Christian intellectuals tried to redefine the meaning of “being Christian,” partially under the influence of the radical theologies in the west. To them, Christianity means committing oneself to the struggle to liberate people from all kinds of oppression: from political authoritarianism to the national division and dependency to economic exploitation to patriarchy within and without the Church. A large number of student activists and intellectuals found in the radical theologies a fascinating mixture of Marxist social analysis banned by law at the time, utopian thoughts, contemporary radical social movements in theory and practice, and the revolutionary origins of the biblical religion. As soon as the influence of these radical Christians became visible enough, Christianity became an arena of the ideological battle between the progressive and the conservative. The YFGC, of course, took the latter’s side in terms of its political stance. But Its Pentecostalism should not be confused with the Korea’s conservative Christianity. It rather represents a theological innovation no less “radical” in a sense than the radical liberation theologies. It can be said that the radical Christian social movements and the modern Pentecostalism in South Korea are two opposite responses to the drastic social change since 1960. If truth lies only in the extreme, a close reading of the extreme form of modern Christianity will reveal the truth of the era of development.

Scope, Sources, and Organization

The scope of the present study on modern Pentecostalism in South Korea is confined to a single congregation called the Yoido Full Gospel Church. It does not necessarily mean that the YFGC represents Pentecostal movement or Charismatic Christianity in general. There are a wide variety of Pentecostalism today throughout the world. But at the same time there exists enough commonality among those local movements to legitimate the use of the term “Pentecostal movement” or “Charismatic Christianity” for them. The present study has no intention to provide a comprehensive classificatory map to locate those diverse movements. But it provides some comparative notes everywhere it is necessary for the analysis of the main object of analysis.

The primary sources of the present study includes a variety of publications by the YFGC’s own printing houses. The materials are abundant because the church has long been a leader in taking advantage of the most advanced forms of mass communication including new paper, monthly magazine, books, cassette recording, radio, television, and now web broadcasting to disseminate its message. My analysis is mainly based on the printed materials and some audio recordings. My personal acquaintance with some of the church’s members in the 1970s and 1980s provided me with the first hand experience of the Pentecostal movement. Although I have never been a member of the church, I had chances to attend the church’s meetings and to get involved in private discussion on religion with the Pentecostals since the mid-1970s. Also I spent a month in the 1998 Summer to see again what was going on at the church, attending worship services, prayer meetings, doing informal interviews with some pastors and lay people including the former insider of high rank, while browsing the church’s library. Besides these primary

materials, there are valuable secondary literatures based on questionnaire survey, participatory observation, and interview conducted in the early 1980s. The strength and weakness of these resources is critically evaluated when they are referred to.

The present study follows Adorno's model, as demonstrated particularly in his researches on mass culture such as modern astrology and fascist radio-sermon. (Adorno 1975, 1994) Although his study of literature, music, and philosophy follows the same method of immanent critique, the object of the present study, the modern Pentecostal movement in South Korea since 1960 stands closer to modern astrology column in a daily news paper and radio-sermon in its nature. Since those mass-mediated cultural phenomena aims at an anonymous audience, they have to formulate their message in a discernable pattern according to their idea of prospective audience in order to produce an impression that they address an individual while actually addressing a social type. Thus, they tend to present their message in the form of numerically ordered categories such as the "ten habits of successful people," etc. Some fixed form and motifs are repeated in an endless series of insignificant variation. The publications of the Yoido Full Gospel Church share these characteristics of mass cultural products. Its large amount of texts can be easily put into a definite classificatory system. This observation confirms the sincerity of the Senior Pastor Rev. Cho, Yong-gi's remark that his whole ministry and sermons are based on the scheme of the "three-beat salvation" theology. (Cho, Yong-gi 1977: 18)

Therefore, the present analysis proceeds according to the pattern of the three-beat salvation – the salvation of soul, material condition, and body, paying close attention to recurrent themes, terms, as well as literary forms. A chapter on tongue speaking is added because the practice is universally recognized as the defining feature of Pentecostal

movement among both its insiders and outsiders. The text of *Three-Beat Salvation*, the central piece of the present analysis, is referred to in abbreviation as TBS and a page number. All translations from the Korean language sources are the present writer's own lest designated otherwise.

Chapter II

Literature

The extraordinary growth of Pentecostalism in Korea, particularly that of the Yoido Full Gospel Church, has drawn much attention from Christians and journalists. But serious social scientific research has been scant. The most intensive one up to date is the joint research initiated and published by the Korea Christian Academy in 1981 (Ryu, Tong-sik et al. 1981). Four scholars from four different disciplines - Suh, Kwang-sun from theology, Chung, Chin-hong from religious phenomenology, Han, Wan-sang from sociology, and Kim, Kwang-il from psychiatry - contributed their independent studies to this joint research project. A few years ahead this joint research project, Choi, Syn-duk, a sociologist, had conducted a scholarly research on the YFGC in 1978 for the first time.(Choi, Syn-duk 1978) In 1997, one of the contributors to the Korea Christian Academy joint project revisited independently this time the YFGC to follow up the significant changes from the late 1980s to the 1990s.(Chung, Chin-hong 1997) Besides those studies, there are a few monographs and dissertations in English by some Korean theologians(Yoo, Boo-woong 1987; Lee, Young-hoon 1996; Lee, Timothy Sang-hoon 1966).

Literature in Korean

Choi, Syn-duk, a sociologist at one of the prominent mission universities in Korea, obviously impressed by the monumental growth of the YFGC, pioneered a sociological study in 1978. She conducted both participatory observation and questionnaire survey. Her actual presentation of the research is mostly based on the result of the questionnaire survey, in which the research subjects themselves are

supposed to answer a variety of questions. The church seems to have been not so enthusiastic about such a scientific research. Among 800 copies of the questionnaire distributed through 8 parishes, it is reported, she managed to receive 300 responses. Since her statistical procedure does not provide any information on sampling process, statistical error, and statistical significance, it is impossible to decide how correctly her statistical data represent the actual situation of the church in question. As to social class and education of the congregation, however, she takes enough caution and points out misrepresentation by comparing the results from the sample with the church's own data for the whole population.(See Chapter I the YFGC : A Sketch in the present study) In spite of the relatively small sample for a congregation with over 100,000 members at the time, the data still provides a good idea about who the members of the YFGC were and what they thought in the mid-1970s. But the first venture in social scientific study on the church demonstrated a strong reservation to scientific research as such and particularly to questionnaire approach on the part of the church members. Indeed, questionnaire research has never been repeated henceforth.

Choi, Syn-duk's analytic framework is based on a certain theological notion of what Christian Church should be, than rigorously sociological one, notwithstanding the title "A Sociological Study on S Church." In the section entitled "the Purpose of the Study and Research Method," for instance, she says: "This study aims at an examination of the correlation and interaction between the social conditions and ideas of the members of S Church and the essence or mission of Christian Church."(Choi, Syn-duk 51) The fact that this research purports to be evaluative from the beginning, insofar as any meaningful sociological study would contain the element of critique. But it is

problematic that the research applies the theological criteria to the congregation in order to evaluate whether it lives up to the essential notion of Church, to a preconceived, external notion of what a church should be. Thus, the survey questions are formulated according to what the researcher thinks, following a theological commonplace, to be the essence of Christian Church, which is said to consist of *Kerygma* (proclamation), *Koinonia* (fellowship), and *Diakonia* (service). Nevertheless this research remains the only statistical survey ever attempted to date, and contains valuable observations about the social status of the church members, their everyday life, their beliefs, and their reaction to the church and its leaders as of 1978.

The joint project of the Korea Christian Academy marks the first serious attempt to understand Pentecostalism in modern Korea, especially focusing on the YFGC, in its many dimensions. It still remains the most important study in this area. It contains first hand information attained from an extended period of participatory observation by professionally trained scholars, and also valuable theoretical reflections. The intention of the book as a whole, which is actually a collection of four independent studies, can be said to be normative or evaluative both theologically and ethically. But as the title, “The Phenomena and Structure of Pentecostalism in Korea” suggests, the general intention of evaluation does not impede the objective analytic impulse of the researches.

Suh, Kwang-sun, a theologian and the first contributor, analyzes and evaluates the beliefs and practices of the YFGC as an exemplary case of the “new Pentecostal movement” in South Korea, based on his own participatory observation from March to May 1981. (Ryu, Tong-sik, et al. 23-99) His analysis is focused on “faith healing” and “speaking in tongues,” which he identifies as the most distinctive aspects of

the “new Pentecostal movement.” He also compares the movement with the Pentecostal movement in the United States, and evaluates it from the perspective of Christian social ethics and the Trinitarian theology. He sees the “new Pentecostal movement” as a popular religious movement based on the indigenous folk religiosity in Korea, “shamanism.” He concludes: it could, on the one hand, “liberate Christian church from legalism and formalism, gives it vitality, provide a community for the alienated people in the midst of urbanizing modern society, and breed critical, nonconformist political consciousness. On the other hand, however, the ‘new Pentecostal movement,’ succumbing to the religious, cultural orientations of shamanism in Korea, contributes to the expansion of secular, mundane, material desire, and furthermore tends to become “apolitical” by making people conform and adjust themselves to consumer capitalism and the political regime behind it.”(op. cit. 24) His use of the notions such as legalism, formalism, vitality, community, “apolitical” position, however, seems to need further examination. For instance, one can raise the question whether the Pentecostal movement falls into its own legalism and formalism. One can also question the exact socio-psychological nature of vitality and community in the Pentecostal movement.

But Suh, Kwang-sun’s comparative analysis helps locate the contemporary Pentecostalism in South Korea in the broader spectrum of the worldwide Pentecostal movement. Particularly he takes notice of the lack of eschatological vision in the YFGC. In the earlier Pentecostal movements at the dawn of the twentieth century, such an eschatological anticipation combined with the belief in the pouring of the Holy Spirit upon the true believers leads Pentecostals to radical egalitarianism and social criticism against money and power. On the contrary, the contemporary Pentecostalism in South

Korea comes to accept wholeheartedly the values of modern capitalist society by advocating this-worldly values such as wealth, health, and happiness as the divine blessings which the Holy Spirit bestows to the true believers. This observation, although a commonsense for a historically minded researcher, is still valuable because it subverts the linear historical narrative of Pentecostalism, the presumably seamless development of the Holy Spirit Movement from the 1st century to date, which some modern Pentecostal theologians try to tell. (Cf. International Theological Institute 1998)

Suh, Kwang-sun's analysis of tongue speaking marks one of the rare serious attempts to understand the allegedly supernatural phenomena. It is not a first-hand research but based on the first-hand researches done by others. He makes it clear that the so-called "speaking-in-tongues" practiced in modern Korean Pentecostal churches is glossolalia, vocalization of meaningless syllables, rather than xenosolalia, speaking of foreign languages known to a linguistic community but unknown to the speaker. His explanatory model, however, relies on the now outdated psychopathological model, which sees tongue speaking as "abnormal" behavior and is based upon the classical, lower class Pentecostalism in the United States. Glossolalia is thus understood as regressive speech like a babe's crying among the oppressed people, whose overwhelming frustration and anger could find no properly linguistic outlet, especially due to their underdeveloped linguistic proficiency. He suggests that glossolalia can be an emotional release of frustration and anger under social oppression but should not be the Christian norm, citing Paul's advice to the Corinthians to take a few sensible words more valuable than hundreds of incomprehensible utterances. The psychopathological approach to tongue speaking was, however, superseded during the 1960s and thus

needs to be updated with recent non-pathological approaches.

Chung, Chin-hong, a religious phenomenologist and the second contributor to the joint project, focuses solely on the YFGC.(Ryu, Tong-sik et al. 101-163) He undertakes not only participatory observation but also interviews with some key leaders and lay people for an extended period of time. He warns against psychological or sociological reductionism in the study of religion and insists on the importance of phenomenological approach, which takes the beliefs and practices of the YFGC as religion more than anything else, the manifestation of different religiosities irreducible to external factors. Especially he pays more attention to what is practiced than what is spoken, assuming that *legomena* or what is spoken cannot cover the totality of religious experience. As a result his work contains many valuable details about the ritual practices of the church, which could not be registered otherwise. The most important among them would be his observation of the dual structure of the church itself and its affiliated organization, the Prayer Mountain, which corresponds the dual leadership structure of Rev. Cho, Yong-gi, the Senior Pastor, and Rev. Choi, Ja-shil, the head of the Prayer Mountain, and the subtle love-hate relationship between the two.

However, Chung, Chin-hong's phenomenological approach does not remain merely on the descriptive level. It insists to be descriptive in order to get to the "thing-in-itself" and evade the conceptual violence by external categories as possible. Precisely in doing so, it arrives at sharp comparative insights. For instance, he characterizes the worshipping community in the YFGC as a community of naked individuals, not of the performers of a social role. (op. cit. 115) Instead of merely speaking about "community" or the "sense of belonging" for the alienated people, he tries to make clear the difference

between the Pentecostal community and other communities: “The community, which is formed in and through such a worship service, is different from the groups based on a specific social or historical consciousness. They neither care about nor claim it.”(op. cit. 116) Here Chung, Chin-hong seems to touch upon the unique nature of the YFGC as a group that is not based upon an articulated and shared ideological discourse, which provide its members with symbolic mandates, roles, and meanings to perform, identify with, and structure their world view. Chung’s language comes close to existential philosophy when he turns from negative determination to positive one: “Perhaps their concern is directed toward the most realistically ontological praxis. They, thus, make a community of individuals who seek for self-authenticating experience through such praxis. In other words, the community of worshippers in the YFGC is a community of naked human beings who confront with the problems of actual human life such as birth, aging, disease, and death.”(op. cit. 116) He emphasizes here that the YFGC is a community based not on a set of shared value, ideology, doctrine and practices, but on utterly isolated and fragmented individuals’ searching for the genuine meaning of life, as the use of the terms with existentialist overtone such as “ontological,” “existential” or “self-authenticating” suggest. The church’s apparent affinity to philosophical existentialism with its concern with the people uprooted and outstripped of any social bond and symbolic order immediately after the Korean War can not simply be denied. But what truly needs to be explained for the YFGC’s religious doctrine and practices is the unique combination of the existentialist tendency and the pragmatic tendency toward the pursuit of wealth, health, and happiness, and its societal implications.

Another important contribution, which Chung, Chin-hong makes to a better

understanding of the YFGC, is to describe the multi-layered structure of its religiosity. In the first approach he adopts Eliade's generic categories of religiosity to locate the religiosity of the YFGC in a comparative perspective. (Cf. Eliade 1996) With the conceptual tool, he concludes that the dominant mode of the YFGC's religious practice belongs to "kratophany," religiosity oriented toward power than "theophany," religiosity oriented toward a personal deity, or hierophany, religiosity oriented toward an impersonal sacred.(Ryu, Tong-sik et al. 144-148) Undoubtedly the practices of the YFGC including both the church itself and the Prayer Mountain are centered upon the experience of the Holy Spirit presumably manifested in tongue-speaking and healing. "The most important characteristic of the kratophanic mode of religiosity," he writes,

lies in the fact that no norm or criterion regulates procedure, method, measures, and process to experience, rely on, possess, and solace power. Or to put it precisely, the result rather tends to legitimate, sublimate, and glorify the process. As a result the kratophanic mode of religiosity inherently tends to exclude theology or ethical judgment. (op. cit. 147)

This characterization points to the same direction as the notion of the "Holy Spirit without the Father and the Son," which Suh sees a reaction to "the Father without the Holy Spirit" predominant in the mainline Christianity of South Korea.(op. cit. 89-97) Suh's observation is particularly helpful because it shows how the YFGC selectively retrieves those elements useful for to its own beliefs and practices from the treasure-house of the Christian tradition. Chung's characterization provides the conceptual tools for a comparative understanding in the larger context of religious studies in general.

To the overall categorization of the YFGC's religious practices as power-oriented religiosity, Chung, Chin-hong adds a more specific analysis, drawing upon the studies on the contemporary popular religiosity in industrial societies.(op. cit. 148-159) He pays

attention to the three types of modern popular religiosity: Fundamentalism, positive thinking, and business creed. Fundamentalism is an underdog's reaction formation to modernization among the outcasts of industrial society. Positive thinking is a religious version of "I-Can-Do" ideology among those who generally get a substantial education, regard themselves as the middle class, occupy relatively a stable socio-economic position but have to suffer from stressful competition and meaninglessness. Finally business creed is an elite ideology among the managerial strata, which translates into Christian rhetoric entrepreneur's attitudes such as liberalism, productivity, pragmatism, industriousness, optimism, the ethic of competition, compensation, royalty and responsibility for the organization. With these categories, Chung, Chin-hong traces the structural transformation of the YFGC's religiosity over time. Up to a certain point, which he does not specify, kratophany, "the experience of Holy Spirit," and positive thinking were the two basic elements. He points out that these two elements complement each other. Positive thinking, on the one hand, functions as a logical extension of kratophany and the latter as the positive evidence of the former.(op. cit. 155) These types of religiosity had a strong appeal, Chung says, to "power-seeking social strata, or to a certain aspect of human nature," and helps the church's rapid expansion.(Ibid.) Here again Chung neither specifies the social groups or the human need, to which these types of religiosity had particularly a strong appeal, nor explains the nature of such an appeal. As the church grew larger, however, new elements were to be introduced in order to manage kratophany and positive thinking.(op. cit. 156) Now managerial strata, whose religiosity was based on business creed, emerged to produce church members *en masse* in a highly organized way. They also contributed to the accelerated expansion of the church

by intentionally promoting positive thinking through cell-groups and mass media. At the second moment, Chung observes, kratophany and positive thinking were no longer the driving forces. Rather the combined mechanism of business creed and hierophany “manufactures and sells” the standardized, mass produced religion of kratophany and positive thinking, the religion of realization of “power” and “potentials.”(op. cit. 156-157) The transition from the first to the second moment, as Chung analyzes, seems to follow the inner logic of Pentecostal movement focusing on power and possibility thinking.

The third moment, the appearance of fundamentalism, however, is “utterly unexpected,” according to Chung.(op. cit. 157) Contrary to other observers (Cf. Suh, Kwang-Sun; Han, Wan-sang), Chung, Chin-hong maintains that “fundamentalist tendency has been rare in the YFGC.”(Ibid.) The discrepancy on the presence of Fundamentalism in the YFGC seems to be due, at least in part, to the vague reference of the term “Fundamentalism,” which the further stretching of the term in recent religious studies only exacerbates.(For example, see Marty and Appleby 1994). By “fundamentalist tendency” Chung means compulsive adherence to a certain doctrines and the withdrawal from the world based on an eschatological prophesy of the universal catastrophe. If one means an imminent eschatology with the term “fundamentalism,” Chung’s observation is correct.(Suh, Kwang-sun also notes the lack of eschatology in the YFGC, as seen above). And it is indeed surprising to hear Rev. Cho, Yong-gi say in a sermon that “Jesus is coming before my hair turns into gray.” But it is generally acknowledged that the classical Pentecostalism presumes North American Christian Fundamentalism that adheres to the five fundamental doctrines of Christian faith: the

virgin birth of Christ, his substitutionary atonement of human sin, his bodily resurrection from the dead, and his literal and immanent second coming in glory, together with the inspiration and authority of Scripture as the only infallible rule of faith and conduct. (Quebedeaux 1976 : 4-6, 145- 159) Another contributor to the volume, Han, Wan-sang observes that the YFGC shares the fundamentalist doctrines with other conservative Protestant denominations in South Korea, which have been historically under the strong influence of North American Fundamentalism at the turn of the century. But it must be reminded that North American Fundamentalists did not accept Pentecostals' claim to the immediate experience of the Holy Spirit and divine healing, although Pentecostals explicitly adhered to the "Fundamentals" and hoped to be accepted in the Fundamentalist circle.(Poewe 1994 : 103-116) Thus the relationship between Fundamentalism and Pentecostalism is far more complicated than it appears at first sight. The problem gets even trickier with the emergence of the so-called "neo-Pentecostalism" or "charismatic Christianity," which does not necessarily adhere to the Fundamentals, as well as with the transformation of the classical Pentecostalism itself, especially in the 1960s. It is not satisfactory, therefore, to see Pentecostalism merely as a version of Fundamentalism. But it is not satisfactory either to regard the former as having nothing to do with the latter. A dialectical approach would see Pentecostalism as a radicalization of the inherent logic of Fundamentalism, the belief in the literal truth of the biblical narrative, up to the point of its own substantial transformation.

The third contribution to the joint project by Han, Wan-sang represents a standard sociological account for the YFGC's rapid growth. (Ryu, Tong-sik et al. 165-231) He divides the contributing factors of the growth into two groups: social

factors, those which generally “push” people to go to the church, and intra-church factors, those which generally “pull” them to come to the church. He tries to find the pushing factors in the structural effects of the division of nation on the South Korean society as a whole and the psyche. The division of nation results in what he calls “structural imbalance” between politics and administration, and between politics and economy, under which political meaninglessness, accountability gap, inequality, malcontent, and instability increase. In addition to this, Han mentions the proliferation of amoral or anti-moral attitude, identity crisis, and the loss of community, which he attributes to the thwarted course of history due to the forced division of the nation. In spite of his Durkheimian outlook, his critique tends to be moralistic: “What is the right way of living? What is the correct choice of life? These questions ask the fundamental value orientation. Thus, the chaotic coexistence of multifarious values in conflict amounts to the broken compass that fails to indicate the correct direction.”(op. cit. 175) Unlike Durkheim he seems to think the restoration of effective morality as the remedy for the social illness. Anyhow he argues that the rapid industrialization since 1960 has aggravated the anomie in the South Korean society and intensified instability and identity crisis. Han, Wan-sang also mentions the dissatisfaction with the mainline churches, which have failed to provide a strong sense of identity and community for the uprooted people.(op. cit. 182-189)

In the analysis of pulling factors, he focuses on how the beliefs and practices of the YFGC give its members a strong sense of identity and community. He sees positive thinking or possibility thinking, one of the central themes of the YFGC’s message, as an extreme form of voluntarism, a belief that mind can change everything.

(op. cit. 201) Other churches merely say that you become a new creation in Jesus but the YFGC adds that you can do anything through faith. Thus, voluntaristic self-confidence is combined with the promise of material improvement - health and wealth. Han, Wan-Sang sees this message to have “a powerful appeal to the modern Koreans who have suffered from frustration, discontent, and insecurity due to unhappy circumstances and social structure, and also have lost the traditional sense of identity.”(op. cit. 204-205) But such a message, he criticizes, limits the scope of salvation to personal realm, and thus strengthens the conformist attitude: “Since the concentration on both positive thinking and personal salvation helps conceal the structural cause of socio-psychological problems, these two attitudes turn into a very passive and negative attitude toward a rather more challenging project, i.e., structural reform or societal change. In this way, positive thinking leads to passive conservatism.”(op. cit. 205) It is true that the YFGC has historically aligned itself with other conservative churches as to the political issues such as military dictatorship and human rights, etc. But precisely because most Korean churches are theologically fundamentalist and politically conformist, these two features hardly characterize the specificity of the YFGC. The YFGC has not only shared these heritages of Korean Christianity with other churches but also has innovated them. This innovation must be the focus of analysis and be examined on its own for an adequate understanding of the YFGC. In addition to this, Han, Wan-sang’s historical analysis is inaccurate and impressionistic. For example, it is simply wrong to say that “non-oriental culture (to which he attribute the anomie – the present writer) rushed in this land for the first time in 1945 since Tan-goon,” the legendary ancestry of the Korean nation, when the Korean nation was liberated from the Japanese colonial rule.(op. cit. 174) The

massive industrialization and urbanization in Korea had already begun as early as in the 1930s under the Japanese colonial rule rather than in the 1960s. In a similar way, identity crisis, instability, and the dissolution of community can be traced further back to the late nineteenth century, when modern imperialist powers encroached upon the Korean peninsular and the traditional order was undermined by external and internal conflicts.

Like Chung, Chin-hong, Han, Wan-sang also pays attention to the strong sense of community in YFGC, which is produced by the festive mode of worship service. To attend the worship service at the YFGC is “like to participate in a big festival or a hot cheering.”(op. cit. 207) He sees the “community” of the YFGC to be formed not only by the exciting worship but also by shared consciousness and value, which includes, of course, positive thinking, the individualistic concept of salvation, and the pursue of wealth and health. The extraordinary management skill based on the cell groups is also mentioned. He sees the YFGC to be close to the ideal community as R. M. MacIver describes.(See MacIver 1936 : 11-131), in which we-feeling, role-feeling, dependency-feeling are alive. To this Han, Wan-sang adds the forth, hope-feeling present in the YFGC. Then he concludes: “It seems only logical that those people who suffer from existential problems such as loneliness, anxiety, discontent, stress, and helplessness due to the loss of community come *en masse* to the ‘positive’ community, which sets out to help overcome such problems.”(op. cit. 214) In the final evaluation, ironically, he criticizes this “ideal community” as not so ideal, that is, individualistic, conformist, and anti-intellectual. His sociological theory seems to have no conceptual tools to differentiate the nature of different communities. Chung, Chin-hong, as seen above, characterizes the “community” of the YFGC as the community of naked, isolated human

existence, as opposed to the community based on a certain shared social, historical consciousness. Generally Han, Wan-sang's use of sociological terms tends to make the YFGC into a mere case of a generic sociological category at the price of its specificity. Also his critique, based on the criteria of the presumed normal course of historical development and an ethical ideal, remains external to its object. In this, his critique is not far from Suh, Kwang-sun's criticism based on a theological norm.

The forth and last contribution to the joint research project is made by a practicing psychiatrist, Kim, Kwang-il.(Ryu, Tong-sik et al. 233-296) His research focuses on Christian faith healing groups including the YFGC. He did participant observation and even offered himself as a subject of healing to some faith healers. Although faith healing is one of the most important practices at the YFGC, it would be misleading to lump the YFGC together with other Christian faith healing groups, which put more emphasis on healing and show more unrestrained shamanism than the YFGC. Rather a comparison of the YFGC with other groups would reveal the unique position of the former, which might shed some light on its exceptional success. The YFGC undoubtedly shares the shamanistic view of disease as the result of sin or the influence of demons. But it should be noted that this tendency has been rather restrained at the YFGC partly by the necessity to comply with biblicism and the Christian tradition. Rev. Choi, Ja-shil, one of the cofounders of the YFGC, the mother-in-law of the Senior Pastor, Rev. Cho, Yong-gi, and the head of the Prayer Mountain, seems to practice a less reserved shamanistic healing, while Rev. Cho inclines toward a rather "rationalized" version. This again reminds the unique dual structure of the YFGC, which Chung, Ching-hong takes notice of and needs to be analyzed further.

One of the most valuable insights of Kim, Kwang-il's research is his cultural psychiatric analysis of Christian faith healing in the modern Korea. He sees Christian faith healing in Korea as the conjuncture at which shamanism, the popular religious matrix of Korea, and some shamanistic elements in the Bible and Christianity itself converge. This phenomenon, in Kim's view, represents two aspects at the same time: the incomplete modernization of medicine and the indigenization of Christianity. He notes that, in the modern Korea, shamanistic healing, non-shamanistic religious healing, oriental medicine, and modern medicine coexist side by side. "When patients and their family confront with helpless situation or are disappointed with modern medicine, they tend to rely on the practices of supernatural healing. In these cases, they want to try two different methods simultaneously without distinguishing shamanistic healing from non-shamanistic religious healing."(op. cit. 272) However the inevitable limit of modern medicine, he opines, can not fully explain the proliferation of supernatural healing practice in Korea. The laxity of medical system and the lack of social security system significantly contribute to it, particularly among the poor. (op. cit. 289-291)

He also examines the psychiatric mechanism of faith healing. The most prominent mechanisms are suggestion and collective hypnosis. In the Pentecostal meetings, patients' wishes are fulfilled by repeated assurance that "you were healed!" or "the demon ran away!" The repetition of simple bodily motion, rhythm, and words such as "Lord!," "Hallelujah!" "Amen!" lead to collective hypnosis and dissociation, maximizing suggestibility and the chance of experiencing hallucination. Suggestion, along with other elements such as ventilation, trance, possession, and group therapy, according to Kim, could help cure psychosomatic diseases. But the indiscriminate claim that all diseases can

be cured by faith and only by faith is, as he see, not only untrue but also hazardous. The faith healing practice of the YFGC is very close to this overall description of faith healing in the South Korean Christianity. But here again attention needs to be paid to how the YFGC uniquely combines the traditional faith healing with other central themes from Pentecostal theology and positive thinking and what its socio-cultural implications are.

Kim, Kwang-il's study on Christian faith healing in Korea also reflects upon psychological and social implication of the shamanistic conception of disease. He sees its main feature in the projection system, a defense mechanism which attributes the source of insurmountable problems to the outer world such as evil spirits, ancestor, environment, or other people, etc.(op. cit. 250) This conception might temporarily lessen fear about hardly curable diseases. But it leads to projection-prone psychological buildup, the attitude that attributes everything to the will of a supernatural being. It not only precludes critical reflection on self and reality, but also increases the chance of psychopathology such as hysteria, schizophrenia, or obsession neurosis.(op. cit 292-293) Projection-proneness also weakens individual's self-identity, and thus promotes submissiveness to the totalitarian order.(op. cit. 293) The lack of critical reflection on what is actually going on in the real world leads to the phantasmagoric view of the "end of the world," and produces the attitude of indifference to the actual course of the world. Like other commentators, Kim, Kwang-il also points out that Christian faith healing groups tend to paralyze critical social consciousness and historical consciousness, the legacy of social prophets, and thus to help maintain social injustice.(op. cit. 259) Kim seems to get close to an immanent criticism in detecting the tendency of social conformism in the very psychological makeup of projection-proneness among Christian

faith healing groups. This suggests that the faith healing groups cannot turn into prophetic groups simply by adding a new political Christology or Christian social ethics to what they already are. But he does not probe into the socio-historical conditions that reinforce such projection-proneness on the global and national levels. Kim's research also sheds some light on the socio-cultural factors, which contribute to the proliferation of the pre-modern shamanistic conception of disease in Korea: incomplete modernization, the tenacity of shamanism, and the lack of social security system. It may be partially true. But it should be remembered that Pentecostalism in the west has emerged and been proliferating in the more thoroughly modernized, rationalized societies. Moreover, occultism such as astrology, transcendental meditation, and New Age movements, has been growing in the modern (or even post-modern) culture. As a matter of fact, the expansion of the YFCG since 1958 has never been significantly slowed throughout the period of modernization in Korea up to the late 1980s. The YFCG already in the mid 1970s can no longer be called the church of the poor, uneducated people. In addition to that, the YFGC is far ahead of other churches in adopting the most advanced mass communication technology and organizational, managerial skills. Thus, the YFGC should be analyzed as a thoroughly modern (or post-modern) cultural phenomenon rather than the remnant of the pre-modern culture, which would disappear with the completion of modernization.

Chung, Chin-hong, one of the four contributors to the Christian Academy research project, revisited the YFGC to follow up his own previous analysis with the up-to-dated observations of the significant changes, which the YFGC has gone through, particularly in the mid 1980s and 1990s.(Chung, Chin-hong 1997, original in English)

The remarkable changes since 1982 include the conspicuous increase of membership from 200,000 to 700,000 persons, territorial expansion through branch sanctuaries, concern for social welfare, the foundation of national daily news paper in 1988, and the institutional attempt at theological systematization and discipline. In these changes, Chung, Chin-hong observes that charisma has become rationally managed, spontaneous power-oriented (what he calls “krato-oriented”) religiosity has been surpassed by theos-oriented religiosity (theological systematization and discipline).(op. cit. 212-220) He carefully notes that the “YFGC can still be characterized with its expectation of miracle.” (op. cit. 216) But he seems to underestimate the current importance of krato-oriented religiosity and positive thinking, mainly based on his observation of the book titles displayed in the church book store, when he says: “This shows that the expectation for miracle, included in krato-oriented religiosity, is in fact merely a bubble phenomenon” (op. cit. 217) Judging from the present writer’s own participatory observation in the church’s worships, prayer meetings, and the Prayer Mountain gatherings, krato-oriented religiosity and positive thinking still prevail at least in everyday practices, although it seems to be the case that they are controlled under rational management. Moreover, the tendency toward rational management seems to have been already obvious in the mid 1970s. In addition, even the so-called “theological” publications by the YFGC’s theological institute which are promotional and apologetic than critical and reflective, promote and defend precisely the same power-oriented religiosity and positive thinking as they were in the classical Pentecostalism. It is even tempting to ask whether the true “bubbles” are the theological systematization and the rather unexpected introduction of social welfare and ethics. Anyhow recent changes do not seem to represent a

fundamental break from the religious beliefs and practices of the YFGC since the 1960s, which will be analyzed in the following.

Literature in English

Besides the social scientific researches in Korean on the YFGC or the Korean Pentecostalism in general, there are only a few in English, as far as the present writer knows. Choi, Syn-duk's pioneering research is incorporated into her article, "A Comparative Study of Two New Religious Movements in the Republic of Korea : The Unification Church and the Full Gospel Central Church" in *New Religious Movements and Rapid Social Change* edited by James Beckford (Choi, Syn-duk 1986 : 113-45) Yoo, Boo-woong's monograph deals with both the YFGC and the Min-jung theology, a Korean version of liberation theology, under the same rubric of "Pentecostalism." This bold move originates from Ryu, Tong-sik's ingenious remark that the two apparently opposite religious movements have in common the Holy Spirit as the foundation of their theologies. (Ryu, Tong-sik et al. 9-2) The discrepancy lies in their orientation: one is "maternalistic" and another "paternalistic." The former focuses on micro-pastoral care for daily suffering and problems, and thus tends to be populist and emotional. The latter focuses on the struggle for democracy and social justice, and thus tends to be elitist and intellectual. Ryu, Tong-sik's remark has a grain of truth insofar as both movements contain some of anti-ecclesiastical, anti-dogmatic, and egalitarian ethos. But it should be reminded that "the age of the Spirit," the new era that the thirteenth century prophet Joachim of Fiore anticipated, is not so much the figure of the anti-enlightenment as that of the Enlightenment, which has been concretized through Spinoza and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. In addition, Yoo, Boo-woong's translation of the Korean term *sung-ryung-*

woon-dong (the Holy Spirit movement) into “Pentecostalism” exacerbates the confusion further, simply because all forms of Christianity with specific emphasis on Spirit are not “Pentecostalism.” For example, Spirit for mystics like Jakob Boehme is, like Spirit in German Idealism, the movement of life that generates self-knowledge, and thus not opposes to Reason. Furthermore, the typology of the Holy Spirit movements “maternalistic” vs. “paternalistic” - is as much superficial as neat. The Min-jung theology, literally meaning the theology of the oppressed, is an attempt of some professional theologians to do their theology not merely for the *min-jung*, the people suffering from a variety of structural injustices, but with them. It brings into a critical scrutiny the political system of authoritarianism, the economic system of exploitation, the world system of neo-imperialism, but also male-domination and the western rationality based on the separation of subject and object and the dualism of soul and body. It pays full tribute to the Korean folklore including shamanism, oral tradition, and attempts at an alternative way of doing theology called “narrative theology,” as opposed to the traditional discursive theology. On the contrary, Pentecostal churches in Korea are indistinguishable from other conventional churches in their common hierarchical and patriarchic systems. Indeed, the paradoxical coexistence of egalitarianism and authoritarianism is one of the most interesting characteristics of Pentecostalism to be examined, as Andre Droogers also observes in his overview of explanatory models of Pentecostal expansion in Brazil and Chile.(Boudewijnse et al. 1998: 6-7)

Mark R. Mullins’ “The Empire Strike Back: Korean Pentecostal Mission to Japan” in the collection, *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture*, deals with the Yoido Full Gospel Church along with the Sung Rak Baptist Church (and the Berea

Academy) as “two important indigenous forms of Pentecostalism” in South Korea. (Poewe 1994: 89) Relying upon some Korean observers including Suh, Kwang-sun, he argues that the western Pentecostalism transformed into those indigenous forms through the Korean folk religion, “shamanism.”(op. cit. 92) And he attributes the enormous expansion of the Korean Pentecostalism to the “numerous indigenous appropriation of Pentecostal faith” rather than “Western control and domination.”(op. cit. 87) It is a virtue to try to see endogenous factors in such a massive social phenomenon instead of merely invoking exogenous ones such as foreign missionaries’ influence. But the Pentecostal leaders of Africa and Korea explicitly deny their “shamanization” of Christianity, and the meaning of “indigenization” is not specific enough to register the local specificity, as the editor of the volume, Poewe, too, points out. (Poewe 11) Furthermore, Mullins’ indigenization thesis tends to rub off the subtle difference between the two forms of Pentecostalism, which might be far more important than their commonality to understand not only the differential popularity between a more unbridled form of “shamanization” (the Sung Rak Baptist Church) and a carefully contained form (the Yoido Full Gospel Church), but also the socio-historical specificity of the South Korean society as a whole it implies. In addition, even if the expansion of the Korean Pentecostalism should not be attributed solely to the North American Pentecostal mission, one should not ignore that the two-year Bible School, the Full Gospel Central Mission Center, and the monthly magazine, *Shin-ang-ge*, established and funded by the Assemblies of God Mission, provided a far more favorable condition than any single congregation in other denominations can expect from foreign missions. If it is the question of cultural imperialism, the North American influence is not to be confined to the activity of the

missionaries. It needs to be considered along with the influence in other spheres such as politics, economy, education, and culture. From a broader perspective, the so-called “indigenous culture” is nothing other than the construction of the western gaze that freezes and disfigures a living culture of people into a stereotype to perpetuate the west’s domination.

Literature on Pentecostalism in Other Areas

The statement that Pentecostalism has now become a global religious phenomenon has an element of exaggeration. Not only that its local manifestations vary in their theologies and the forms of organization except the common emphasis on the “Spiritual gifts,” most commonly, speaking-in-tongue and healing. But also that it does not have any global governing body. It is the fastest growing form of religiosity, but only within the Christian world. Furthermore, its geographic distribution is extremely uneven. Latin American countries such as Chile, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Puerto Rico have large Pentecostal population. As of 1997, Protestants constitute 10 percent of Latin Americans. Pentecostals including Charismatics are two-thirds of all Latin Protestants. (Hunt 1997: 187) Puerto Rico excels the others with at least one-third of population Pentecostal. In these Latin American countries Pentecostals even emerge as political actors to varying degrees.(Cf. Cleary 1997: 1-24) However, Pentecostalism in North America, although growing fast, seems not to have reached such a social significance. In Western Europe it still remains at the margin.(Hunt 1997:187) In Asia and Africa it expands only in a few isolated spots. South Korea is an exception than a rule on the global scale.

In contrast to the scanty of social scientific literature on Pentecostalism in Korea, there are abundant on Pentecostalism in Latin America, which is not surprising, given its social significance there. (Bibliographies are contained in the books discussed here.) For the purpose of the present study, a complete review of those works would be pointless. Besides many valuable comparative insights, here it would suffice to reflect on some theoretical issues those researches raise. Andre Droogers' article, "Paradoxical Views on a Paradoxical Religion: Models for the Explanation of Pentecostal Expansion in Brazil and Chile" in *More Than Opium* (Boudewijnse et al. 1998: 1-34) celebrates theoretical diversity and advocates what he calls an "eclectic" approach, that is, non-exclusive, non-unilateral model (op. cit. 5, 26) on the assumption that the object of research, Pentecostalism, itself contains contradictory aspects simultaneously: egalitarian tendency and hierarchical tendency, liberty of emotional expression and legalistic discipline of behavior and discourse, detesting of the world and successful participation in it, distancing from politics and attacking communism and moral corruption, anticipating the Second Coming of Christ and searching for short-term solutions for daily problems, and more numerous women and exclusive male leadership, etc. (op. cit. 6-7) Then he proceeds how different models – the anomie model, the class model, and the failed modernization model – respectively illuminate some aspects of Pentecostal expansion, while leaving others in the darkness. He correctly criticizes the anomie model for its tendency to remain external to religion itself (op. cit. 15), and the class model and the failed modernization model for their determinism and reductionism (op. cit. 16-24). His reflection on inevitable partiality in the study of culture culminates with the suggestion that "the diversity of models has contributed to a focus on contradiction in

Pentecostalism.”(op. cit. 25) But an immanent critique, as I present in the introductory chapter, tries to be in and beyond the object of analysis at the same time and to explain the contradictions not simply as the different aspects but as the constituent moments of Pentecostalism, which define its specificity.

The introduction to the collection, *Charismatic Christianity: Sociological Perspectives*, co-authored by Stephen Hunt, Malcolm Hamilton, and Tony Walter raises an important question: Is Charismatic Christianity anti-modern, modern, or postmodern? The authors seem to leave the question unanswered because they confront the problem that “it [neo-Pentecostalism] displays attributes which are, sometimes simultaneously, anti-modern, modern, and post-modern.”(Hunt 1997: 4) The enumeration of anti-modern, modern, and postmodern aspects indeed shows the complex, often contradictory, makeup of neo-Pentecostalism, which does not “fit in” any given conceptual scheme. Real problem seems to lie in the classificatory system itself. It is not only too schematic but also misleading. For example, what appears anti-modern is thoroughly modern in its rebelling gesture against the modern, as Andrew Walker, a contributor to the volume, argues with Fundamentalism, which in the Introduction is presented as an anti-modern element: “Fundamentalism, however, unlike Vatican I, was thoroughly modern in method and intent.”(op. cit. 25) The “postmodern” aspects of neo-Pentecostalism, consumer hedonism and experiential excitement, may be characterized as “ultra-modern,” as Walker tries to do with the “Toronto Blessing,” the so-called “watershed” in Charismatic experience.(op. cit. 31-36) More profoundly it depends on how to conceptualize modernity and its correlated most-modernity. Insofar as we are still in the world capitalist system, it seems to be more fruitful to see the post-modern as a new phase

within the historical development of capitalism, as David Harvey and Frederic Jameson respectively attempt.(See Harvey 1989, Jameson 1991)

Chapter III

Tongues

Linguistic Miracle?

On the notion of speaking-in-tongue hinges the whole symbolic universe of Pentecostalism. In the Pentecostal symbolic universe, tongue speaking means a supernatural event of speaking a language unknown to the speaker himself. The “other tongues,” which Spirit-filled believers is believed to miraculously speak, are regarded as either languages actually spoken in some human linguistic communities, such as Chinese, Japanese, Russian, etc., thus comprehensible to a certain group of people (based on Acts 2:4-8), or “angels’ language” presumably spoken in an angelic community, thus incomprehensible to human beings (based on I Corinthians 14:2, 6-11). The audibility and visibility of speaking-in-tongues gives it a special significance as the only tangible sign of Spirit’s powerful presence. Thus Pentecostals take it to be the decisive evidence of baptism in Spirit or second baptism, which is required, in addition to initial baptism in water, to become an authentic Christian. Sectarian movements tend to require a more authentic evidence of being a true believer beyond the reutilized rituals of the established Church, which they see hopelessly corrupted. Some sectarian movements found the authentic requirement in baptism in Spirit based on Acts 10:45; 19: 2, 3, 6 and sought for its experiential evidence. And it arrived from the presumed heaven in the form of speaking-in-tongue. It is said that the outburst of tongue speaking marks the birth of the modern Pentecostal movement, according to the canonical history of Pentecostalism. (Cf. International Theological Institute 1998 : 91-107) Unfortunately the so-called classical Pentecostalism in the United States was welcomed neither by the

mainline “enemies” nor by the fundamentalist “brothers.”(Cf. Poewe 1994 : 103-116)

Since the 1960s, however, the situation in the United State has dramatically changed and tongue speaking started to be recognized as a legitimate religious practice by the most of the major Protestant denominations and the Catholic church. Henceforth the so-called neo-Pentecostalism or Charismatic Christianity emerged to spread over the Christian world in a few decades.(For a convenient documentation of the historical development, see Quebedeaux 1976; for a fuller treatment, see Hollenweger 1972)

Similarly in South Korea, too, the traditional suspicion of the mainline churches toward Pentecostalism has gradually turned into wholehearted acceptance or at least theoretical recognition around the 1980s.

It is interesting to note that scientific study of glossolalia – glossolalia is a non-religious term for speaking-in-tongue - has gone through a corresponding shift. The older studies before the 1960’s tend to have seen tongue speaker s as “insane,” “infantile,” “regressive,” irrational,” “abnormal” “unintelligent” or “maladjusted.” In contrast, the newer researches claim to find them “normal,” “intelligent,” “well-adjusted, if not better” as the non-Pentecostal subjects are.(Cf. Samarin 34-44) This reversal reflects not only the shift in the way to measure normalcy, intelligence, or adequate adjustment, etc., but also the socio-historical change in the social status of Pentecostals from the lower class in the early 1900s to the middle class in the 1960s. The economic boom in the U. S. since 1945, which led to the “consumer society,” probably contributed at least partially to the change. No similar research has been attempted for Korean Pentecostal subjects. But it can be said that the Korean Pentecostal movement also started with the destitute people in the absolute poverty particularly after the devastating Korean War and progressively

incorporated the middle (and upper) class over time. Like the North American counterpart, Pentecostalism in Korea moved from the margin of society to the center, both geographically and culturally, as the trajectory of its geographical movement from an urban slum to a semi-periphery of the old city and finally to the center of finance, culture, and politics. Today it is obvious to anyone that Pentecostals in Korea cannot be regarded as “invalid” in the common sense of “dysfunctional” in social life.

Social Construction of Trance

Apart from the shift in theoretical and ideological evaluation, the linguistic status of the “tongues” actually spoken by Pentecostals has been made clear enough, based on the linguistic analysis of hundreds of the recorded samples throughout the world: (Samarin 1972; Goodman 1972)

- (1) The so-called “tongues” are not languages at all in its proper sense of the conventional sign system shared by a linguistic community. They are a vocalization of meaningless syllables.
- (2) In spite of being non-language, “tongues” are formulated by the known phonemes, structured by pseudo-words, pseudo-phrases, and pseudo-sentences. Thus, “tongues” can be best understood as a secondary pseudo-language based on the linguistic elements of the known languages.

Another significant finding of tongue researches is that glossolalia is based on the universal human capacity rather than on the presumed supernatural. William J. Samarin attributes glossolalia to the universal linguistic capacity of humanity to produce a variety of pseudo-languages including not only “tongue speaking ” but also meaningless refrains in songs, nursery rhymes, etc. In doing so, however, Samarin ignores the crucial difference between nursery rhymes and “tongues.” The former is more or less conventional in a given language community and consciously transmitted as a shared

tradition, but the latter is variable from one individual to another, ephemeral, private, and thus impossible to transmit as a convention. While agreeing on the pseudo-linguistic nature of tongues, Felicitas D. Goodman sees the psycho-physiological foundation of glossolalia in the universal human capacity to enter an altered state of consciousness. There is, however, disagreement between Samarin and Goodman on the issue whether an “altered state of consciousness,” trance, or ecstasy is a necessary condition to produce a meaningless utterance, “tongue.” Based on his ethnographical research on a Mexican congregation located in Mexico City from 1968 to 1970, Goodman concludes that the physio-psychological substratum of tongue speaking lies in “the state of hyper-arousal dissociation, the subject’s divorcement from ordinary reality based on the highly agitated state of certain vital function.”(Goodman 124) Samarin challenges Goodman’s view with many cases in which tongue speaker s enjoy tongue speaking while they are doing other jobs such as dish washing, cleaning room, taking bath, sleeping, or even driving a car.(Samarin 26-34) But the difference between the two prominent tongue researchers seems not so substantial. Samarin’s point lies in that not all tongue speaking requires the mental state of dissociation than that no dissociation is involved at all in tongue speaking.(Samarin 33) He himself has many cases in which dissociation is involved. But in most cases, tongue speaking is gradually acquired with much instruction and practice.(Samarin 44-72) “The most important fact, psychologically or sociologically, is” he underlines, that glossolalia is used at all.(Samarin 211) But the conscious instruction and use of glossolalia do not necessarily exclude the presence of dissociation. Goodman also acknowledges that glossolalia is instructed and learned. And he observes the tendency that the intensity of dissociation declines over time so that an experienced

tongue speaker can skillfully get in and out glossolalia while doing other jobs. But he maintains that a certain amount of dissociation is still required to produce speech automatism unless one fakes it. Samarin's counter examples can be understood as the cases of Goodman's weak dissociation. He even says in a footnote that trance is a learned behavior.(Samarin 220) In Pentecostal gatherings, tongue speaking is not only recommended and taught but also controlled by regulating time and space, complying with the apostle Paul's recommendation to limit its use for the edification of church.(I Corinthians 12) In this rather controlled situation, however, the indicators of dissociation are abundant: tightly closed eyes, rapid breathing, occasionally pallor and goose pimples, a twitching and flushed face, laceration, salivation, perspiration, inability to swallow, rigidity of limbs, trembling, spasm, and unusual kinetic behavior such as rhythmic movements, sometimes of very great rapidity.(Goodman 58) My own observation of tongue speaking in a variety of occasions including the YFGC's worship services and prayer meetings confirms Goodman's observation. The control of ecstasy is typically imposed by regulating time and space. Even at the Prayer Mountain, an affiliated organization of the Yoido Full Gospel Church, where one is supposed to pray as she likes, there are regulations, especially in group meetings like prayer worship services. These are held regularly several times a day at the Prayer Mountain, and proceed with temporal control usually by signaling with a bell or a song the moment to come out of ecstasy. At one prayer meeting at the Prayer Mountain, which I attended, even a farewell song to the Holy Spirit was sung at the end of the loud prayer session. During the time when the song was sung, a middle-aged woman tongue speaker, whom I observed, barely got out of her intense dissociation, pouring out "tongues" with intense

bodily movement. Even after the singing was over, her eyes were tightly closed like she wanted desperately to stay in such an ecstasy, her limbs rigid, and her upper body moving rhythmically back and forth. The worship leader's hurried attempt to wrap up the prayer session, obviously in order to keep the established schedule, seemed rather detrimental to her spiritual thirst. Space was controlled too. Tongue speaking occurs any time and anywhere in principle. But the most extensive and intensive practice of tongue speaking was allowed only in the place called a "prayer pit," an isolated spot, where nothing could interrupt praying. The very need for a spatio-temporal regulation implies dissociation as a foundation of tongue speaking, which would easily lead to an anarchy without a proper control. It actually belongs to an essential "know-how" for Pentecostal leaders. I once overheard that one Pentecostal leader warned that "this kind of meeting should be led by an experienced spiritual leader, or you will get into serious trouble."

The written testimonies to tongue speaking by the YFGC members also contain plenty of indications to such a dissociation. To give a few examples:

While I prayed, I felt my right hand tremble. I put my hands together between my thighs, but trembling came again and again. After the worship service was over I got on a bus, feeling strange atmosphere. Trembling came again. Now my tongue twisted and was locked in place. (Kim, Myung-nam, *Shin-ang-ge*, October 1967: 11)

When I believed and recognized Holy Spirit present personally here, I felt like I was getting hot. Incomprehensible words started to come out of my mouth. I tried in vain to hold my tongue in order to go back to thanksgiving prayer, which I had been doing. Shaking kept me from going back. (Chang, Bong-sook, *Shin-ang-ge*, March, 1968: 27)

I was praying for a while. Suddenly I felt my entire body getting rigid. At the same time I felt pressed down by something from above. My entire body started to tremble as if I got an electric shock. I could not hold my body. I felt a shaking in my intestines and something coming out of my mouth. My tongue twisted. Like water spouting out of fire engine hose, words burst forth from me, with the sense of gratefulness and joy. They were so loud that other church members

stopped praying and gathered around me. It continued about 30 minutes. Then I collapsed, being exhausted. After a while I managed to regain consciousness and got up. (Lee, Choon, *Shin-ang-ge*, November 1967: 24-25)

It is not difficult to identify the indicators of dissociation from these vivid testimonies to tongue speaking : trembling, twisted and locked tongue, heat, shaking, rigidity, pressure, and exhaustion after intense kinetic movement. The testimony of Rev. Choi, Ja-shil, one of the cofounders of the YFGC and the persistent advocate of tongue prayer, shows both types: The initial outburst of her tongue speaking at a prayer mountain must have been based on intense dissociation, but the later practice of her tongue speaking seems to have been more controlled and based on far less dissociation.(Cf. Choi, Ja-shil 1996) She proudly says that she can speak in tongue any time and anywhere as she wanted. But the fact that she can start speaking in tongue at will does not refute the theory of dissociation as the physio-psychological precondition of glossolalia, particularly because she compulsively practiced tongue speaking “to forget worries,” i.e., to escape her chronic melancholia.(op. cit. 122-123, 133) The alleged therapeutic efficacy of tongue-speaking for the cure of psychic disturbance seems to be hardly sensible without this moment of dissociation from everyday reality that produces a sense of release from the constraints in real life .

Samarin proposes what he calls “a strong hypothesis” that “artificial, humanlike languages – in other words, glossolalia, as I use the term – are rarely found in societies that have had no contact with Christianity.”(Samarin 222) There are examples of vocalization, he points out, unintelligible but very unlike human languages such as “spiritual language” in non-Christian societies. And he insists that these must be distinguished from Pentecostal glossolalia.(Ibid.) As discussed above, Samarin tries to

find the origin of glossolalia in a universal human capacity to produce pseudo-language rather than in the supernatural. Samarin himself does not ask the question what forces put the universal human capacity into the particular form of glossolalia. But a sociologist would have no difficulty to infer from Samarin's seminal observation that glossolalia is a social construction of the universal human capacity to produce pseudo-language in and through the symbolic order of the literal Christianity, Pentecostalism. The defining linguistic characteristics of Pentecostal glossolalia – unintelligibility and languagelikehood – are required as the conditions of the Pentecostal notion of "speaking-in-tongues" as the miraculous event of speaking a language unknown to the speaker but known to some linguistic community. At this juncture, Goodman's reflection entitled "Cultural Elaborations of Hyperarousal Dissociation" in the concluding chapter of his book is instructive because he explicitly mentions the social (cultural) determination of glossolalia. Hyperarousal dissociation is, he notes, distributed throughout the world but one society makes use of only a few aspects among many: "Rather various groups ritualize, institutionalize, and thus elaborate only one or a few of its several aspects." (Goodman 153) It is then possible to understand tongue speaking, i.e., speech automatism of pseudo-language, as a socially constructed form of ecstasy, a universal human capacity, in and through the Pentecostal symbolic universe. In a similar vein, Samarin also suggests in the concluding remark that the universal human capacity to produce pseudo-language like nursery rhyme can be given a specific religious meaning, just as everyday mundane objects like bread and wine are elevated as the sacred objects in Christian community, regardless of their intrinsic properties.(Samarin 227-236) From this general reflection, however, he does not proceed to explain specifically why

Pentecostal Christian communities have to choose glossolalia as their sacred object. His insistence on defining glossolalia solely in terms of linguistics and its consequential identification of glossolalia with nursery rhyme seem to make him ignore the distinctive features of tongue speaking. First of all, nursery rhyme must be distinguished from glossolalia in that the former, as said above, is relatively fixed, constant, conventional, communal, and thus socially binding, but the latter is utterly private, ephemeral, variable, and non-social. If the status as “language” of a given arbitrary combination of phonemes can be decided solely by the convention of a given community, as Ferdinand de Saussure holds (Saussure 7-17), nursery rhyme can be thought as language but glossolalia cannot. What defines tongue speaking is precisely this non-conventional, non-social, non-communal nature of its pseudo-linguistic materials, those known phonemes, pseudo-words, pseudo-sentences, etc. On the other hand, paradoxically, what makes tongue speaking monads into a collective called a “church” is precisely this non-communal, non-symbolic practice of glossolalia. Physio-psychological dissociation that Samaritan tends to see contingent in tongue speaking, points to not only the involuntary nature of glossolalia but also the withdrawal from everyday reality, the disintegration of the symbolic social order into the non-social. It is precisely this double aspect of glossolalia - its involuntary and asocial nature – that gives it the semblance of the supernatural which transcends everyday reality. Glossolalia may have existed and have even occupied a central place probably in some segments of the earliest Christianity, whose position the apostle Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, challenges, arguing the relative insignificance of glossolalia for the edification of the Christian community. (See Johnson 596-600) Thereafter its crucial significance seems to have rarely been recognized at least by the

dominant Christian tradition throughout the history of Christianity until the dawn of the twentieth century when the crucial importance of tongue speaking was “rediscovered” by the zealous biblicist Christians in North America, who wanted to “literally” believe in the biblical miracles and to see them actually happen here and now in the midst of the enlightened world. The biblical references, obscure and inconsistent in themselves,(Johnson) to “tongue speaking ,” which cannot be said central in the biblical tradition, were elevated to the *locus classicus* of the authentic Christianity. Thus the modern Pentecostal movement invented its own tradition. And now glossolalia is not only practiced, but also displayed, testified to, discussed, taught, learnt, expected, and desired precisely in the community of Pentecostals. In this sense, tongue speaking may be said to be a social construction of ecstasy in and through the contemporary Pentecostal movement.

For an adequate understanding of the modern Pentecostalism, it is crucial to keep in mind that Pentecostalism, a sectarian movement in which speaking-in-tongues occupied the central place, came into being only at the specific historical conjuncture of the early twentieth century United States. This peculiar movement should not be confused with those radical sectarian movements such as Thomas Münzer’s radical reformation, which also emphasized the work of Holy Spirit over the Order of Church and the Scripture. To lump together the 16th century radical reformation and the 20th century Pentecostal movement under the general rubric of the “Holy Spirit Movement,” as some Pentecostal church historians do (for example, International Theological Institute 1998 : 37-73), only blurs the historical specificity of both the movements and their political, economic, social, and cultural contexts. In the radical sect movements of the

sixteenth century, speaking-in-tongues did not occupy the central place in their theologies and practices.(op. cit. 69) Pentecostalism as “tongue movement” must be understood as a historical novelty originated in the modern America, where European philosophical theology and the “higher criticism” of the Bible met a formidable reaction on the part of a variety of the conservative Christians. Fundamentalism was certainly a reaction to liberal theology in particular and enlightenment in general, but still remained at intellectual level insofar as its main weapon consisted in discursive practice in the form of theological debates. But some of the “experience-centered” Christians such as the Methodist and the Holiness movements sought for something more tangible than the mere cognitive acceptance of the “Christian fundamentals,” which they were more than willing to share with the North American Fundamentalists. If the Scripture is divinely inspired and thus absolutely truthful in its “literal” immediacy, then, why can one not see the same miracles happen here and now in modern time as they did in the biblical time? “Experiential” evidence came in the form of tongue speaking. Their belief was thus empirically demonstrated and confirmed. Pentecostal movement was finally born. As a reaction to modernity, it should be noted, however, that Pentecostal movement remains thoroughly modern. The form and the content of the reaction are already mediated by modernity.

Pentecostals regard their movement as the “return to the Apostolic Church,” the presumably pure, original, genuine church prior to its contamination by what they label “humanism,” “rationalism, and “modernism.” But their resuscitated belief in miracle may be best understood as what Adorno calls “secondary superstition” in his study on modern astrology.(Adorno 1994 : 36-37) Modern belief in the supernatural intervention

into our daily life, Adorno aptly points out, does not embody the true developmental stage of consciousness in the intercourse between humans and nature through praxis. Through centuries-long struggle, consciousness has already left behind the modes of animistic thinking and mythological thinking. The innocence of mythological thinking has been irrevocably lost through progressive enlightenment. The modern revival of mythology can only be a secondary reaction formation to the irresistible progress of the Enlightenment and thus already mediated by what it reacts to. An imperceptible abyss, even though unconscious, separates the modern subjects who believe in spirits from what they believe in, because their being already belongs to the disillusioned modern world. Nothing other than the Pentecostals' obsessive repetition of the ever-same "testimonies" to the presumed supernatural experience shows how much they suffer from the irrevocable separation and thus need to compulsively persuade themselves, as well as their fellow believers again and again. And also Pentecostalism shows a curious affinity to positivism, the very modern (anti-)philosophy in that both tries to get rid of interpretation and thinking as obstacles blocking and distorting our access to the real, which is supposed to be immediately available to our sense perception, "experience." While positivism excommunicates religious matters from the realm of exact science into the realm of what they call "metaphysics" for the reason that the religious statements can be neither verified nor falsified by observation and experiment. Pentecostalism treats with religious matters, particularly miracles, as something verifiable by experience like modern scientists do with nature. Moreover, the way in which Pentecostals describe miracles such as tongue speaking in their testimonies curiously resembles pseudo-scientific reports or consumers' testimonies frequently found in what is called

“infomercial” today, the neologism combining the words “information” and “commercial,” which selectively describe only those aspects of the subjects’ “experience” in detail but in highly schematized format, thus, out of its larger context, which demonstrate the effectiveness of a given product – material or non-material. Tongue speakers’ quite sophisticated description of physical changes in their experience of tongue speaking reads like a medical report intended to persuade and get approval from a hypothetical judge by presenting the irrefutable objective “evidences.” Just like modern commercial turns into pseudo-science called “informacial,” and science into commercial, modern religion turns into a pseudo-science of the supernatural.

Speaking-in-Tongue as the *objet petit a* as Real

One of the most puzzling questions concerning glossolalia is why the seemingly silly behavior of automatic vocalization of non-sense syllables accompanied with disgusting kinetic gestures fascinates so many people all over the world, Pentecostals as well as spellbound onlookers. Samarin observes, based on the practitioners’ answers to his interview questions, that glossolalia, in spite of being an insignificant linguistic anomaly in itself, provides some psychological and symbolic advantages for its practitioners. The experience of glossolalia, taken in Pentecostal communities to be the only tangible evidence of baptism in Spirit, is said, as a rule, to mark a dramatic turning point in the practitioners’ lives, reestablish their faith, reinforce their ego, and bring them the utmost sense of peace and joy. The testimonies of the YFGC members attribute the same values to speaking-in-tongue:

When I prayed in tongues, I could vividly feel that Lord was with me, and that I was known by him. Joy came over me because I became sure of the fact that God recognized me. On the way back home after early morning prayer

meeting, I could see the beauty of the street, which I had never seen before.
(Chang, Bong-sook, *Shin-ang-ge*, March 1968: 28)

My life has enormously changed for the better: I always have joy in my heart,
feel confident about anything, and sing with praises any time.(Lee, Choon,
Shin-ang-ge, November, 1967: 25)

Since I gradually opened my eyes to spiritual life with the dwelling of the Holy
Spirit in me, I am now thoroughly lead to spiritual life.... My life has thus
changed from flesh-centered life, i.e., life based on human reason, to Spirit-
centered life. (Kim, Myung-nam, *Shin-ang-ge*, September 1967 : 13)

Of course, it would be uncritical to take these statements as the spontaneous expressions of autonomous individuals, as Samaritans do. In both their form and content, they are already overdetermined by the Pentecostal belief. The Pentecostal testifiers are simply saying what they are supposed to say in and for their Pentecostal community. This might be one of the paradigmatic examples of “ideological interpolation,” in which an individual is “subjectivized” by answering, accommodating oneself to the symbolic demand of the Other or the symbolic order.(Cf. Althusser 1971: 127-186) Although the testimonies take a form of narrative in the first person, the extremely invariable literary form designed for ecclesiastic edification severely truncates the narrative impulse, as in a garden variety of illustrative stories found in moral lessons and self-help books. The extent to which formalism deprives the liveliness and the wider social contexts of the stories indicates the “totalitarian” nature of the collectivity called “church” which not only keeps producing but also feeds on those ever-same impoverished narratives. But this does not necessarily mean that the testifiers tell a lie. Probably they are telling the truth, that is, what they really “experience,” feel, and think. But the subjective truthfulness only underlines the objectively ideological nature of the Pentecostal practice of testimony, because an ideology effectively operates only when it is unconscious.

In the paradigmatic ideological edifice of Pentecostalism, tongue speaking occupies a unique place. Glossolalia, taken as the tangible evidence of the second, more authentic, baptism in the Holy Spirit, occupies, in the symbolic universe of Pentecostalism, the point at which the “before” and the “after” part. The story typically goes as follows: “Before it happened to me, I suffered from doubt, meaninglessness, depression, illness, and financial difficulties, etc. But after it happened to me, I entered a whole new world of certainty, meaning, hope, health, and wealth.” In one aspect, tongue speaking embodies the loss of reality, hence similarity to the psychotic breakdown of the signifying chain. It is precisely what makes tongue speakers look “crazy,” “mad,” or “insane,” etc. It is also what makes onlookers, including even prospective tongue speakers, embarrassed, as they testify:

In the loud group prayer and faith healing sessions, however, they looked hypnotized and unconsciousness... I wondered if I was deceived by a religious con artist like Elder Park, Tae-sun.¹ Confusion tormented my heart because my education, culture, conventional ideas prevented me from accepting faith.(Chang, Bong-sook, *Shin-ang-ge*, March, 1968: 26)

Although I had been no less zealous in prayer than anyone for a long time, I could not accept speaking-in-tongue. It looked ridiculous to regard it so highly, insofar as the so-called tongue speakers’ life had nothing special. At the time I visited frequently the Full Gospel Central Church (the former name of the YFGC - the present writer’s note) since it appeared to me fierce and exciting. But I hated the sound and sight of tongue speaking.(Lee, Choon, *Shin-ang-ge*, November, 1967: 24)

But the momentary loss of reality is also precisely what makes tongue speaking appear “supernatural,” “divine,” or “miraculous,” etc., and thus casts a magic spell on the amazed gaze. It is in this capacity of tongue speaking that it stands for the entrance to a whole new world of confidence and joy. Tongue speaking as the only tangible evidence

¹ Elder Park, Tae-Sun is a founder of a sectarian community which became infamous among Korean Christians for its presumed heresy and scandals.

of the divine presence indeed constitutes the guarantee and foundation of the Pentecostal universe. Tongue speaking is something both embarrassing and fascinating, both derailing and founding at once. To draw on a Lacanian theory of ideology, tongue can be best understood as the *objet petit a* as a piece of Real, i.e., traumatic encounter with the thing-in-itself that cannot be symbolized but makes possible symbolization. Slavoj Žižek succinctly summarizes the dual function of the Lacanian Real: The Real “erupts in the form of a traumatic return, derailing the balance of our daily lives, but it serves at the same time as a support of this very balance.”(Žižek 1992: 29) In glossolalia, the literal Christians find God’s immediate answer, the “answer of the Real,” to their quest of the divine manifestation in the here and now. To a dispassionate observer, the “miracle” of speaking-in-tongue appears mere a nonsensical linguistic anomaly which has nothing extraordinary, supernatural, or divine in itself. What lends glossolalia the aura of the divine is not its intrinsic property, but its position as the only tangible evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the symbolic universe of Pentecostalism. It is nothing other than the Pentecostal gaze itself that turns the stupid speech automatism into the cause-object of desire and starts to exert the irresistible power of fascination. The gaze puts the silliest in the place of the sublime. On the one hand, the relationship between glossolalia and the miracle of speaking-in-tongue as a divine manifestation is contingent and arbitrary. On the other hand, however, the relationship must appear necessary, “natural,” or to have been always already there. This is the necessary illusion for the ideology of Pentecostalism to effectively work. Such an illusion is precisely the *modus operandi* of an ideology in general, as Žižek points out:

Herein consists, also the fundamental lesson of Lacan: While it is true that any

object can occupy the empty space of the Thing, it can do only by means of the illusion that it was always already there, i.e., that it is not placed there by us but found there as an “answer of the real.” Although any object can function as the object-cause of desire – insofar as the power of fascination it exerts is not its immediate property but results from the place it occupies in the structure – we must, by structural necessity, fall prey to the illusion that the power of illusion belongs to the object as such. (Žižek 1992: 33)

In other words, Pentecostals’ belief in tongue speaking as the only tangible evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit already presupposes the fascinated gaze looking for “what in glossolalia is more than glossolalia.” To the gaze, the subtle distinction between glossolalia and speaking-in-tongue should be, and indeed is, concealed. That is why Pentecostals hate so much to hear the word, “glossolalia.” “What in glossolalia is more than glossolalia” belongs to the Pentecostal fantasy, not to the linguistic quality of the ecstatic speech automatism. In the Pentecostal fantasy, divine miracles must appear to have always already been there. What Pentecostals need to do is simply to “find” them, to “experience” miracles as the ancient biblical people did. In the midst of modern world, in which even Christian churches come to proclaim no availability of miracles, they “discover” a miracle in speech automatism. To them, glossolalia comes as a piece of the Real, an answer from the Real, which sustains their fantasy.

Both the “literal” reading of the Bible and the belief in the linguistic miracle in the modern Pentecostalism derives from the same fantasy that the divine, the infinite, is present fully and immediately in the mundane, the finite. The literal reading of the Bible assumes the meaning of the biblical text as the divine manifestation fully and immediately available. Hence no need of interpretation, which only the awareness of the gap between the text and its meaning prompts. The belief in tongue speaking assumes the presence of the divine available fully and immediately in the experience of speech

automatism. Hence, suspicion on theological reflection, which only the awareness of the gap between immediate experience and the elusive presence of God sustains. In such a world of pure immediacy, rigorously speaking, there can be no meaning or experience insofar as meaning or experience presupposes some ontological gap between a word and what it means, or between the subject and the object. In their exclusion of mediation, tongue speaking and literal reading unwittingly collaborate with their archenemy, philosophical positivism. Pentecostalism, the modern version of the medieval realism, has philosophical positivism, the modern version of the medieval nominalism, as its obverse. Just as speaking-in-tongue (the immediate experience of the divine) embodies the truth of literal reading (the immediate availability of meaning), Pentecostalism embodies the truth of positivism. Pentecostalism, as it were, achieves the reconciliation between nominalism and realism, but only at the price of mediation. In the false reconciliation may lie the utopian aspiration of the modern subjects for a authentic language and a true experience, which are neither manipulated nor pre-determined by instrumental reason. (For example, Walter Benjamin's language, which "knows no means, no objects, and no addressee of communication," in contrast to the bourgeois conception of language as the means of communication. Benjamin 1978 : 318) However, the reconciliation remains false insofar as it blinds itself from the outset about the very necessity of reconciliation, that is, the ontological gap between word and meaning, between the subject and the object, the very impossibility of the full and immediate experience of the thing-in-itself without a detour, which is not only the condition of human beings, but also another name of subjectivity. It was no other than the Judeo-Christian tradition that introduced the ideas such as the primordial alienation from the

Paradise as the human condition, an illusive deity, the prohibition of idolatry, any positive representation of the transcendental being. And also both Judaism and Christianity has long been known as the “religions of the Book,” which have developed a quite sophisticated hermeneutics. In its emphasis on the immediate experience of the transcendental, Pentecostalism comes closer to magic which the Judeo-Christian tradition has long left behind, confirming the commonplace observation on the affinity between the Pentecostal practice and shamanism in South Korea. The question to ask here is why magic could become predominant and popular precisely in the progressively rationalizing, secularizing, enlightening modern Korea.

Regression, or Search for an Uncorrupted Soul?

In this context, the view of Harvey Cox, a Harvard theologian, on speaking-in-tongues is worth discussion. In his influential book on Pentecostalism, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (Cox 1995), he tries to understand the meaning of Pentecostalism’s attraction among the growing number of contemporary people in the light of what he sees a double disillusionment toward both traditional Christianity and modern rationality. In doing so he presumes a certain universal “primal human religiosity,” which he believes Pentecostalism effectively taps in an ingenious way. Speaking-in-tongues is, according to him, a local Christian embodiment of the universal capacity of ecstatic utterance, which can also be found in most religious traditions. Cox suggests that the universal capacity of ecstatic utterance is based upon what some psychologists call “primal speech, ” a certain capacity of pre-symbolic expression of pressing needs, demanding urges, and tumultuous emotions, which is observable in an infant’s babbling and never

disappears even after it enters into the properly linguistic domain.(Cox 88-89. Here Cox cites psychologists Ann and Barry Ulanov) He, then, compares speaking-in-tongues to what he regards other types of ecstatic utterance such as Tibetan Buddhist monks' double-basso drone chanting, or Hindu holy men's nasal whine. Thus he sees speaking-in-tongues as resurfacing of such undercurrent primal speech and restoration to ecstatic utterance, the universal human capacity across the different religious traditions: "If we understand speaking-in-tongues as an example of ecstatic utterance, as I think we should, this would provide yet another example of Pentecostalism's power to tap into a deep substratum of human religiosity, and would signify another radical departure from evangelical or fundamentalist Protestantism in which neither tongue speaking or links to other religions are condoned."(Cox 91) Correcting the common confusion, Cox here points out that Pentecostal movement differs from Fundamentalist Protestantism as well as from evangelical one. In Pentecostal movement he finds the clues to a new type of religion for the twenty-first century, which would transcend the traditional boundaries of institutional religions thanks to the very supra-linguistic dimension of ecstatic utterance and its almost universal distribution among different religions: "Virtually all the mystics of every faith have indicated that the vision they have glimpsed, though they try desperately to describe it, finally eludes them"(Cox 92), and, then, goes further to say that "mystical suspicion of language," which the literary critic and novelist Susan Sontag elaborates in "The Aesthetic of Silence"(Cf. Sontag 1982), is "the one thing, perhaps, on which the Sufi, Hindu, Taoist, Christian, and Buddhist mystics would all readily agree." (Cox 93) With his well-meant hope of a future religion based on a deeper and universal human religiosity, Cox seems to rather hastily lump together glossolalia with other types

of ecstatic utterance and even critical reflection on the inherent limitation of language by mystics, philosophers, and literary critics like Jacob Boehme, Hegel, Schelling, and Sontag, etc. He also takes such a diversity of theoretical, theological interpretations of tongue speaking as the palpable evidence to its inherent indescribability in human language.(Cox 95-96) But glossolalia, as Cox sees it, goes beyond “even this lofty, classic mystical insight,” and reveals God’s act of grace, which turns the inadequacy of human languages into the fluency of angelic language. As Cox puts it: “What Sontag calls the ‘excruciating pain’ of linguistic atrophy, desiccation, and banality is transfigured, if momentarily and episodically, into free-flowing praise.”(Cox 96)

Harvey Cox’s view on speaking-in-tongues is more of a wishful thinking than of a rigorous analysis. His eschatological vision for a new religion of the twenty-first century, which would become an alternative to both dysfunctional Christianity and bankrupt modern rationality, seems to obscure his sight at the crucial differences among an automatic vocalization of meaningless syllables in glossolalia, other types of ecstatic utterance, mystic’s silence, poet’s agonized choice of words, and philosophers’ impossible attempts from the Kantian philosophical critique to the Hegelian dialectic to register in words what cannot be put in words.(dialectic as “thinking against thinking, without abolishing itself altogether,” Adorno 1992: 141; also see Jameson 1990; Zizek 1993) One should also remember that modern rationalism itself emerged as the immediate outcome of mysticism of the late middle age, which sought for illumination of “inner light,” and, thus, they do not exclude each other. Moreover, what motivates Pentecostals to turn to glossolalia is not critical reflection on the intrinsic inadequacy of language in its relationship with the thing-in itself, but its opposite, that is, the most naïve

realism assuming the immediate coincidence between words and things, the “literal” reading of the Bible. Cox himself notes the lack of theory of tongue speaking in the Pentecostal circles, although rather expressing his gladness about it (Cox 94), based upon the assumption that it should remain unexplained, as a “mystery.” Glossolalia indeed amounts to momentary withdrawal from language or temporary suspension of the symbolic order. But it leads neither to mystic’s silence nor to higher consciousness or artistic creation in and through the very language, notwithstanding its inherent impossibility, as in critical philosophy and literature. The suspension of language in tongue speaking only leads to rigid linguistic formalism as abundantly shown in tongue speakers’ testimonies and uncritical affirmation of the social *status quo*. In this aspect, again, Pentecostalism resembles logical positivism, whose radical suspicion on “metaphysics” in thinking leads to the fetishism of the merely existing and the elimination of language itself in search of a perfect language. It is no accident that Pentecostal churches produce such a poor literature, little art and theory, just like positivism has little capacity to appreciate those spiritual activities.

Harvey Cox tries to see in speaking-in-tongue the moderns’ search for an authentic language denied in modern society, where the manipulative use of language prevails. In the same vein, he also wants to see in Pentecostal movement the moderns’ search for an authentic soul lost in modern world, where rationalization and mechanization turns spirit into a mere instrument of pursuit for wealth and power. But glossolalia turns out to be not so much primordial as Harvey Cox would like to see it. Linguistically, glossolalia is a secondary linguistic formation, as described earlier in this chapter, insofar as the phonemes of all the recorded “tongues” consists in those which the

tongue-speaker has already acquired. The possibly primordial moment of ecstasy in the speech automatism, namely, hyper-arousal dissociation as the physio-psychological foundation of speech automatism, also turns out to be thoroughly mediated by Pentecostal belief. If the term “regression” should be used for a behavior of moving back to the already superceded, then, the post-linguistic return to the presumed primordial “language” of babbling would be one of its paradigmatic examples. But a far more significant regressive moment in the Pentecostal practices lies in the parallel backward movement toward the pre-critical, pre-reflective notion of language, the literal belief in words and their magical efficacy. It deserves the designation of regression precisely because it proliferates in a society which has left behind magic through hard struggles.

Here one needs to ask whether the linguistic regression is somehow related to psychological regression, of which Pentecostals have often been suspected. As discussed earlier, however, linguistic regression does not necessarily imply that tongue speakers are “abnormal,” “psychopathic,” or “maladjusted.” In terms of social functioning, it is observed, the tongue speaking Christians are as good as others, if not better. It is also the case for most of the tongue speakers at the YFGC, who desperately try to adjust themselves to the existing order of society, instead of withdrawing from or resisting it, to be “successful” by practicing Positive Thinking, the hall-mark theology of the church, which will be analyzed in the following chapters. Traditional theory, which identifies psychological regression with mal-adjustment, has no way to account for the contradicting phenomena at once: tongue speakers’ linguistic, philosophical regression and their successful adjustment to society. It is the critical theorists of Frankfurt school who take notice of pervading psychological regression in the very “normal”

functioning of modern society. Particularly Adorno's analyses of diverse cultural phenomena such as Thomas Luther's radio addresses (Adorno 1975), the astrology column in *Los Angeles Times* (Adorno 1994), jazz (Adorno 1992), and Culture Industry in general (Horkheimer and Adorno 1993) shed much light on how progressive rationalization tends to entail psychological regression among the people.

Notwithstanding the extreme diversity in the explicit content, these mass cultural phenomena, according to him, rely upon psychological technique in mobilizing "irrational, unconscious, regressive processes" to win mass-appeal:

This task is facilitated by the frame of mind of all those strata of the population who suffer from senseless frustrations and therefore develop a stunted, irrational mentality. It may well be the secret of fascist propaganda that it simply takes men for what they are: the true children of today's standardized mass culture, largely robbed of autonomy and spontaneity, instead of setting goals the realization of which would transcend the psychological *status quo* no less than the social one. Fascist propaganda has only to *reproduce* the existent mentality for its own purposes; - it needs not induce a change - and the compulsive repetition that is one of its foremost characteristics will be at one with the necessity for its continuous reproduction. It relies absolutely on the total structure as well as on each particular trait of the authoritarian character which is itself the product of an internalization of the irrational aspects of modern society. Under the prevailing conditions, the irrationality of fascist propaganda becomes rational in the sense of instinctual economy. (Adorno 1951: 134)

The same psycho-technique, which Adorno detects in Fascist propaganda, seems to apply to mass religious movements including modern Pentecostal movement. Modern Pentecostal movement also appeals to the people deprived of autonomy and spontaneity, reproduces their stunted, irrational mentality, and mobilizes it intentionally for the purpose of the organization, the so-called "church growth." Interestingly, the YFGC boasts of having the secret of its success in "meeting the needs" of ordinary people in a similar manner to a businessman who attributes his success to his extraordinary capacity to predict what consumers want to buy. The secret of the YFGC's enormous expansion

also lies in taking people as they are. The church is said to have provided them what they desperately want. But the needs can be regarded as “theirs” only insofar as they are utterly alienated from themselves under the constraints and manipulation of modern society to the point that they forget who they are and what they truly want. Nothing other than the need for senseless speech automatism and the endless series of ever same “testimonies” testifies better that the need itself embodies the alienation of the Pentecostal subjects. The compulsive repetition of the practices also underlines their regressive nature. These “religious” practices remain in the unconscious sphere, only where their “rationality” can be found ironically. The “rationality” of the irrational is nothing but the obverse of the objective irrationality in society as a whole. The libidinal rationality points to the utopian longing for a genuine language, experience, and reconciliation, which finds no proper outlet in the public sphere. The apparently incomprehensible appeal of mass movements such as the culture industry, popular religious movements, and fascism clearly shows how much easier it is to adjust to the *status quo* and have some gratification through identification with it than to see through it and bring about a radical change. (Adorno 134-135)

To deal adequately with the regressive moment in the YFGC’s Pentecostalism and its implication in the broader social contexts requires an analysis of its beliefs and practices as a whole, in addition to the analysis of tongue speaking . Before proceeding further to such an analysis in the following chapters, it would be instructive to note how strongly obsessed Rev. Cho, Yong-gi, one of the cofounders and the Senior Pastor of the YFGC, has been with mass psychology and mass media. On the one hand, the YFGC has been renowned for its pioneering in taking advantage of cutting-edge mass

communication technology of the time, starting from an in-house publishing organ as early as the 1960s to radio and television to a satellite broadcasting system and finally up to an internet broadcasting station in multiple languages (www.yfgc.com) and a national daily newspaper. With all of these mass media, the church has become a multinational media mogul. On the other hand, most titles that Rev. Cho, Yong-gi explicitly says he reads besides the Bible are the bestsellers of pop-psychology such as Napoleon Hill's *Success Philosophy*, Norman Vincent Peale's *The Power of Positive Thinking*, and Eric Burn's *I Am OK, You Are OK*. He even has no hesitance in quoting from Adolph Hitler's *Meine Kamph* in a lecture on preaching for other ministers:

In *Meine Kamph* Hitler explained how he could conquer Germany. "If you say it for the first time, people will laugh at you. If you say it for the second time, they will say that you are crazy. If you say it for the third time, they will lend their ears to find out why you say so. If you say it for the fourth time, then, they will be persuaded. And if you say it for the fifth time, they will follow you."(Cho, Yong-gi 1997: 86)

It is thus no accident to see the same psycho-technique in the propaganda of the YFGC as well as in the pre-discursive practice of tongue speaking, as will be analyzed in the following chapters.

Chapter IV

Soul

“Three-Beat Salvation”: A Source Critique

The theology of the three-beat salvation has long been known as the hallmark of the Yoido Full Gospel Church, since Rev. Cho, Yong-gi's book entitled *Three-Beat Salvation* was published in 1977.(Cho, Yong-gi 1977. Henceforth referred to as TBS) Here the term “theology” is not used in the rigorous sense of critical reflection on one's faith in God but in a loose sense of any articulate statement of what one believes about God. It is obvious from its literary style that the author intends the book not so much as a theology as an inspirational message, or a extended written sermon. In this the YFGC has faithfully preserved the legacy of the classical Pentecostalism's suspicion on theology. The church started publishing the titles which contain the term “theology” through its newly established theological institute only in the early 1990s (International Theological Institute 1993A, B), although it has paid great attention to publication and already established its own publishing house as early as the 1960s. Even the titles intended as “theological” works are entitled “The Faith and Theology of the YFGC,” instead of “The Theology of the YFGC.” This unusual title implies the church's unease with the term “theology” still alive.

Recent studies on the YFGC tend to uncritically rely on these later “theological” publications as if the theology of the YFGC, commonly dubbed today “the theology of the fivefold gospel and the threefold blessing,” had existed from its earliest phase in the current form.(For example, see Yonsei Church History Study Group 1996) One may claim that the church had all ingredients consisting of the theology of the fivefold gospel

and the threefold blessing from the earliest period of the legendary tent church. But such a dogmatic approach tends to neglect not only the historical development of the church's theology and the shift in emphasis over time. The recent attempt of the YFGC at theological systematization seems to be an effort to re-articulate its unique beliefs and practices within the general framework of the now widely recognized Pentecostal theology, in particular, that of the Assemblies of God, to which the YFGC belongs. The heresy dispute that some mainline churches has raised against the YGFC since the 1960s may make such a theological articulation more urgent. But the purpose of the present study is not to trace the whole process of the YFGC's doctrinal development but to analyze its beliefs and practices during the period of the state-led economic development, the formative period far ahead the recent attempt at theological systematization. For the purpose of the study, thus, these later "theological" publications are of secondary importance. The most important text for the present study is *Three-beat Salvation*. First of all, this book has been best known and most controversial, as suggested by the fact that the title was destined to be the trademark of the YFGC. The importance of the book as the object of analysis lies not in its theological value but in its massive influence on the Korean Christianity at large and its socio-cultural implication beyond Christianity.

The inaugural issue of the church's official monthly magazine, *Shin-ang-ge* (The World of Faith), published in February 1967 already featured 3 John 2, the *locus classicus* of the three-beat salvation theology on its cover: "Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with you soul."(New Revised Standard Version) And also the issue already introduced the notion of the good God in Rev. Cho, Yong-gi's inaugural sermon.(*Shin-ang-ge* 1967 February :

3) It means that a prototype of the three-beat salvation theology was already three in the mid-1960s. But it was yet to incorporate North American Positive Thinking. Positive Thinking seems to have been introduced in the early 1970s. Norman Vincent Peale, a best-selling positive thinker, appeared for the first time in the 1971 March issue.(Shin-ang-ge 1971 March : 14) It was also around this time that the “testimonies” in the magazine started including the success stories in business in addition to the experience of speaking-in-tongue and healing. Thus, the text of *Three-Beat Salvation* published in 1977 must be seen as the product of at least a decade-long development. The 1977 text incorporates also the traditional revivalist theology of Korea, which lays great emphasis on tithing and further generous offering. The originality of *Three-Beat Salvation* lies in such an ingenious combination of the classical Pentecostalism, the Korean revivalist tradition, and North American Positive Thinking.

The doctrine of the three-beat salvation still remains the defining feature of the YFGC’s beliefs and practices. Its undiminished importance to date can be measured by the fact that the recent theological systematization under the new rubric of “the fivefold gospel and the threefold blessing” incorporates the doctrine of the three-beat salvation not within the framework of the “fivefold gospel” but adds it extraneously to the former as if it were a foreign, independent body of doctrine. Also worthy of notice is the apparently insignificant replacement of the term “salvation” in the older version with the new, “blessing,” in the recent version.(The modification of “three-beat” into “threefold” is less symptomatic.) Until the year of 1993, when the International Theological Institute, the church’s official theological organ, published the book, *Faith and Theology of the Yoido Full Gospel Church*, and finally settled down with the new

term “the fivefold gospel and the threefold blessing,”(International Theological Institute 1993A: 13), the terms “salvation” and “blessing” has been used interchangeably. In 1990 Rev. Cho, Yong-gi published the book entitled *Fivefold Gospel and Threefold Blessing* (Cho, Yong-gi 1990), and later, in 1991, Young-San Institute, named after Rev. Cho’s literary name, published the book entitled *Fivefold Gospel and the Blessing of Threefold Salvation* (Youngsan Institute 1991). While “the fivefold gospel” the YFGC’s adoption of the standard Pentecostal theology remains constant, the later half oscillates between “the threefold *blessing*” and “the blessing of threefold *salvation*.” This strange oscillation suggests not only the laxity in the use of the key theological terms like “salvation” and “blessing,” but also the desperate effort to preserve the distinctive teaching of the YFGC, the doctrine of “the three-beat salvation,” even in the newly introduced framework of Pentecostal theology, sacrificing its logical and systemic consistency. Insofar as the fivefold gospel - the doctrines of regeneration, Spiritual fullness, divine healing, blessing, the Second Coming of Christ - already contains the substances of the threefold blessing - spiritual well-being, material well-being, and physical well-being (See International Theological Institute 1993A: 13-45) – the doctrine of threefold blessing is redundant. The impulse to risk such obvious redundancy even in the work of theological systematization, ironically underlines the undiminished importance of the three-beat salvation theology for the YFGC. But its importance is not limited to the YFGC itself. Today the theological ideas, which the book, *Three-Beat Salvation*, articulates for the first time, at least in the history of Korean Christianity, have become widely preached and practiced as the proven magic formula for rapid church growth by many pastors even in other denominations. Even Jürgen Moltmann, a world-

renowned liberation theologian, reproduces almost in verbatim the YFGC's teaching on the method of prayer and its efficacy, although not without a critical distance. (Moltmann 1997: 125-144) Hence, an immanent critique of the modern Pentecostalism in South Korea needs to focus on the analysis of the three-beat salvation theology.

“Meeting the Needs of Our Time” or Consumer Religion

A triumphant mood prevails in the book, *Three-Beat Salvation*, obviously thanks to the remarkable “success” of the author Rev. Cho, Yong-gi's eighteen year long ministry that already started drawing attention from journalists as well as the Christian world at the time. From the Preface the author shows his confidence about what he is going to say, with which he challenges the traditional understanding of God and salvation.

The Word of God shall not change forever. But its emphasis can change according to time and situation. The emphasis of the gospel in our time when our country is about to enter the status of advanced countries in the world can not be the same as the one when it had been oppressed as a colony under the Japanese imperialism for thirty-six years. Our attitude as Christians needs to be more affirmative, positive, and productive for the time has come when our nation can contribute on the front line to the creation of a new history along with the world powers. (TBS 3)

From the first page, he poses as a theological innovator than as a conservative. It is surprising to see him underline the historical significance of “our time,” since he rarely mentions society and history. In this preface, he is parroting almost in verbatim the cliché of the military authoritarian government's official slogans such as Korea's imminent entrance into the status of advanced countries and the importance of people's responsibility in creating a new history. It is to be noted, however, that the substantial part of the book offers no historical and theological analysis to concretize the

theologically sensible claim by itself that the emphasis of the gospel must shift according to time and situation. The author merely claims that the publication of the book is “to meet our nation’s needs of the time.”(TBS 3) Needless to say, he takes for granted “our nation’s needs of the time” as defined by the authoritarian government, and never critically reflect upon the definition from an independent Christian perspective. Here it should be reminded that the later half of the 1970s was the period in which Korean Christianity at large bifurcated into two opposing, often antagonistic, camps. While one, mostly the theological conservative, supported the military regimes and the American intervention, the other, mostly the theological progressive, advocated the struggle for democracy, economic justice, and national independence. Rev. Cho, Yong-gi, by parroting in verbatim the government’s official slogans, he exposes, maybe over-exposes, himself aligning with the government’s policy whatever it may be. This seemingly affirmative position is far from a true consent based on independent judgment. Parroting empty slogans rather implies cynical distancing, a thoroughly pragmatic attitude toward any kind of government, which has later been abundantly demonstrated by the fact that the YFGC had no difficulty in re-aligning itself with the democratic civic governments of Kim, Young-sam and Kim, Dae-jung respectively.

In contrast to the preface full of the big but empty words such as “nation” and “history,” the main body of the book shows what really motivated Rev. Cho, Yong-gi’s theological innovation: the extreme poverty and hopelessness in the late 1950s that he himself and his prospective congregation had to face. He opens the section by recollecting: “Twenty years ago, when I started my first ministry at a tent church in Bool-kwang-dong, Seoul, my heart was greatly troubled. Because the people there, to

whom I had to preach the gospel, were living in unspeakable misery, spiritually wasted, hopeless, worrying over the next meal.”(TBS 17) In those years immediately following the Korean War (1950-1953) this was indeed a typical situation for the majority of Koreans. The young minister was tormented by the unbridgeable gap between the conventional idea of God and the reality of his mission field:

I had to confront with a serious self-contradiction when I set out to preach the Word to them. It was because the God, whom I had learned at the Bible School, was merely the God of the past and of the future, and thus I did not see the God of the present. Then, where is the God of the present? This question stirred my heart. The Christ of the past would not impress them in the least, and the Christ of the future would be too remote for their helpless situation here and now. (TBS 17)

Cho, Yong-gi and Choi, Ja-shil, the cofounders of the YFGC, were not exempted from the same desperate situation: “So I cried out. I desperately cried out for me, as well as for them.”(TBS 17) It is then said that God revealed him the Word of the three-beat salvation through III John 2:

Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with you soul.(New Revised Standard Version)

A common sense reader would read this part of the third epistle by the Apostle John as a generic greeting commonly used at the beginning of the letter. Intended as a generic greeting in an epistle, the words are not specific: hence “all may go well,” “be in good health,” or “be well with your soul.” To the desperate young pastor, however, it strikes as the decisive divine revelation, indeed, the master key to the whole Christianity:

Thereafter this Word has been the foundation of all my preaching and ministry. When we read the whole Bible from the Book of Genesis to the Book of Revelation from the perspective of the three-beat salvation based on this Word, God appears as the God of the present, as well as the God of the past and the future, who is loving and caring for me. Thanks to this message, our church has been able to grow into a worldly renowned church, and shall keep growing. (TBS 18)

Rev. Cho goes further to claim that the message of the three-beat salvation proves to be the solution to the problems that humankind all over the world grapples with today:

As a matter of fact, humankind confronts today with the problems of emptiness and meaninglessness, of poverty and curse, and of disease and the fear of death. Their cry soars up to the sky. What they need is the three-beat salvation. On my overseas mission trips, 30 or more times for the past 10 or more years, to America, England, Germany, France, and Scandinavia, I became clearly aware of the fact that people everywhere are in need of the three-beat salvation. Everywhere I preached the three-beat salvation, I saw an amazing change occur and the flame of the revival burst.(TBS 18-19)

The list of problems in this introductory remark is categorized according to the three-beat salvation schema. Here the general references in III John 2 are ingeniously translated into a little more definite words, but still vague: The group of “emptiness and meaninglessness” corresponds to the well-being of “soul,” the group of “poverty and curse” to the well-being of “all,” and finally the group of “disease and the fear of death” to “good health.” It may go without saying that the generic conventional greeting of the epistle does not intend such specific meaning. What needs to be done is, however, not to point out exegetical excess in the theology of the three-beat salvation but to understand why such an outrageous interpretation could have exerted so great influence on the South Korean society since the 1960s and some parts of the world today.

Such exegetical excess seems to be one of the crucial ingredients in the mass appeal of Pentecostalism. It both presupposes and promotes the lack of critical reasoning among its audience, while attesting the same lack among the Pentecostal leaders. It also presumes and reinforces the Bible fetishism that the modern historical critical studies of the Bible have long attempted to overcome. The more the scripture is taken to be

esoteric, alienated from human understanding, the more arbitrary its interpretation becomes, the more final, decisive, true, and authoritative the arbitrary reading is taken to be. The exegetical excess is not merely a passing mistake or the sign of intellectual poverty. It is rather an indication to the general submissiveness of the people to an alien authority, which needs to be repeatedly reproduced in order to maintain the inhuman society.

However the listed problems in the above quotation curiously address today's prevailing sentiment. Disease and the fear of death have always been the problems every human being cannot help but face. Thus, they might not be specifically modern problems. Needless to say, modern medicine helps considerably extend the average life expectancy of human beings at least in the industrialized parts of the world. The mention of "disease and the fear of death" as modern problems seems not merely intended to address the poor who cannot afford modern medicine, or those who suffer from currently incurable diseases. Precisely the very development of modern medicine, by enhancing the chance of cure, ironically make people far more conscious of their health. Probably the medicalization of life (Foucault 1975) combined with the culture of narcissism (Lasch 1979) reinforces the modern obsession with health. If death is part of natural life process, there would be nothing to fear about death. But if life itself becomes deadly in the modern exchange society from the outset, as the images of living dead or being buried alive suggests, then, death would become truly fearsome. In this sense, disease and the fear of death may be said to be specifically modern problems.

In the same manner, the reference to "poverty and curse" does not necessarily address the people living under the so-called poverty line. As the theory of relative

deprivation suggests, the sense of poverty intensifies precisely when modern capitalist economy expands, widening inequality. The luxurious images of the rich and famous and the phantasmagoric story of self-made millionaire that mass media promotes deepen the sense of relative depravity and at the same time enflame the desire to be rich. Rev. Cho, Yong-gi uses the word “Curse” to designate both the economic difficulty his prospective audience suffer from and its primordial Cause projected far back to the mythical time. The term is, of course, taken from the biblical narrative in the Book of Genesis, according to which Adam and Eve, after violating the ban on the Fruit, were driven out from the Garden of Eden and condemned to living under the Curse of toil, thorns and thistles, and sweating.(Cf. Genesis 3:17 - 19) The author of *Three-Beat salvation*, thus, confounds the problems of modern political economy such as poverty and economic crisis with the primordial condition of human existence, which the etiological myth of the Fall tries to account for. He says: “Sweating always symbolizes the Curse. Today we live sweating because we are under the Curse. If we are living in God’s blessing, we do not need to live sweating. We sweat because of slow business. We sweat because of our problem kids. We sweat because of disease and death. We sweat to cultivate the land full of thorns and thistles. We have to do so because we fall and are under the Curse.”(TBS 112-113) In this way, Rev. Cho, Yong-gi stretches the meaning of the Curse to accommodate the broad range of hardship which the most comprehensive and thus most vague beat among the three-beats of salvation, the well-being of “all.” But the later elaboration makes it clear enough that the generic term “all” refers mainly to financial blessing. For example, the author of *Three-Beat Salvation* exerts a considerable effort to establish that the pursue of wealth does not contradict the Christian gospel, and

that it must be understood as Christians' privilege which is not only allowed but also made possible through the sacrifice of Christ.(TBS 107-113) And his actual discussion on the second beat of the three-beat salvation focuses on financial blessing, as we shall see later. Of course he occasionally remarks that the well-being of "all" refers to all spheres of our life, thus de-focusing it out the main concern of financial blessing.

He says, for example:

"All" refers to our everyday life in its totality. It refers to every thing from child rearing problem, job problem, business problem, the problem of interpersonal relationship problem, the problem of basic necessities, i.e., cloths, foods, and shelter, up to the problem of security and happiness of life, etc. Therefore if we are ransomed in Jesus Christ through his blood and our soul, mind, and body get well, then, we also need to get well in "all."(TBS 110)

This and other similar statements provide the textual evidences to the claim that the theology of the three-beat salvation does not exclusively emphasize on financial success. It may be true. But one should note that the generic term logically nullifies the very classificatory system of the three-beat salvation theology. If the second beat of salvation, the well-being of "all," includes everything by definition, then, the other two beats have no reason to be. It is unlikely that the author risks such an obvious logical sloppiness because of his lack of intelligence. Rather he seems to exploit the vagueness of the generic term of "all" so that his notion of salvation includes financial blessing as the main concern but appears not exclusively so. The generic expression is particularly useful in a situation where the open pursue of wealth is still an embarrassment at least officially among the wider Christian community, like in the mid-1970, although many popular revivalists had long played upon many Christians' clandestine desire for material blessing. Rev. Cho, Yong-gi's original contribution to Christianity in Korea lies in the fact that he acknowledged for the fist time in publication the pursue of material wealth as

not only a Christian virtue but also a privilege and even duty. But because it was risky to do so, particularly in the midst of suspicion of heresy on the part of the mainline churches, the rhetorical strategy of de-focusing would have been necessary. One of such devices is to use “code” words, to use intentionally a vague word to refer to a specific thing, which should not be mentioned by its name. Those comprehensive and, thus, vague expressions such as the well-being of “all” or the blessing on “environment” play precisely the function of a code word. In spite of these distracting devices, there should be no doubt in that financial success constitutes what is mainly at stake in the second beat of salvation. The logical excess by the use of code word combined with the exegetical excess in the use of the Bible also helps manipulate the repressed desire for wealth. Such a trick both liberates and contains at once the desire for financial success which has already been there but repressed in the public discourse of the mainline churches. The author of *Three-Beat Salvation* does not forget to add an all too abstract and common warning against “greed” without elaborating its difference from the legitimate material concern.(TBS 109) Poverty is also immediately taken as a “problem” to be solved at the individual level. Neither the political economic condition of widespread poverty nor its ethical implication is discussed. This makes a stark contrast with theology of liberation which see the problem not in poverty itself but in the social structure that produces and reproduces poverty.(Cf. Gutierrez 1994)

By “emptiness and meaninglessness” the author of *Three-Beat Salvation* refer to the condition of soul, especially in the advanced countries, where the rate of suicide soars up in spite of material wealth. The talk of “inner emptiness,” “alienation,” “spiritless life” in modern society, which had once been the vocabulary of a radical social

critique, has now entered into journalists' jargon. Here again Rev. Cho, Yong-gi picks up those words to designate the widespread sentiment, especially among the city-dwellers.

He speaks for the uprooted people:

No one is more tragic than those who have been driven out of home, those who have lost their home towns. They shall live an ephemeral life like the Autumn leaves scattering in the wind and shall end up with the eternal dungeon.(TBS 43)

Actually he was once one of those numerous uprooted people, who had to leave their rural communities for economic and political reasons and to have been relocated in a slum area of Seoul. But he never offers socio-historical analysis of the great social transformation, which is occurring right in front of his eyes. Instead, what he actually offers is a theological tautology: "Therefore, human beings who separates from God do not know whence they came and whereto they are going, why they live, and how they live."(TBS 42) Here again the theology of the three-beat salvation plays upon the prevailing sentiment among the majority of people, but without questioning the social and historical conditions that produce and reproduce it. The theology takes the negative products of the structural process of society as the "problems," and seeks for the immediate solutions to them in the supernatural domain. This outlook leaves the existing social order unchallenged and help reproduce, without curing the cause of the disease, the same symptoms again and again that the three-beat salvation theology mistakes as "problems" to be solved immediately. The secret of the miraculous growth of the YFGC lies in this endless reproduction of "problems"-symptoms, the raw materials for the religion industry, through its own religious practices. Thus, it becomes a symptom itself to be analyzed.

“The Good God” or Faith as Utility

The author of *Three-Beat Salvation* introduces the new notion of God, “the God who is good.” The notion of the good God seems not new at all, since the epithet “good” is one of the most common for the Judeo-Christian deity along with the others such as “merciful,” “gracious,” “loving,” as well as “just,” “righteous,” or “envious,” etc. Here again the author picks up a commonplace from the Christian tradition and gives it a new twist. He opposes the notion of the good God to the traditional image of God as the fearful Overseer:

Today there are too many Christians who do not clearly understand that God is good. They mistake Him as a fearful God, a threatening God, a God who takes away everything good, or a God who has nothing to do with them here and now. (TBS 20)

The notion of the good God is introduced to replace the old one in the traditional Protestantism which places emphasis on ascetic morality, the last judgement, and the compensation in the future. Now the good God wants to lift the burden of the Protestant ethic of the inner-worldly asceticism, which has already been superseded by the further development of capitalism in its home countries, as Max Weber laments in the last pages of *Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*.(Weber 1930: 180-183) Moreover, the notion of the good God relocates the divine blessings from the remote future to the here and now. A pious life means no longer to keep up an ascetic moral conduct throughout one’s life in this world, anticipating for the ultimate reward on the day of the reckoning. Thus, Rev. Cho, Yong-gi accuses the contemporary pulpits of their misleading image of God: “They introduce God only as a harsh and fearful God who is only waiting for the Day of Judgement.”(TBS 27) Faith means no longer withdrawing from the “sinful” world, apparently similar to the view of the liberation theologies which see faith as

active participation in the revolutionary praxis in and of the world . But the transcendental dimension, which makes it possible for the liberation theologies to be a radical social critique against the present world order, turns, in the notion of the good God, into the supernatural, magical apparatus ready to be mobilized, utilized, or manipulated at will for one's worldly interests. Therefore it is not surprising to see the author of *Three-Beat Salvation* compares faith to the gear of an automobile:

Brothers and sisters, faith can be compared to the gear of an automobile. If you apply the forward-gear, your car runs forward. However, if you apply the backward-gear, it runs back with the same force. Similarly, if you believe in the good God, you will see a good present and future. But if you do not believe in the good God, you will face anxiety, fear, and hopelessness. It is up to your own choice whether you have a positive faith or a negative one. A positive faith brings about positive fruits and a negative faith negative fruits.(TBS 26)

Faith becomes as a matter of technique to secure the heavenly blessings rather than a matter of self-reflection and confession. To have faith, then, means "to fill our mind with the image of the good God"(TBS 28), the psycho-technique of auto-suggestion, which hardly differs from the self-help manuals filling the bestseller corner at today's bookstore.

Corresponding to the shift in the concept of God, the meaning of salvation also changes. The author of *Three-Beat Salvation* challenges the traditional understanding of salvation:

Hitherto we conventionally understand salvation as merely spiritual salvation, the idea that after we dies, our spirits are delivered and allowed to go to the heaven. But much wider than this is the meaning of salvation, which is given to us through the Resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ, who was crucified to death and raised among the dead in three days.(TBS 28)

Not unlike the theologians of liberation, he claims that salvation is not limited to the spirit realm and the afterlife, but includes the material realm and this life. He supports the claim

with an “interpretation” of Adam’s Fall: “Adam’s Fall was not merely a spiritual fall. Curse and death inevitably followed the spiritual Fall. As their [Adam’s and Eve’s] spirits were dead, they were at the same time driven out from the blessed Garden and condemned to curse and physical death.”(TBS 29) From this reinterpretation Rev. Cho infers that salvation concerns not only the spiritual Fall but also its consequences, i.e., curse and death. Therefore the salvation made available through Jesus Christ must be expanded to include not only the salvation of soul but also “the transformation of living conditions from curse into blessing, and of our bodies from death and disease to life.”(TBS 29) In the same vein, Rev. Cho, Yong-gi finds the meaning of the Exodus in the magical efficacy of the Passover lamb’s blood in protecting life, Yahweh’s provision of the necessities for Israelites’ survival in the wilderness(TBS 31), rather than in the liberation of the Hebrew slaves from the bondage of Egyptian empire, emancipation from an unjust political system, as the theologies of liberation would see.

It should be noted, however, that Rev. Cho never gives up the traditional notion of the ultimate salvation as an otherworldly event. The idea of salvation as the worldly blessing is simply added to the traditional idea of entering the heaven after death without substantial change in the conventional idea of salvation. The ultimate and completed salvation is still put off until the afterlife, and the idea of the Kingdom of God, the ultimate salvation, is still understood as an otherworldly event. In this way, the eschatological anticipation is tamed to stop being an utopian memory of the future, which would produce a creative tension with the existing order of the time. By setting aside the realm of the Kingdom of God in an infinite future or the afterlife, a peace between the sinful world and the eschatological Kingdom is agreed upon so that the

social *status quo*, the real source of poverty, meaninglessness, hopelessness, de-spirited existence, and undeserved illness and premature death is exempted from the disturbing memory of utopia. Hence Rev. Cho, Yong-gi's unusual interpretation of the Exodus:

In the Book of Exodus we can find a broader and deeper meaning of salvation Jesus Christ has achieved. The land of Canaan, the Promised Land for today's Christians is the Kingdom of God. Until we, Christians, after we have been ransomed and justified through the blood of Jesus Christ, enter the Kingdom that God has prepared for us, however, the Blood of Christ protects us and the Body of Christ keeps us strong. He gives us the three-beat salvation, i.e., the wellbeing of all and good health, as well as spiritual salvation. Lord wants us to be successful and victorious in all endeavors in our everyday life as we live in this world, too, once we have been ransomed.(TBS 31)

This interpretation does not challenge the conventional understanding of the Kingdom of God as the remote non-material afterlife but simply assumes it again. What really matters in this interpretation is what will happen in the interim period between the day of justification (the day of conversion) and the day of entering the heaven (the day of the ultimate salvation). It is interesting to note that both are understood as "spiritual salvation," again faithful to the conventional interpretation. For the interim period, the traditional Protestantism prescribes rigorous moral asceticism such as self-reproaching, sanctification, the renunciation of desires in order to secure the ultimate salvation in the afterlife, which is regarded as not automatically warranted by the baptism. But the theology of the three-beat salvation lifts the burden of moral asceticism, the necessity of suffering in this life, as the prerequisite of the eternal life after death by the bold announcement that there is nothing wrong in Christians' enjoying of the worldly goods - wealth, health, and happiness. It proclaims that worldly success and victory are precisely what Lord wants Christians to enjoy in this world. They are not only allowed but also required, it goes further to claim, because if it is not so, it amounts to nullifying

the efficacy of the Precious Blood of Christ. In this way, the last trace of the communal, ethical moments of the old religion in Protestantism, although it was left in an already thwarted form of individualized asceticism, has been finally replaced by the technique of success, just as the older Protestant business owners' patriarchal care for "his men" has been replaced by the younger generation of "scientific managers" who only care about efficiency. (The novelist D. H. Lawrence remarkably registers this transition in his novel, *Women in Love*, Chapter 17 Industrial Magnet. Lawrence 1976: 202-225) The worldly goods that a pious Christian has regarded as the source of all evils now turn into the divine blessings which every Christian must actively seek after with no sense of guilt. The inner-worldly asceticism has yielded to the inner-worldly hedonism as capitalism has outgrown the religious incubator of the Protestant ethics. The unashamed celebration of the inner-worldly hedonism is also what distinguishes the YFGC's version of Pentecostalism from the classical Pentecostalism which still reveres moral asceticism. However, the true novelty of the three-beat salvation theology lies not just in celebrating the worldly goods as Christian's legitimate end, but in providing the technique to achieve the goal. The turn to hedonism in the three-beat salvation theology does not necessarily mean the liberation of desire. Rather it means the opposite, as we shall see in the following discussion.

"Spiritual Wellbeing" or Bloody Psychic Order

The notion of spiritual well-being assumes the traditional tripartite theological anthropology, according to which a human being consists of spirit, mind, and body. This is, of course, another piece of the uncritically accepted and circulated doctrines among

the majority of Christians, based on a literal reading of Genesis 2:7 and I Thessalonians 5:23. Curiously the tripartite anthropology prevails in spite of the critical biblical scholars' caution that the Greek terms for soul, mind, and body should be understood "not as ways to speak of different parts of the individual but as different ways to speak of the entire unified, integrated person."(Taylor Jr. 321) Contradicting the YFGC's claim to be a holistic approach, the tripartite concept of human being divides a whole person into three different parts and assigns a specific role to each part: Spirit is the only avenue of communication with God; Mind is the locus of thought, emotion, and will; And body is the locus of five senses - sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. Spiritual well-being is defined as "the state in which spirit, mind, and body are in order by adequately performing their assigned roles."(TBS 37) A hierarchical, authoritarian conception of order characterizes this rather Platonic anthropology. By "order" Rev. Cho, Yong-gi means "the state in which spirit commands mind according to God's will, mind commands body, and body gives up all its desires and subjects to the rule of spirit and mind."(TBS 37-38) Adam before the Fall is said to have been in such an order.(TBS 38) But as the first man committed a sin by disobeying God, his spirit was dead. His communication with God terminated. He was driven out from the Garden of Eden and became homeless. The Satanic power enslaved him. Now human beings are under the command of Satan so that they cannot help but becoming the victims of all sorts of temptations, such as "the passion of flesh, the passion of sight, and the pride of this world."(TBS 46) The spiritual death and the loss of communication with God are said to result in the loss of the most fundamental knowledge about the purpose and direction of human life. Now the life of human being, with spirit dead, is guided only by mind and

body, Rev. Cho maintains, which lead only to egoism, greed, wars, conflicts, adultery, corruption, and arrogance. The moderns are not only facing the imminent judgement of fire but also already under the punishment. The hell is nothing other than “this world where there is evil instead of good, death instead of life, sorrow instead of joy, suffering instead of happiness, terrible loneliness instead of caring relationship, to put it simply, the place filled with all kinds of negative powers.”(TBS 49) The author of *Three-Beat Salvation* not only attends to the widespread sufferings and troubled feelings among the majority of people: disorientedness, homelessness, anxiety, resentment, discontent, loneliness, sorrow, disease, and the fear of death. But also he designates them as “problems” to be solved and possible to be solved here and now, instead of accepting them as those inevitable sufferings one has to go through until the time of entering the heaven. If Karl Marx sees in religion the “cry of spirit in the spiritless world” in its veil of otherworldliness (Marx 1975 : 244), Rev. Cho, Yong-gi’s version of Pentecostalism may be said to tear the veil to expose the naked substance of religion. There is no doubt in that this theological innovation was also motivated by Rev. Cho, Yong-gi’s personal experience of disillusionment with the hopeless reality of the modern Korea and the traditional Christianity. Both the popularity of the three-beat salvation theology and the social influence of the liberation theologies in South Korea may be said to indicate the same disillusionment among numerous Christians. But from the shared discontent, Rev. Cho, Yong-gi takes the opposite direction from the liberation theologies. Instead of inquiring into today’s social and religious systems, which produce and reproduce sufferings and discontent, he attributes these tribulations in real life to the realm of the primordial myth: Adam’s Fall and the Satanic power. The fate of humankind is

presented as always already determined by the primordial event in the mythological past, for which human beings have neither control nor responsibility at all. A quite realistic observation of modern suffering merges with an magical view of the world.

He sees the modern world under the spell of magic. Then, only counter magic will break the spell. The modern sorcerer finds the magic power of liberation in the Blood of Christ. No capacity is left to human beings to recover themselves from the bondage of the primordial Sin, because they fall not partially but completely. Rev. Cho, Yong-gi explicitly says that moral discipline, education, politics, or social revolution can not bring them back to the original state of the paradise before the Fall.(TBS 51) The complete fall of human being has been a commonly accepted doctrine in the Christian tradition since St. Augustine. According to this doctrine, only Jesus Christ can ransom human beings through his sacrifice, which is symbolized by the Blood and Body at the communion. But the author of *Three-Beat Salvation* goes beyond such a commonplace to emphasize the special efficacy of the Blood for salvation:

It is not the teaching of Jesus that saves us. It is not the life of Jesus that saves us. It is only through the precious Blood of Jesus that our sin can be forgiven and our salvation is attained.(TBS 53)

And he rebukes modern churches for the reason that they do not preach about the Blood of Jesus: “They are so eloquent in preaching about the teaching and life of Jesus, seasoning it with philosophical learning, but they do neither testify nor praise the Blood of Jesus. Thereby they cannot lead their congregations to the forgiveness of sin and salvation. Without the belief in the precious Blood, of little use are worship, ceremony, and rituals.”(TBS 53) To revive spirit is, he insists, much more important than to have religion or to hold sacraments.(TBS 65) And it is possible only through the “absolutely

personal experience in which we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior.”(TBS 56) This emphasis on the personal transformation through the efficacy of the precious Blood, commonly dubbed the experience of being “born-again,” or “regeneration,” shows that Rev. Cho, Yong-gi stands in the revivalist tradition, which can trace back to the primitive Methodism. But the three-beat salvation theology does not confine the meaning of the precious Blood to the innocent Son’s vicarious sacrifice to ransom human beings from sin. Christ’s Blood is not merely a religious symbol derived from the Jewish tradition. In the three-beat salvation theology, it is rather a mysterious element containing miraculous power. It is thus said: “Only thanks to the Blood, we can come to God. Only thanks to the Blood, we can overcome Satan’s attack. Only thanks to the Blood, we can do what is right.”(TBS 54) The demons, the presumed sources of all misfortunes from disease to slow business will run away “when we soak our hearts with the Blood of Jesus Christ by means of prayer and creative proclamation,” as Israelites marked their door posts with the blood of the lamb to escape the death at the Passover night.(TBS 54) In this way, the ethical religion centered on the laws returns to a natural religion or magic, the prophetic monotheism to a pantheism, and progressive secularization to re-mythologization. The church remains faithful to the Christian tradition that the sacrifice of the Son of God had made animal sacrifice redundant once and for all. But their emphatic belief in the efficacy of the precious Blood does not seem to remain the boundary of the symbolic. The Blood is believed to be something real and have enormous tangible power to change miraculously the course of event. The Pentecostals seem to revive what McCarthy, a New Testament scholar, calls “sacramental realism” in the early Christian tradition.(Cf. McCarthy) The realistic belief in the mysterious efficacy of sacred objects may have

corresponded to the historical development of human understanding at the first and second centuries, although McCarthy takes it to “go beyond” the merely symbolic understanding of sacrifice in Judaism, thus unwittingly suggesting the regressive moment in the early Christian sacramental realism from the perspective of enlightenment. In modern time, such sacramental realism has irrevocably lost its innocence. Today it can only be a second-handed myth. It is not so much a genuine expression of the development of human consciousness hard won through his interaction with nature as the resuscitation of the once superceded worldview in the face of the bewildered enlightenment. The best way to understand theoretically the resuscitated magic in the midst of the world would be to draw on the Freudian concept of “psychic reality,” which designates the proper domain of psychoanalysis, i.e., that of dream, phantasmagoria, and desire. Or more precisely the Blood belongs to the Lacanian imaginary, to the pre-linguistic, pre-symbolic, pre-legal world of fragmented, free floating images, to the isle of narcissism. It becomes now obvious why the three-beat salvation theology has to leave behind the Protestant ethics and enters into the uncanny world of magic and miracle. The return to sacramental realism in the guise of the biblicism indicates the disintegration of the Lacanian symbolic order, the regression to secondary narcissism.

The Pentecostal Christians at the YFGC are fond of what they call “the precious Blood songs,” the praises dedicated to the Blood. Every time I attended their gatherings, I heard them singing some of those blood songs. One of them runs:

**The Blood of the Lord, the Blood of the Lord;
We drink from the cup of precious Blood:
Overflowing, overflowing the Blood of the Lord;
And mine is the victory!**

In this song there is no reminiscence of theological reflection on the symbolic meaning of

the sacrifice of Christ on the cross for humanity and history. Only the victory, the material efficacy of the overflowing Blood, is praised. A young pastor, whom I had a chance interview, said with an eyewitness's confidence: "The Blood songs have incredible power to ward off demons. I don't know how. But they really work, touching people's hearts, softening the stubborn, and exorcising demons." E. P. Thompson, in his analysis of the primitive Methodist revival meetings, notes the importance of the Blood imagery.(Thompson 371) "Soaking in the blood" implies, according to him, the hidden violent impulse among the working class, which could be directed toward oneself and toward others. When it is directed toward oneself, it entails self-sacrifice, forcible self-adjustment to the harsh working condition of the time. When it is directed toward others, it leads to rebellions. Methodism, often called "the religion of heart," largely contributed, Thompson argues, to the taming of young people into docile industrial workers through the "transforming power of the cross." The YFGC inherits the legacy of revivalism from the classical Pentecostalism in its emphases on "heart," "personal relationship with God," and "the power of the precious Blood." Methodism and Pentecostalism are common in operating not so much in the domain of conceptual thinking as in the murky domain of the unconscious psychic process, which the terms "heart" and "experience" indicate. Both movements proliferate during the period of industrial revolution. Needless to say, the industrialization of the Great Britain in the 19th century should not be directly compared to that of South Korea since the 1960. The historical distinctiveness of the industrialization in South Korea may account for many specific elements in the YFGC's beliefs and practices, such as the de-emphasizing of ethics and the open celebration of the worldly goods, which would have embarrassed

the primitive Methodists. But it is still worthy of notice that Pentecostalism in Korea, a self-designated theological innovation for a new industrial era, should find, in the Blood imagery, the most dynamic power for the fundamental transformation called “spiritual salvation.”

To achieve the first beat of salvation, spiritual well-being, defined as the establishment of the order among spirit, soul, and body, proves to be a bloody procedure, as the author of *Three-Beat Salvation* himself vividly describes. In order to establish the order, mind must be broken, and body killed.(TBS 66-103) The problem is that mind and body would not obey the command of spirit. It is admitted that conflict among them is perpetual, even after one accepts Jesus Christ as one’s personal savior. To become a born-again Christian does not automatically guarantee a mind free from the ingrained habit of “humanism,” a body from corrupt passions. Therefore both mind and body must be continuously inflicted to obey the command of spirit. But the subordination of mind is said to be somewhat different from that of body. Mind must be not merely broken. It is also disciplined to serve the higher command of spirit because it is regarded to have the capacity to perform some useful function. On the contrary, body, since having nothing useful but unscrupulous passions in its intrinsic constitution, must be thoroughly destroyed. By “breaking mind” Rev. Cho means to go through failures and frustrations beyond one’s capacity of understanding and finally to subject to the incomprehensible course of events. Mind is said to be “unable to understand God’s world and God’s way.”(TBS 68) The divine mystery, incomprehensibility, inaccessibility has been indeed the classical theme of the Judeo-Christian theology. But the theology of *Three-Beat Salvation* confounds the divine mystery with the apparent impenetrability of the

modern world to the majority of the people. Thus, the logic of modern capitalist society, which appears incomprehensible to naïve consciousness, comes to be identified with the unfathomable providence. To be faithful means to accept and endure those incomprehensible calamities as the tests and disciplines that the transcendental being imposes in his providential guidance, and to look forward to miracles.(TBS 79-86) The process of “breaking mind,” according to Rev. Cho, Yong-gi, culminates in the desperate prayer: “Lord, I do not know where I am going. I entrust my whole life, mind, body, and everything to you. Now you will be in the sole command of my life. Direct me. Lead me.”(TBS 85) Again this prayer would sound commonplace to any Christian’s ears, insofar as Christianity like other religions has been fully aware of the ultimate mystery of life. But the ultimate mystery of life needs not nullify a rational endeavor, critical thinking, and responsibility for one’s own life and wider communities. It rather requires reason and responsibility. However, the same prayer in the context of the three-beat salvation theology leads to the submission of reason and responsibility. Therefore it is not surprising to see Rev. Cho, Yong-gi recommend the total submission to the alien forces as the prerequisite of “living with miracles and power that we will receive when God answers our prayer.”(TBS 68) Thus, Pentecostal faith completely mutilates reason and responsibility, the modern subject in short, which today’s societal tendency toward rationalization and bureaucratization has already undermined. Faith in the transcendental being leads to blind submission to the immanence of the *status quo*. The irrationality of society as a whole sanctified as the divine providence attains a totalitarian authority, which can be neither understood nor changed by a rational endeavor. Pentecostal faith precludes such a rational endeavor as “humanism,” “hubris,” or “greed” to be broken by

God. The spontaneous feelings such as anxiety and fear are also anathematized as “negative attitudes” which must be filtered out in order to receive miraculously the divine blessings. The phantasmagoric anticipation for the miraculous solution of the societal problems such as poverty, unemployment, economic recession, and disease only desolates spirit further among the victims of social injustice who are unable to penetrate into the real source of their suffering. The system reproduces itself by keep producing such a fantasy of miracle. The outrageous exegetical excess in the “spiritual” interpretation of the biblical narratives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses, which illustrate the doctrine of spiritual well-being(TBS 68-69), only dispirits further their already impoverished spirit. Spiritual empowering in Pentecostalism means objectively dis-empowering human spirit.

Sudden Turn to Hedonism

In contrast to the traditional Protestantism and the classical Pentecostalism, the YFGC’s theology of the three-beat salvation devotes so little space to the elaboration of the “bodily passions” or sin in general. Rev. Choi, Ja-shil shows far more rigorous moral asceticism than her son-in law, Rev. Cho, Yong-gi. In *Three-Beal Salvation* only two sins are specifically mentioned: sexual desire and drunkenness. Of course, it is not the invention of Protestantism to see sexual desire as the paradigmatic evidence for the hopelessly sinful nature of human beings. It has indeed often been identified with the original sin throughout the history of Christianity, probably because its intimacy and utterly involuntary nature give it a demonic dimension. However, the author offers no explanation why he specifically mentions sexual desire as the most powerful signifier of

the sinful human nature. He probably relies on the pop-psychological commonplace that sexual drive is one of the most tenacious instincts besides hunger. Anyhow he simply mentions it. In contrast, the choice of drunkenness strikes rather unusual. In the three-beat salvation theology, it is not explicitly related to labor discipline for factory work as in the primitive Methodism. Probably it is chosen to address the problem of domestic violence by drunken husbands, which women, the major constituency of the YFGC, frequently have suffered from. However, the items such as diligence, endurance, self-sacrificing, thrift, honesty, time-keeping, etc., which are closely related to work discipline, are not mentioned at all. Moreover, the theology of the three-beat salvation does not recommend poverty, suffering, and self-renunciation for their own sakes as the Christian virtues. Instead it underscores that Christians are not only allowed but also ought to overcome such miseries and enjoy happiness in this life, not to mention in the afterlife. This crucial turn to the ethics of inner-worldly hedonism seems to require the three-beat salvation theology to limit the moral renunciation of body to a nominal level. It also leaves other sins vague and general. The testimonies in the Protestant revival meetings, as well as the Catholic confessions have been typically preoccupied with the detailed enumeration of obscene bodily passions.(Cf. Thompson 366; Foucault 1990 : 17-73) No parallel can be found in the YFGC. The brevity in dealing with the bodily passions is even more striking when one compares it with the copious, pseudo-scientific instruction about how to do fasting prayer in order to overcome sexual drive: "Hunger is the most basic need for a human being. The other needs can be either ignored or satisfied later. But the satisfaction of hunger cannot be deferred, hence the Korean proverb that no one, after starving for three days, cannot but turn into a burglar. Therefore if you abstain

yourself from food and pray to the Lord, you could destroy the demonic power intruding by means of bodily passions and eliminate those passions themselves. This is why the lay Christians, as well as the servants of the Lord must do fasting prayer.”(TBS 97-98) Indeed, fasting prayer characterizes the religious practice of the YFGC, along with tongue prayer and mid-night prayer. These three distinctive ways of prayer constitute what Rev. Choi, Ja-shil calls “the three-beat prayer,” following the ingenious rubric, “the three-beat salvation.”(Cf. Choi, Ja-shil 456) In the three unusual modes of prayer, Chung, Chin-hong observes a far more intensified interest in the sacred, distancing from the profane, as the choice of mid-night for the time for prayer, of “tongue” for the language of prayer, of fasting for the method of withdrawing from everyday reality, along with the choice of the Prayer Mountain for the place indicates.(Ryu, Tong-sik et al. 126) But it should be noted that these unusual modes of prayer are practiced as a pragmatic magic at the YFGC, that is, a practical method of exorcising the demonic powers or of mobilizing a certain supernatural power to achieve the clearly defined goals such as cure from a disease, financial success, promotion, etc. which are rather mundane. In addition, it should be noted that the explanation of fasting as the most effective method of eliminating sexual drive and other bodily passions is rather physiological than theological or ethical. The YFGC’s notion of fasting differs from that of Judaism as a ritual of collective repentance for communal disasters, or from that of some Asian religions as a meditative practice in some to purify and rejuvenate mind and body. However, it needs to be reminded that the YFGC’s view of fasting and prayer as the way of releasing the divine power to exorcise demonic powers is not without the support from the biblical tradition, even though it is the one that most biblical scholars suspect to be secondary:

“This kind can not be driven out by anything but prayer (and fasting).”(Mark 9:29. The most authoritative English versions omit the reference to fasting, regarding it as a secondary addition. Cf. Revised Standard Version, New English Version, New American Version, etc.) The theological question whether the YFGC’s position is biblical or not may interest theologians and professional ministers. But a more important question for a sociologist would be what is the socio-cultural implication of the fact that the YFGC and the other Pentecostal movements choose it as the *locus classicus* for their belief and practice, particularly in the midst of the enlightened world, and adopt it to “solve” a variety of real-life problems.

The chapter on spiritual well-being ends with a surprising optimism, after going through the bloody process of mind-braking and body-killing. It is declared:

Thus, those who achieve spiritual well-being share a king’s power with Jesus Christ... We are kings. As kings, we can exorcise demons, the authority of the airy world, which has enslaved us in the past. We have the authority to throw them away. We can do it in the name of Jesus. In the name of Jesus we can do wonderful things... Now you are not ordinary people. You belong to the heavenly Kingdom. You are the children of God, who have eternal life. Therefore demons shall desperately run away at our command.(TBS 102)

All these rhetoric would sound familiar to the ears of most Christians. But with the the accustomed rhetoric, the author of *Three-Beat Salvation* means more than it has traditionally meant. He means that the kingship of believers needs not remain in the spiritual realm only. The kingship must be objectively materialized here and now so that people can recognize it with no doubt. Thus, Rev. Cho, Yong-gi goes on to say:

Now then, brothers and sisters, if you are a king, don’t you need kingly dignity, wealth and authority? If you present yourselves lowly, poor, ill, and weak to your subjects, none of them would recognize you as a king.(TBS 103)

The eschatological vision of believers’ kingship in the Kingdom of God, which might

have helped the earliest Christians endure the hardship of the time, suddenly turns into the curious demand to demonstrate your kingship with the tangible signs such as wealth, health, authority, and power you are enjoying in the present world. What has been commissioned to the final judgment of God becomes a matter of recognition by the people, “your subjects.” Also interesting is the underling idea that being a king is not enough by itself to have dignity, wealth, and authority in their own kinds and a true believer, even though he is already a king, must stage his kingship visibly to satisfy the gaze of his “subjects,” in other words, according to the subordinated people’s ideal of dignity, wealth, and authority. Thus, the theology of the three beat salvation erases the radical conflict between the Christian ideal and the secular ideal of dignity, wealth, and authority, which has traditionally given Christianity a critical edge. As a believer-king, in effect, subordinates himself to his subordinated, Christianity does so to the worldly ideals of modern capitalist society - wealth, health, and power. The king is qualitatively indistinguishable from his subjects precisely because their difference lies in quantity as the equal *homo economicus*. The determining characteristic of Pentecostalism in general lies in the short-circuit of the end-time and the present time, of the transcendent and the immanent, of the world beyond and this world, and the figurative and the literal. But while the short-circuit in the classical Pentecostalism was geared to radical withdrawal from the order of the world, the short circuit in the three-beat salvation theology is geared to the exactly opposite, that is, radical incorporation into the current social order.

The following two chapters of *Three-Beat Salvation* are devoted to the discussion on the methods how to practically attain dignity, wealth, and authority. Before analyzing the chapters on the second and third beats of the three-beat salvation, however, the

sudden turn from the initial ascetic renunciation of the illicit passions of sight, flesh, and the worldly pride to hedonism, the unashamed acceptance of the worldly values, deserves a theoretical reflection. At the first sight, it appears a sheer self-contradiction, which professional theologians tend to think an evidence of theological sloppiness and, thus, the sufficient reason to ignore. Moreover the scattered and truncated references to the traditional Protestant ethics which are either too obvious or too general as a rule, almost look like a rhetoric device to maintain the appearance of Christianity. The frequent citations of the select bible passages also contribute to the same purpose, although only with the help of the typical outrageous exegetical excess. But there seems to be rationality at the deeper level of the unconscious. The “braking of mind” amounts, psychoanalytically speaking, to the elimination of the ego’s role, the rational mediation of the reality principle and the pleasure principle. The bloody order of the psyche points to the price one must pay for the so-called “socialization.” The waning of the traditional Protestant ethics amounts to the receding of the ego-ideal. The desperate expectation of miraculous problem-solving implies the wide spread feeling of helplessness, the impossibility for an individual to live her own life by rational judgement and decision. Those helpless individuals now oscillate between the two extremes: blind submission to the given order and imaginary feeling of narcissistic omnipotence. The libidinal economy behind this double movement is no other than the short circuit of the Superego and the id, or to borrow the infamous expression from Marcuse, “repressive desublimation.”(Marcuse 1955: ix) In this new libidinal economy, the Superego does not appear as the agency of prohibition but as the liberator of the unconscious fantasies, while societal oppression finally reaches the very realm of the unconscious. The

theology of the three-beat salvation in its uncanny combination of ascetic renunciation and hedonistic celebration comes near to the ethos of the consumer capitalism, or the “post-modern” society, where the Superego injunction is “Enjoy!”(Zizek 1995: 20) This observation partly accounts for the persistent appeal of the YFGC’s beliefs and practices in South Korea and other parts of the (post-)modern world.

Chapter V

Money

Material Well-being or Thwarted Utopia

It would be controversial for a minister to openly recognize the aggressive pursue of fortune as a Christian virtue and privilege. That is precisely what Rev. Cho, Yong-gi did with the publication of *Three-Beat Salvation* for the first time in the history of the Korean Christianity. Many Christian pastors in the oral tradition of revivalism had already played upon the popular pragmatic religiosity seeking the worldly goods such as wealth, health, and success, etc. The publication of the gospel of financial success predictably invoked severe criticism on the part of the mainliners. But the controversy itself, combined with the remarkable growth of the YFGC, ironically contributed to the dissemination of the gospel. What is new in Rev. Cho, Yong-gi's gospel of financial success lies not so much in the theological legitimization of material concern as in the sophistication of the psycho-religious technique to get rich and powerful.

The chapter on the well-being of "all" in *Three-Beat Salvation* mainly deals with the practical method to miraculously attain a financial success. In the beginning pages, Rev. Cho, Yong-gi argues, "it is not correct for a Christian to remain in a situation in which everything goes wrong and to live in poverty, lest it is a God's special plan."(TBS 107) To live a humble life like Mother Theresa's is recognized but set aside as an exception rather than a norm of Christian life. The ideal Christian life is, according to the three-beat salvation theology, to prosper and succeed in everything. With this idea, the author of *Three-Beat Salvation* challenges the mainline churches:

Korean churches, however, hold a very ambiguous view on the matter of the well-being of all. Even preachers, the servants of the Lord, do not make it clear.

Some maintain it is a Christian virtue to suffer everything and be patient even in a painful situation. It is beyond doubt that Korean churches strongly recommend suffering.(TBS 108)

He also points out what he sees as the self-contradiction of Korean churches, i.e., that they emphasize offering for mission while discouraging active concern for prosperity:

As Korean churches have demonized material concern as the hotbed of sins, Phony religions have proliferated and misled pious people to such nonsensical teachings how to receive blessing. It is, of course, true that many servants of the Lord pray for God's blessing and material affluence. But they do not openly teach their congregation why we have to receive blessing and to do well in everything, and therefore the believers are not sure about the matter.(TBS 108-109)

Here Rev. Cho, Yong-gi explicitly states his intention to open up what some pastors have been clandestinely doing. Although the integrity in his theological conviction needs not be doubted, the enormous success of the YFGC seems to have boosted his confidence about the gospel of prosperity.

As usual he supports his gospel of financial success with an imaginative biblical interpretation, in which the exegetical excess is a rule. God's creation in its original state is interpreted to be "a world where everything goes well," in particular, a place where God provides the necessities – cloths, foods, and shelters – with no shortage.(TBS 113) It is a variation of the utopian reading of the myth of Eden, which is by no means uncommon in the history of Christianity. A variety of utopian dreams such as blissful innocence, equality, ecological equilibrium, or affluence have been projected to the world before the Fall. Rev. Cho, Yong-gi's version projects the dream of the poverty-stricken Koreans, including himself, who were literally restituted in wars and dictatorship. His biblical reading touches upon one of the most urgent needs among the majority of Koreans at the time. But also the interpretation reduces utopia to the

provision of the necessities. It shows Rev. Cho's peculiar capacity to get in touch with and respond to the widespread sentiment among the people with considerable freedom from dogmatic constraint. But it also shows his incapacity to go beyond their naive consciousness. In this inability and unwillingness to rise up above the immediately given, he is indeed one with his audience, the mass, into which South Korea's war regime has deformed most individuals.

From the creation narrative in the Bible, he draws an ingenious idea that human beings are inseparably interconnected with the material world from the beginning:

The relationship between the material world and human beings is like that between blood and life. Human beings cannot survive without the material world just like life cannot be maintained without blood. Once you were born as a human being, you cannot escape from economy. Because it is the material world where you can get foods, cloths, and shelters, and it is also the material world where you have to work.(TBS 113)

This statement almost sounds like a materialist manifesto. Especially the analogy of the relationship of blood and life might have been developed into something similar to dialectical materialist view on the interaction between the objective material world and human subjects. But the instrumental view on the material world, "economy," and "blood" cuts off the radiance of the analogy. In the instrumental relationship between the world and human beings, the traditional dualism of the material and the spiritual remains intact, thus, discrediting again the YFGC's claim to be a "holistic" religiosity. However, the three-beat salvation theology is indeed a challenge to the traditional Christian theology insofar as the latter tends to denounce the concern for prosperity, at least officially. Interestingly, around the same period, the radical theologies - the liberation theology, the black theology, the feminist theology, and the third-world theology as well as the materialist readings of the Bible - try to reintroduce materiality

into the heart of theological discourses. From the notion of the fundamental dependence of human life on the material world, on which the radical theologies would fully agree, however, the author of *Three-Beat Salvation* moves on to the opposite direction. He calls for what he sees the correct Christian understanding of the material world:

God obviously created this material world for us. He made it abundant so that we do not need sweating under the curse because of material difficulties. He wants our lives to be prosperous and affluent and well in everything, thanks to the material world. The material world, thus, fundamentally does not belong to Satan.(TBS 113)

He depicts the material world as given in the final form of products ready for immediate consumption. Omitted in Rev. Cho's theology of prosperity is reflection on the process of production from what is given as raw materials to final products through labor something that can satisfy a human need. God created a world of bountiful consumer goods, as it were, and believers do not have to "sweat." The author of *Three-Beat Salvation* plays upon the double meaning of "sweating." The poor are "sweating" in the sense that they are living in poverty and condemned to backbreaking labor to earn a living. The image of an affluent living in the three-beat salvation theology is, then, to live in a condition in which one can live well without laboring. To this image of a living with no toiling corresponds the image of the world filled with consumer products ready for immediate consumption and the presumably inexhaustible opportunity of fortune. In this utopia of the three-beat salvation theology, the key to such an affluent life lies in the miraculous intervention of the good God. It is immediately clear how far this version of modern Pentecostalism is from the traditional Protestant ethics of hard work and abstinence from the worldly pleasure. If the latter corresponds to the spirit of industrial capitalism, the former to the spirit of speculative financial capitalism, which has been one

of the prominent historical features of the state-led capitalist development in South Korea since 1960.

The wishful image of the modern Korean Pentecostals' utopia is the mirror image of the poverty-stricken reality to which the majority of people have been condemned in the midst of the unheard-of economic boom. Even though it looks like a fancy, it is a fancy firmly grounded in those people's lived experience. Only the groundedness of the wishful image in the real world accounts for the irresistible fascination of the three-beat salvation theology over such great a number of people. The image of an affluent living without toil that the YFGC's theology makes into a practically attainable goal through the divine intervention becomes the cause-object of desire for the Pentecostal subjects.

To designate the cause-object of the Pentecostal desire as an utopia may be misleading inasmuch as it surreptitiously reduces the idea of the material *world* to the idea of an affluent living of an isolated individual or an individual household, i.e., of a monad. The idea of a community with no shortage of the necessities, which the word "world" implies, is thwarted into the idea of the private enclave of the affluent in the midst of general poverty. The world itself becomes nothing more than an instrument for the well-being of an isolated individual. It makes a stark contrast to the liberation theologies, in which the reinsertion of the material world into theology develops into a critical reflection on the structural contradictions of the modern society, guided by the the principle of hope.

The author of *Three-Beat Salvation* shrewdly recognizes the widespread sense of universal suffering and corruption in today's world, in which "all human beings are sweating under the curse and groaning because everything goes wrong."(TBS 113) He

attributes this lamentable situation of the present world to the humans' disobedience to God and their subsequent enslavement to Satan.(TBS 114) He then claims:

Thus, it is not sufficient to explain the present state of our material life by economic trends or social circumstances. We, Christians, need to examine first whether anything goes wrong in the relationship between God and us. Yahweh is the God who never betrays us, and the God called "*Yahweh Jireh*," which means the Lord will provide for us.(TBS 114)

The author obviously does not intend to specifically discuss the limits of the current economic theories and social theories, although social sciences are notoriously incapable of explaining social process. The insufficiency of social sciences that he mentions in rather a generic manner refers to something far more specific, that is, the incongruence between the purpose of social sciences to understand the dynamics of social process and an individual's goal to be rich. For an individual, who concerns himself solely with making a fortune, economics and social sciences are too general to pinpoint to whom volatile capitalist market will bring the financial fortune. The very unpredictability of capitalist market's specific influence on an specific individual makes the sudden logical leap from economy to the theology of prosperity look sensible, particularly to those preoccupied with making a fortune. This is the breeding ground of a variety of the resuscitated occultism which claim to be able to predict or control, through the intervention of the supernatural, a fortune and happiness to the very desperate victims of the social processes that become incomprehensible and uncontrollable to them.

"Tithing as a Turn of Faucet" or Faith as Instrument

The YFGC takes today's general sufferings throughout the world as "problems." Its religious practice aims at problem-solving. By "problems" it means various items of difficulty which are isolated from social context and thus to be tackled solely at the

individual level. In the YFGC's sermons and prayers, one hear almost always the same standardized list of the "problems": business problem, job problem, children problem, marital problem, school problem, and health problem. The problem-solving approach shows the YFGC's pragmatic bent. It also implies its structural-functional outlook of society, which tends to see problems in various elements of malfunction or dysfunction within a presumably harmonious society but never puts the society as a whole in question. The traditional Protestantism saw the world in its entirety "sinful," thus leaving intact the irreconcilable tension between the present world order and the Kingdom of God. The use of the term "problems" in religious discourse signifies a new historical era in which Christianity starts to understand itself positively as a part of the totally administered life in modern society, along with schools, mass-media, clinics, welfare system, social work, and charity organizations.

In contrast to the secular institutions of social administration, however, the three-beat salvation theology attributes the origin of the problems to human beings' disobedience to God's will, as seen above. The problems are taken to be God's curse upon those who violate His sovereign will. Following the Korean revivalist tradition, Rev. Cho, Yong-gi claims that God's sovereignty is embodied in taboos. He finds its prototype in the first prohibition in the Garden of Eden: "You shall not eat from the Tree of Life or you shall die!" Even after humans violated the first taboo and acquired Knowledge, Rev. Cho says, the taboo still remains in different forms to test our unconditional obedience to the divine will:

Then you would think: "The Tree of Life was in the Garden of Eden. But where is it in the modern world?" But today we can see even more clearly with our eyes the Tree of Life, which symbolizes God's sovereignty.(TBS 148)

The sovereignty of the good God is paradoxically embodied in his totalitarian injunction: “When God demanded not to eat the fruit from the Tree, He did not explain the reason. An authority owes no explanation. To Him there is only decree or demand.”(TBS 115) Rational argument about the totalitarian injunction, pejoratively called “theory-making,” is, thus, regarded as a Satanic conspiracy.(TBS 117) This leads to “humanism,” human-centeredness, of which Pentecostalism typically accuses the modern world. All evils originate from the human-centered civilization that “has conquered the God-centered world” and “exalted the mortals to the equal of God,” and allowed them to “argue with God about good and evil.”(TBS 118) The traditional theological idea of the divine mystery turns into the totalitarian notion of an unquestionable law which requires only blind submission. God’s sovereignty is thought to dwell not in the abyss of his freedom beyond visibility, but in the impenetrable solidity of the positive laws. The infinite is, thus, seized in the iron cage of the finite, which claims in its turn the authority of the infinite. God comes to resemble a totalitarian leader.

According to Rev. Cho, Yong-gi, God’s sovereignty is embodied in the two positive, hence finite, institutions that belong to the two distinguishable domains respectively. In the spiritual domain, it is embodied in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity such as the virgin birth of Christ, his substitutionary atonement of human sin, his bodily resurrection from the dead, his literal and immanent second coming in glory, and the inspiration and authority of Scripture as the only infallible rule of faith and conduct. In the material world, God’s sovereignty is said to be embodied in the law of a full tithe.(TBS 149) This convenient distinction of the material and the spiritual domains shows again that the YFGC’s re-direction of theological concern to the material

world is by no means an attempt to overcome the traditional dualism. The material world is mathematically added to the spiritual one, leaving the distinction itself and their compartmentalized substances intact. It makes the YFGC's claim to a "holistic" Christianity look more of a propaganda, which it essentially is.

To receive divine blessing, according to the three-beat salvation theology, one has to unquestioningly comply with the two absolute requirements: to accept the fundamental doctrines and to practice full tithing. It is symptomatic that Rev. Cho, Yong-gi pays much greater attention to the symbol of God's sovereignty in the material domain than the one in the spiritual domain. He spends over fifteen pages to elaborate the significance and method of correct tithing.(TBS 150-166), while allowing only one page for the acceptance of the fundamental doctrines.(TBS 149-150). Why does Rev. Cho, Yong-gi lay much heavier emphasis on the practice of tithing than on the doctrinal matters? Insofar as Korean Christianity has largely been fundamentalist in its official theological orientation, the importance of the fundamental doctrines may not need a detailed discussion. On the other hand, the practice of tithing needs to be greatly emphasized in a situation where Christianity is not a state religion like the Lutheran Church in Germany, for example, and a local congregation has to take the sole responsibility for its own financial support. But to make the practice of tithing a requirement for every Christian has two difficulties, theological and practical: Theologically, both the Jewish and Christian traditions of tithing are by no means univocal.(Cf. J. Christian Wilson 578-580); practically the requirement of full tithing possibly repel the prospective converts by adding an extra burden to the poverty-stricken people. Some more daring pastors, particularly the revivalists, introduce rather a magical

notion of tithe as the prerequisite of material prosperity, encouraged by a magical reading of their favorite scripture quote (Malachi 3:6-12), in which the prophet Malachi accuses the Israelites of robbing their Lord by not bringing their full tithes in the temple storehouse in Jerusalem and insists that full tithes would release God's overflowing blessing upon them. It might be rather difficult for a lay Christian as well as a Fundamentalist minister, to see the hermeneutic problems in such a magical interpretation, which thoroughly ignores the socio-historical contexts of the prophetic oracle in question. However, it would not take a sophisticated theological training to see how the scripture passage is rather isolated and secondary when compared to the much more substantial biblical references to the practice of tithe. (For instance, the chapters 12, 14, and 26 of the Book of Deuteronomy describe the communitarian function of tithe in the ancient Israelite society, an ancient version of social security, to support the landless such as priests, the Levites, sojourners, orphans, and widows.) The magical notion of tithe as the prerequisite of material blessing, however, has had a quite considerable following among the revivalists and local pastors, before Rev. Cho Yong-gi picks it up and incorporates it into his three-beat salvation theology, adding an articulate argument.

The argument for an absolute injunction runs inevitably circular. Rev. Cho, Yong-gi simply declares tithe to be the symbol of God's sovereignty in the material domain. And then he argues that one can know it is so because there are the "Satanic temptations," that is, the counter-arguments against tithing such as: "Tithing is a Jewish tradition already surpassed by Christianity," or "I will offer a double tithe when I get rich," etc. (TBS 152) The argument for the dogmatic claim is based on another dogma that Satan encourages human beings to question and disobey the divine imperative.

Thus, he says: “As we see Satan so desperately trying to keep us from tithing, we can see more clearly that it [tithing] represents the sovereignty of God.”(Ibid.) It is an astonishingly crude circular logic. But what interests us is not the logical crudeness but the libidinal economy in this nonsensical circular logic. It is not only the divine injunction that appears alien to human understanding. The very being of the divine consists in its absolute remoteness from humanity. In other words, God proves him to be truly God inasmuch as He takes an attitude of absolute indifference toward human situations. The notion of God points to the Lacanian concept of the superego: The superego “is a Law insofar as it is not integrated into the subject’s symbolic universe, insofar as it functions as an incomprehensible, nonsensical, traumatic injunction, incommensurable with the psychological wealth of the subject’s affective attitudes, bearing witness to a kind of ‘malevolent neutrality’ directed toward the subject, indifferent to his empathies and fears. At this precise point, as the subject confronts the ‘agency of the letter’ in its original and radical *exteriority*, the signifier’s nonsense at its purest, he encounters the superego command ‘Enjoy!’ which addresses the most *intimate* kernel of his being.”(Zizek 1995: 20. Original italics) It is precisely this radical exteriority and intimacy that defines the good God of the three-beat salvation theology who asks us something incomprehensible and allows us to enjoy it. And in this short circuit of the superego and the id at the price of the ego, the modern Pentecostalism of South Korea mirrors the general social tendency toward total administration in which living individuals are deprived of their psychological wealth. Hence, its surprising popularity.

The “malevolent neutrality” toward the subject in the notion of the good God is

also that of instrumentality. It is, thus, no surprise that the three-beat salvation theology can combine authoritarianism with pragmatism. The “agency of the letter,” obvious in the literal reading of the scripture, indicates nothing other than the final eclipse of religious symbol. The three-beat salvation theology discovers the secondary use of the once lofty religious figures now denuded of their symbolic force in the magic-technology to bring in divine blessing at will:

If Lord’s Supper can be compared to a water pipe, then, tithing to a faucet. Those who do not believe in Jesus and take his Body and Blood are like those who try to drink tap water without a water pipe. But if those who believe in Jesus as their Savior and take his Body and Blood as the food for life offer a tithe as the sign of recognition of and obedience to God’s sovereignty, divine blessing will overflow because the water pipe is connected to the source of water and the faucet turned on.(TBS 159)

This analogy is intended to underline that to receive material blessing requires both the doctrinal recognition of Jesus Christ and the practice of tithing. The emphasis is, of course, laid on tithing, which is compared to the final and simple step like a turn of faucet, to the divine blessing of a financial success. More significant in this analogy is, however, the fact that the religious doctrine, ritual, and practice are compared to the utility system, suggesting that they are not important on their own, but meaningful only for an external purpose. Here it is to secure material prosperity. The YFGC’s pragmatism applies to all ideologies from anti-communism, economic growth, the notorious Korean-style democracy to Christianity itself. It presupposes cynical distancing to the truth value of the ideological contents because what truly matters in the ideologies are not their intrinsic meaning but their effectiveness in achieving the external given ends. Cynical distancing toward any ideological content appears contradictory to the other requirement of the blind acceptance of any doctrine. But both

the seemingly opposing positions are possible only in the era of post-ideology in which any ideology stops being a living, evolving tradition and is stultified into a ready-made, finalized entity. Christian Fundamentalists engage in debate only to eliminate the breathing space for rational debate. Pentecostals feel no need of debate precisely because the immediacy of spiritual experience finally closes the open space. Stultified doctrines lives on stultified spirit. Blind acceptance does not differ from indifference. A fanatic and a cynic converge in the modern Pentecostalism of Korea. It is, then, only natural that the literal Christians are so preoccupied with the “effects” of their faith, as if their faith had no intrinsic value. It may even be said that Christian Fundamentalism finds its historical truth in the modern Pentecostalism, religion industry, just as the art for art’s sake finds its truth in the “postmodern” cultural products or culture industry. Or the modern Pentecostalism salvages Christianity from its bankruptcy by appreciating its instrumental value as a spiritual booster.

“The Laws of Material Blessing” or Applied Religion

The pragmatic view of religion in the three-beat salvation theology is not confined to the notions such as God as a gear and tithing as a faucet. Its author also describes the praxis of faith as “the application of laws,” sounding like an applied sciences. He elaborates “the laws of material blessing”(TBS 164), that is, “the law of planting and harvesting”(Ibid.), “the law of investment”(TBS 166), and “the law of echo”(TBS 169). In these expressions, the word “law” is used in a scientific sense rather than the usual religio-ethical sense as in Moses’ “laws.” These laws are not so much to abide by as to be put into an external use:

...when God wants to give us the blessing of prosperity, we need to use the laws of material blessing on our part.(TBS 164)

But when you start a new business with a special plan, you have to use these laws in order to receive God's blessing.(Ibid.)

When we start a new business, led by the Holy Spirit of God, we can use our faith according to the law of planting and harvesting.(Ibid.)

There are many people in the Bible who received blessing by using the law of investment.(TBS 167)

There are so many people in our generation who succeed by applying this law.(TBS 170)

The use of the unlikely term “effects” in a theological discourse turns out to be very appropriate to the instrumental concept of faith:

When you plant the seed of faith, you have to do so willingly to see its effects. If you do it unwillingly, it would bring about no effects.(TBS 165)

In the above quote, the author uses the term “effects” instead of the term “fruits” which would better correspond to the analogy of planting the seed of faith.

The curious choice of the terms from modern science such as “laws,” “the application of law,” and “effects” appears at the first glance to be a sheer contradiction to the notion of the absolute sovereignty of God. As seen above, however, the sovereignty of God in the three-beat salvation theology means not His transcendence beyond all that is positively given here and now, but the impenetrability of the positively given institutions, thus, binding the infinite to the finite. On the other hand, the so-called “laws” of material blessing are far from those testable by the rigorous scientific procedures. The “laws” in the three-beat salvation theology are, so to speak, the laws of the supernatural realm. The so-called laws of material blessing make an unlikely causal connection between the supernatural and the socioeconomic in a pseudo-scientific

manner, just like astrology links the two unrelated spheres, the movement of stars and the course of human life in the same pseudo-scientific manner. Astrology is, on the one hand, an attempt to bridge the two unrelated spheres at one stroke.(Adorno 1994 : 118) On the other hand, the void between the two allows such a pseudo-science. It is the “very unrelatedness, the irrationality in the relations between astronomy and psychology, for which there is no common denominator, no ‘rationale,’ which affords astronomy with the semblance of justification in its pretense to be mysterious, irrational knowledge itself.” (TBS 165) In astrology, impenetrability of society is projected to the balls of dust which are utterly indifferent and alien to human life but believed to steer its course day to day. In the laws of material blessing, incomprehensibility of socioeconomic process is projected to the supernatural which stands utterly indifferent and alien to human understanding but believed to release its enormous power for the benefits of believers according to the unconcealed laws. In this way, as the social ascends onto the realm of the transcendental mystery, the divine conversely descends to the realm of pseudo-technology. The “laws of material blessing,” that is, the laws which govern the divine intervention or miracle, is obviously an oxymoron. Precisely in the confusion of category, however, the impossible concept registers the two related aspects of modern society: incomprehensibility and thing-like nature. It is also a desperate effort on the part of the bewildered individuals to predict the unpredictable and to control the uncontrollable even in a mere wishful fantasy.

“Investment in God’s Business” or the Spirit of Speculative Capitalism

The main thrust of the so-called laws of material blessing is that a more generous offering than an ordinary tithe brings about a greater blessing. Thus, the author of *Three-*

Beat Salvation exerts a considerable effort to distinguish the two different levels of material blessing. He depreciates the significance of tithing immediately after underscoring, as seen above, the importance of tithing as the easy final step into the miracle of material blessing:

We do not offer a tithe to receive a blessing. We have to offer a tithe to express our recognition of and obedience to God's sovereignty. It is, of course, true that when we recognize God's sovereignty by tithing, God will make our land beautiful and bless its fruits. But when you start a new business with a special plan, you have to use these laws in order to receive God's blessing.(TBS 164)

In other words, tithing secures an ordinary material blessing, but you need to offer more than a tithe for an extraordinary fortune. Astonishingly, all of the three laws of material blessing - "the law of planting and harvesting," "the law of investment," and "the law of echo" - assume a sort of causal relationship between offering and its material reward. In a nutshell, the three laws mean the same thing: "The more you offer the more you prosper." Offering is regarded not as donation for a valuable cause or charity for the needy but as investment in the overt expectation of a dear return, which offering should yield according to the exotic "laws." Offering is, thus, compared to the economic activities such as sowing and investment that return more than the initial endowment, or to the natural phenomenon of echo that returns a sound to its source. In terms of content, the three "laws" are not different at all. They are rather three different analogies of the presumed causal relation between offering and its miraculous return in the form of financial success. In contrast to the analogies themselves, in which the cause (the initial endowment) and the effect (the return) are on the same ontological domain of the material, the presumed causal chain between offering and its material reward is, according to the three-beat salvation theology, mediated by the divine. While

both the cause and the effect remain in this mundane world, the real thing, i.e., the mysterious process of transformation from the former to the latter, happens in the world beyond human perception and understanding. On the other hand, however, the “laws” present the transcendental realm as if it were caught in a causal network which is known and ready to be applied by the mortals for their interests. In its impulse to control natural and social forces through the manipulation of the supernatural, the laws of material blessing come close to magic than religion.

These analogies are supported, as usual, by the biblical quotations about God’s promised rewards to those who offer their possession to help the needy (II Corinthians 9:6-10; Philippians 4:15-19; Luke 6:38), but only with typical exegetical excess. Rev. Cho, Yong-gi’s (ab)use of the biblical texts makes an act of kindness into an act of entrepreneurial investment with a huge guaranteed return. As religio-ethical duty turns into business, business into magic. For some, of course, this practice might appear as an unashamed religious trickery. It has been, however, the inexhaustible source of fascination to so many people to whom the movement of modern capitalist society, which affects deeply their daily lives, appears incomprehensible and uncontrollable. Like ancient people desperately relied upon magic to face the whims of the nature, modern mass compulsively rely on the second-handed magic to cope with the whims of society. Priests become sorcerers and the Bible a book of magic formula again in the modern world. Faith has to demonstrate its truthfulness only by its effects in achieving the practical goals. Truth comes to mean effectiveness in the religious sphere, too, as in the other spheres of culture. To the fascinated gaze, the remarkable expansion of the YFGC stands as the irrefutable evidence to demonstrate the efficacy of the magic formula.

The so-called “law of echo” plays upon the obscure meaning of “giving.” At first, giving is presented as an offering to God: “God did not promise to return just as much as we gave. He promised to return into your lap good measure, pressed down as if the good measure were not enough, shaken together to contain a larger amount, and running over again.”(TBS 170) Here Rev. Cho, Yong-gi cites Luke 6:38, the wisdom saying that, by generously giving to the needy, one will get from them more than what you give them. But his citation in this context makes it into an entrepreneur’s calculation on the increased yield from the offering to God, that is, to the church. And then he recommends: “Under the guidance of God, do not give sparingly.”(Ibid.), citing another biblical text obviously from the Apostle Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians, where the apostle asks the Corinthians to help other churches in need with their generous offering.(Cf. II Corinthians chap. 9) But here again the biblical passage is taken out of its context and put in an utterly different context to distort the occasional offering request with a specific purpose into an exotic formula to bring in a great fortune. By leaving obscure to whom, what, and why they are supposed to give, the different meanings of “giving” – an offering to God, a donation to the church, a gift of charity, and an investment for a profit – are indiscriminately confused. Such confusion is particularly enticing because it helps Pentecostals elude their real egoistic motive by creating a vague impression that what they try to do is “legitimate” religiously and ethically. This confusion is reinforced by the naïve belief that whatever a church does is not only what God wants to do it but also what society at large recognizes as good.

At this point in the same paragraph, the author of *Three-Beat Salvation* abruptly moves from giving as offering to a different kind of giving. Again he alludes a biblical

passage: “Brothers and sisters, give your life to your neighbors.”(Ibid.) This social ethics of self-sacrifice for one’s community, however, is given a brand new meaning, according to which “giving one’s life” means not self-sacrifice but the principle of a successful business. The “law of echo” means nothing other than the drawn-out capitalist myth that one can be a millionaire by using one’s own money for the benefit of others. “Giving” is said to be the only and the best way of taking:

To enjoy God’s blessing, therefore, we have to quit the egoistic way of life. If we use our own money in the way that benefits and blesses others, then, we will be given back 30 times, 60 times, or 100 times blessing like echo. We can possess nothing in the world. But when I benefit others with what I have now, it will come back to me. This is the law of echo.(TBS 171)

Rev. Cho, Yong-gi illustrates this point with the popular American success stories:

Carnegie became a billionaire by creating jobs for so many people and letting them have their savings accounts; Ford by providing automobiles affordable to everyone.(TBS 170-171) Both billionaires are said to have known and used the law of echo. These illustrations assume no magical intervention of the supernatural in the socioeconomic sphere. Rather they capture an aspect of capitalist economy, if in a crude manner: A capitalist needs to invest his money, transform it into commodity, and circulate it in market in order to finally get it back in the form of money with an increased value. It may be seen as a version of Marx’s formula of capitalist reproduction, M-C-M. But the success stories (mis)represent the compulsory nature of capitalist expanded reproduction and its inherent class antagonism as a mutually beneficial process in a more or less harmonious society. As a capitalist’s investment is represented as a moral act of altruistic giving, the act of altruistic giving is made into an entrepreneurial activity seeking the maximum profit in the guise of the divine blessing.

As already noted above, a peculiar feature of Rev. Cho, Yong-gi's linguistic practice is to intermingle, confuse, and obscure. On the one hand, the terms from the secular business world such as "investment" or "profit" are used to describe religious practices. On the other hand, the terms from the religious sphere such as "blessing" or "giving" are used to express the mundane business activity. In this way, the religious sphere is fused with the business sphere. The most striking example is found in the use of the Korean word "*sah-up*," which means any kind of human activity or work and, thus, can be used for both religious and commercial activities. It is not unusual to use the word to designate Christian mission, as often dubbed as "the *sah-up* of God." In the common usage, however, "the *sah-up* of God" never connotes the profit motive of the activity in question. It simply means what Christians believe God has commissioned to them to do, in other words, their mission. And it would be obvious to any Christian that the ultimate goal of God's mission is not profit-making. But the author of *Three-Beat Salvation* twists, by the typical method of intentional obscuring and boundary-crossing, the common sense of "the *sah-up* of God" in the way that it means a business in the sense of profit-making activity. On the one hand, however, he carefully refrains himself from identifying God's business itself with profit-making activity, leaving its meaning obscure and thus allowing the audience to take it as they want. On the other hand, he explicitly describes "God's business" as a lucrative investment, in which God guarantees an extraordinary profit beyond imagination to the investors. What he means by this remains obscure. It could mean that one's generous offering to the church's missionary activity guarantees an unimaginable success in his secular business through a mysterious causality. Or it could mean that the church's missionary activity itself actually makes an

extraordinarily lucrative business as abundantly proven by some mega-churches. But the enormous “success” of the church itself helps discern this intentionally obscure expression’s objective meaning. Religion industry proves to be a very lucrative business. The latter meaning unfolds in reality, while the former meaning simmers in the fantasy of Pentecostals. The objective realization of the latter meaning depends on the subjective idealization of the former meaning. In other words, the secret of the YFGC’s “success” lies in the rational calculation and conscious manipulation of the phantasmagoric desire among the mass for its own religious business through the trick of confusing and obscuring. In this capacity, modern Pentecostalism becomes part of culture industry.

It is also striking that the so-called laws of material blessing omit the Protestant ethics, which provided the much awaited solution to the perennial problem of habituating workers into the factory system.(Thomson 353-362) If the moment of production is crucial as in industrial capitalism, the main importance would fall on the problem of work discipline, be it religious or scientific. It is precisely the moment of production that the so-called laws of material blessing ignore, probably unknowingly. In the economic universe that the “laws” tacitly assume, an investment (offering) is supposed to yield a profit (the material blessing) in a miraculous way without the mediation of production and circulation. In this universe, thus, rational management of natural and human resources has no place. The expectation of miracle replaces the methodical, scientific regulation. But one should not dismiss this outrageous world of signs and wonders as merely a childish fancy with no ground in reality, insofar as the economic model of investment incurring a huge profit with the omitted moment of production replicates nothing other than that of speculative financial capitalism. Of course, it does not mean

that the majority of the YFGC members actually take part in those speculative economic activities such as real estate investment, stock exchange, or money lending, etc. But it means that the way in which the author of *Three-Beat Salvation* presents political economy unwittingly models on speculative capitalism, which has been indeed a prominent feature of South Korea's economic development since 1960. The newspaper editorials and columns throughout the period of development have lamented over the widespread fantasy of being a millionaire overnight among the desperate people, attributing it to the lack of norm (anomie) in capitalist accumulation. Here again the author of *Three-Beat Salvation* gets in touch with the widespread sentiment among the ordinary people. From this perspective, the present geographical location of the YFGC gains a new meaning. The Yoido Island, where the church has been located since 1974, has become now the center of mass-media, politics, and financial capital. Major television and radio broadcasting stations, the parliament, the national headquarters of major political parties, and investment banks - both domestic and foreign - crowd together in the small island, very much like in the island of Manhattan. In 1974, when the church moved to the current location, the island was almost wilderness. The initial move and the later construction of various buildings prove to be a successful real estate investment.

But the most remarkable affinity between the three-beat salvation theology and speculative financial capitalism lies in the interpenetration of religion and economy. One might think it to be the remnant of the pre-modern society according to which religion, politics, economy, and other spheres of social life were yet to be differentiated. To a certain extent, shamanism may contribute to the undifferentiated view of religion and economy. But the terms from the modern business world such as "investment," "profit,"

and “business” by no means belong to the vocabulary of shamanism. The well-being, which an older woman sought for through shamanistic ritual, is far from the well-being, which a younger businessman strives for by “investing in a business,” as the capitalist concept of wealth from the pre-capitalist one. In addition, the author of *Three-Beat Salvation*, as discussed above, is fully aware of the novelty of his theology, which would predictably provoke indignation on the part of the mainline Christians in Korea. According to the mainliners’ view, religious concern is not only independent of economic concern, but also deemed as higher than the latter, if not squarely contradict it. Rev. Cho, Yong-gi himself occasionally reminds his readers that economic concern is not all, paradoxically admitting that it is the main concern of his theology.(TBS 239) Thus, the interpenetration of religion and economy must be understood as a historically new development in the South Korean Christianity and society.

Perhaps the interpenetration of religion and economy can be conceptualized by what Frederick Jameson calls the “de-differentiation of post-modernity.”(Jameson 1998: 86) By “de-differentiation” he means “a remarkable historic development in our own time, namely the immense expansion of culture and commodification into these fields – politics and economics, for example – from which it was so rightly differentiated in the daily life of the modern period.”(Ibid.) And he goes on to say: “The great movement of de-differentiation of post-modernity has in other words once again effaced these boundaries (and, as has been said, makes the cultural economic at the same time that it turns the economic into so many forms of culture.)(Ibid.) Jameson observes the tendency of de-differentiation in a wide variety of cultural phenomena but does not pay attention to the similar change in religion. Religion, particularly in its Fundamentalist

forms, has yet remained one of the last areas to be colonized by the force of commodification. It can be shown by the fact that precisely as the capitalist globalization moves ahead with no substantial hindrance, religious fundamentalisms and nationalisms based on them appear to be the only effective anti-systemic movements in the modern world system.(Cf. Wallerstein 1995 : 189; For a variety of forms of religious fundamentalisms, see Marty 1994) In contrast to those fundamentalisms, the modern Pentecostalism in Korea shows a form of religion which is thoroughly commodified and commodifying, globalized and globalizing. If the term “post-modernity” refers to the latest phase of capitalism (Jameson 1991; Harvey 1989), then the modern Pentecostalism can be called the post-modern form of Christianity.

The notion of de-differentiation seems particularly useful to register the double metamorphosis of religion into business and business into religion. Jameson attributes the de-differentiation, the acculturation and commodification of every sphere of life, to the predominance of financial capital in today’s political economy. Drawing upon Arrighi’s work (Arrighi 1994), he characterizes financial capital:

Speculation, the withdrawal of profits from the home industries, the increasingly feverish search, not so much for new markets (these are also saturated) as for the new kind of profits available in financial transactions themselves and as such – these are the ways in which capitalism now reacts to and compensates for the closing of its productive moment. Capital itself becomes free-floating. It separates from the ‘concrete context’ of its productive geography. Money becomes in a second sense and to a second-degree abstract (it always was abstract in the first and basic sense.) (Jameson 1998: 141-142)

It would be misleading to characterize the Korean economy during the 1970’s and 1980’s as financial capitalism in an epochal sense. During the period, a large sum of money was put in the home industries. And productive moment has certainly predominated in this period of economic development. However, it was also a well-known secret that no less

money from foreign aids and subsidiary loans was invested in lands, buildings, and the notorious business of usury for the easier and larger return. It was the period of speculation as much as of industrialization. The omission of work ethics in the so-called “laws of material blessing,” therefore, is not an accident. The three-beat salvation theology and financial capitalism share indifference toward the productive moment of economy that requires sophisticate work discipline. The relatively marginal position of the YFGC in Korean Christianity until the 1980s may be said to correspond to the marginal position of financial capitalism in the Korean economy as a whole. But as financial capitalism gains a greater momentum in the 1990s, the theology of material blessing has come to prevail even in the mainline churches. It is tempting to say that the YFGC prepared the way of the coming era of financial capitalism in its post-modern theology of the three-beat salvation.

American Masters of Positive Thinking

The section on the psycho-technique to achieve success follows the detailed discussion on the magical efficacy of generous offering qua investment to bring in material blessing. The transition is abrupt and even contradictory except the overarching theme of “blessing.” However, the biblical term “blessing” is now replaced by the secular term “success.” While “blessing” is presented as something God bestows to the pious, but “success” as something to achieve through the proper management of the psyche. Moreover, the section on offering gives an impression that full tithing and extra offering sufficiently bring in material blessing, but the subsequent section requires more. This inconsistency between the two sections reveals the eclectic nature of Rev. Cho, Yong-gi’s writing. The section on offering as the prerequisite of material blessing,

as mentioned above, relies on the traditional revivalist theology in Korea. The section on the psycho-technique to achieve success obviously relies on the North American Positive Thinkers, particularly Norman Vincent Peale and Napoleon Hill.

The names of Peale and Hill are explicitly mentioned in the later sections, but without specific references to their works. Considering Rev. Cho's style, which makes few explicit citation besides the Bible, it is unusual that the section on the psycho-technique of success refers to many authors. In addition to Hill, "a renowned success philosopher of America,"(TBS 195) and Peale, "a famous American counselor,"(TBS 222-223), some medical doctors in the field of psychosomatic medicine such as Dr. Gorge E. Brook, "a worldwide authority of longevity studies,"(TBS 225) and Dr. Walt Clement Alberts, "a specialty doctor of internal medicine at the famous Mayo Hospital in America,"(TBS 193) are cited by their names, again with no exact references. Thus, there is no way to determine whether he is using the original source or secondary. But all of the cited authors are introduced as worldly renowned authorities, curiously underscoring their American nationality. In this peculiar manner of introduction, one can glimpse a culture of celebrity featuring an authoritarian attitude of uncritical acceptance of the "big names," as well as reverence toward things American. Rev. Cho, Yong-gi again shows his capacity to tap the popular culture.

The influence of Peale's Positive Thinking and Hill's Success Philosophy is not limited to the direct citations mentioned above. The very framework of the three-beat salvation – the well-being of soul, material circumstances, and body – models the pursuit of wealth, health, and happiness in the popular American ideology of success, of which Peale and Hill are two post-war versions.(For the historical mutations of the ideology, see

Meyer 1965 and 1980) However, it is here in the section on the psycho-technique of success that their influence appears in a raw state. The section can be read as Rev. Cho, Yong-gi's restatement of the essentials of Positive Thinking and Success Philosophy. Although Peale and Hill have many in common, they considerably differ in the concept of success, as well as the style of writing and the target audience. Rev. Cho seems to deploy selectively a variety of elements from both to make his own version of success theology. To identify the uniqueness of Cho, Yong-gi's version, a comparative analysis of Peale and Hill is in order.

Napoleon Hill or Applied Psychology

It is quite accurate for the author of *Three-Beat Salvation* to introduce Norman Vincent Peale as a "counselor" and Napoleon Hill as a "success philosopher." Although both Peale and Hill write about how to achieve a successful life, they understand somewhat differently what constitutes a successful life. Hill's bestseller, *Think and Grow Rich*, focuses on how to achieve financial success, although not exclusively so.(Hill 1963) In contrast, Peale's bestseller *The Power of Positive Thinking* concentrates on how to maintain the peace of mind or the feeling of happiness.(Peale 1952) Hill, a self-designated analyst of successful people, is much more mundane in value orientation and language than Peale, a Methodist minister. No ethical or religious restraint keeps Hill from explicitly speaking about how to grip big cash. To grow rich is presented as a matter of "translating a thought or 'desire' for money into its physical equivalent," to use Hill's characteristic expression.(Hill 33) Financial success, according to him, starts with a thought of special kind. He calls it a "desire," as opposed to a mere wish: "Barnes'

desire was not a *hope*! It was not a *wish*! It was a keen, pulsating desire, which transcended everything else.”(Ibid. Hill’s own emphases) To make a great fortune you must “work yourself into a white heat of *desire* for money, and actually *believe* you will possess it.”(Hill 37. Hill’s own emphases) The desire, to “be translated into its financial equivalent,” must be put into a definite plan. He asks readers: “Write out a clear, concise statement of the amount you intend to acquire, name the time limit for its acquisition, state what you intend to give in return for the money, and describe clearly the plan through which you intend to accumulate it.” And then “read your written statement aloud, twice daily, once just before retiring at night, once after arising in the morning. As you read – see and feel and believe yourself already in possession of the money.”(Hill 36)

Hill even provides a psychological background for this practice. He assumes that the key to financial success or any great achievement is mental power or will power. But mental power or will power does not mean the human capacity to transform purposively the external world through reason, i.e., the conscious mind. According to Hill, mental power dwells in what he calls the subconscious mind, which is considered to be far more important than the conscious mind. The subconscious mind is so mysterious that Hill confesses he always feels awe-stricken when he thinks of it. Being the only known link between finite human mind and what he calls “Infinite Intelligence,” the subconscious mind transmutes desire into its physical and monetary equivalent.(TBS 198) Of course, the finite human mind cannot understand “Infinite Intelligence.” But still it can tap the power of Infinite Intelligence through the medium of the subconscious mind. Human being “may become the master of himself and his environment, because he

has the power to influence his own subconscious mind.”(TBS 72) There lies the secret of all successful people such as Emerson, Napoleon, Lincoln, Darwin, Carnegie, and Ford, etc., whose lives Hill claims to have carefully studied. The key technique that he calls “auto-suggestion” or “self-suggestion” attempts at tapping the presumed infinite power by the proper operation of the subconscious mind. It is yet unknown, thus, mysterious to human understanding, he admits, how the subconscious mind can release and channel the presumed cosmic power. However, it is known, he claims, that Infinite Intelligence can be controlled by controlling the subconscious mind through auto-suggestion. Thus, Hill says: “It [the subconscious] is the intermediary through which one may draw upon the forces of Infinite Intelligence at will. It, alone, contains the secret process by which mental impulses are modified and changed into their spiritual equivalent. It, alone, is the medium through which prayer may be transmitted to the source capable of answering prayer.”(TBS 198)

Hill’s cosmological pseudo-psychology, then, presupposes two distinguishable stages of psycho-cosmic operation: one is a properly psychic process, that is, the conscious mind acting upon the subconscious mind; the other can be only said as a cosmic process, that is, the subconscious mind mysteriously releasing the power of Infinite Intelligence. The former operation constitutes what Hill calls “auto-suggestion,” which is defined as “the agency of communication between that part of the mind where conscious thought takes place, and that which serves as the seat of action for the subconscious mind.”(TBS 67). Far from the Freudian unconscious, Hill’s “subconscious mind” is controllable by the conscious. Autosuggestion is precisely the technique by which one intentionally saturates his subconscious mind with certain ideas or “thought

impulses.” It is believed that whatever thought impulses are saturated into the subconscious, the latter will materialize them in reality through an unknown but proven mechanism. Positive thought impulses embody themselves into positive results, and negative ones into negative results. It is, thus, crucial to eliminate negative ideas thoroughly and input only positive ones. The method of autosuggestion is rather simple: just verbally repeat the written statement of ideas with faith until they are saturated into the subconscious mind. Any idea, plan, or purpose, he says, “may be placed in the mind *through repetition of thought*. This is why you are asked to write out a statement of your major purpose, or definite chief aim, commit it to memory, and repeat it in audible words, day after day, until these vibrations of sound have reached your subconscious mind.”(Hill 54, Hill’s own emphasis) Indeed, almost all the detailed instructions he elaborates in his success manual are nothing but the practical application of this autosuggestion technique. At this juncture, it is interesting to note Hill’s rather surprising mass psychological conviction that repetition can make people eventually believe a lie to be true.(Hill 53) It immediately reminds Hitler’s dictum Cho, Yonn-gi quotes from *My Struggle* to explain why preachers need not be bothered in repeating the same sermon.(See Chapter VI) There is no way to find out whence Hill learnt mass psychology. It may be possible for him to have learnt it from the advertising courses he says to have once enrolled for home study.(Hill 81) Regardless of the trustworthiness of this personal information, Hill’s underlying psychology and writing style indeed belong to propaganda.

Hill also provides another interesting psychological background for the efficacy of autosuggestion, introducing it as “a very significant statement of truth”:

Thoughts which are mixed with any of the feelings of emotions constitute a “magnetic” force which attracts other similar or related thoughts.(Hill 53. Hill’s

own emphasis)

This suggests that autosuggestion does not consist of merely a mechanical repetition. The whole point of autosuggestion is to “mix” or “magnetize” ideas with emotions. Thus he enthusiastically says: “Every man is what he is because of the dominating thoughts which he permits to occupy in his mind. Thoughts which a man deliberately places in his own mind, and encourages with sympathy, and with which he mixes any one or more of the emotions, constitute the motivating forces which direct and control his every movement, act, and deed!”(Hill 53) It is why one must repeatedly recite the written statement of his organized plan with the attitude of faith, self-confidence, and positive emotions. The notion of the “idea mixed with emotion” is undoubtedly a pop-psychological adaptation of the psychoanalytic notion of libidinal investment. In the chapter entitled “The Mystery of Sex Transmutation”(Hill 175-196), Hill tries to show that sex is the greatest of all mind stimulants and success requires the art of harnessing and transmuting sexual energy into “action, other than that of physical expression.”(Hill 186) This chapter certainly reminds the psychoanalytic concept of sublimation. However, Hill does not seem to have an adequate understanding of Freud’s works, as manifested by the fact that he mentions sexual drive as the most powerful among other mind stimuli such as love, a burning desire for fame, power, or financial gain, money, music, friendship, etc. Probably Hill draws upon a popularized version of depth psychology or applied psychoanalysis which the advertisement industry relies on. In any case, the similarity between Hill’s emotionally magnetized ideas and the Freudian libidinal investment remains superficial. Unlike the intentional mixing of ideas with emotion to act upon the subconscious mind, The Freudian libidinal investment, being an unconscious process, lies beyond the

conscious control. From the psychoanalytic view, the positive thinkers' compulsive effort to reinvest positive feelings in positive thoughts signifies only the very libidinal detachment from the external world at the level of the unconscious, the prerequisite of secondary narcissism.

Hill uses only a few religious terms. Compared to Peale's, Hill's language is far more secular and mundane. He has no hesitation in using such words like "a big cash" and offering an explicitly "psychological" theory. He never presents himself as a religious person. He rarely quotes the Bible. However, he does use some religious terms such as prayer, faith, miracle, and Infinite Intelligence. But it must be noted that those religious terms lack any specificity of a historical religion, say, the historical Christianity. Prayer is, thus, presented as a method of autosuggestion to tap the power of the infinite being. Faith is understood to be an attitude of emotion indispensable to eroticize ideas: "Faith is the element, the 'chemical' which, when mixed with prayer, gives one direct communication with Infinite Intelligence."(Hill 52) Miracle is explained merely as the work of the exotic law, the exact process of whose operation is yet to be known. And the deity itself is depicted as an impersonal cosmic energy, Infinite Intelligence, in contrast to the personal deity of Christianity, who would act and react in a dialogic relationship with finite beings to unfold the history of salvation. In Hill's text, thus, traditional religious terms are "rationalized" or "secularized," approaching to a kind of deism. But one should not miss the obverse of the rationalized religion: that psychology becomes a mythological cosmology.

One of the most interesting features in Hill's text is that he always presents the mysterious work of "magnetized thoughts" as the operation of a "natural law." Even

though the exact way of the natural law' operation is yet to be known, he claims, innumerable success stories demonstrate the way it really works. Thus he says, immediately after describing the self-confidence formula: "Back of this formulas is a law of nature which no man has yet been able to explain. The name by which one calls this law is of little importance. The important fact is – it WORKS for the glory and success of mankind."(Hill 55, Hill's own emphasis). He likes to pose himself as a scientist. In the Introduction, he boasts of his extensive research at Mr. Carnegie's request for twenty years to analyze hundreds of successful people.(Hill 16) When he deals with the dubious subjects such as the sixth sense and telepathy, he emphasizes that he "is not a believer in, nor an advocate of 'miracles,' for the reason that he has enough knowledge of nature to understand that Nature never deviates from her established laws."(Hill 214) But he is not so much interested in exploring the mystery of nature as in selling a scientific-sounding user's manual for financial success based on these questionable pseudo-scientific premises. Hill's book is intended to appeal to those who neither believe in the traditional religion nor can bear sustained critical reflection. This image of his audience is not far from that of the prospective readers of astrology column whom Adorno calls the "semi erudite."(Adorno 1994:119) The semi erudite, whom Adorno points out as the loyal consumers of modern occultism, can be attributable neither to stupidity nor to insufficient education. Some of them are professionals as many of the YFGC members are. What makes the educated the semi erudite awe-stricken by the so-called cosmic mystery is the very impenetrability of the exchange society's operation that creates and then shatters the desire for an incredible fortune among its victims like a lotto does so. In their impossible phantasmagoric desire, the truth of religion is confounded

with a pseudo-scientific belief and vice versa. What Hill exploits in his success philosophy is not so much the law of Infinite Intelligence as this desire itself. But the phantasmagoric desire is “real” enough insofar as the actual operation of today’s speculative financial capitalism as a whole has little foundation in the actual production of goods and services and can not yield to any rational regulation. This is the condition of possibility of Hill’s homespun success philosophy.

Norman Vincent Peale or Applied Christianity

Norman Vincent Peale apparently differs from Napoleon Hill in that his text is explicitly religious and intended to promote a certain type of religion. Unlike Hill’s, his text contains many quotations from the Bible. It is not surprising because Peale is an ordained Methodist minister. Truly striking is Peale’s remaking of Christianity into what he calls a “applied Christianity” in the Introduction to his million-seller, *Power of Positive Thinking*.(Peale 1952) For him, Christianity is not so much a matter of doctrine or morality as of practical technique of mind for a successful life. He seems to simply take for granted the popular notion of a successful life, which consists of wealth, health, and happiness. However, financial success does not occupy the central position in his concept of a successful living. The language like the “burning desire for money,” which is central in Hill’s success philosophy, has no place in Peale’s applied Christianity. For Peale, “success” means the well-being in business, job, marriage, family relationship, physical and emotional health. His notion of success is as far broader as more moderate than Hill’s. With this somewhat diluted concept of success, his text focuses on how to overcome a variety of psychological disturbances such as the lack of self-confidence, the lack of energy, anger, resentment, frustration, and worry, etc. These so-called “negative”

feelings are sometimes presented as problems *sui genre* to overcome in order to achieve spiritual well-being conceived as the purpose in itself. But spiritual well-being is also presented as an instrument to attain other goals such as successful business, job promotion, and health. Peale's text seems to reflect the wider trend of positive thinkers' ambivalence toward material success in the 1960s, which they frankly approve as the most important goal at one place and, then, subordinate to the other seemingly ultimate goal of inner peace at the other place.(Cf. Cawelti's 209-214)

Peale's use of the Bible is, of course, based on his notion of practical Christianity as the spiritual instrument of success. He even compiles his favorite scriptural passages in a small booklet entitled "Thought Conditioners."(It is included now in Peale 1955 with the instruction of how to use them) The truthfulness of these words is said to be demonstrated by their practical effect on the psyche. Likewise the value of faith, love, and forgiveness is measured by their effectiveness in producing the sense of happiness, material rewards, or health. The eternal truth of the Word proves to be the unchanging effectiveness of the psychic super-machine, which remains the same today and tomorrow as yesterday. Peale's use of the Bible models on the behaviorist psychology, on the scheme of stimulus and reaction. He isolates the biblical passages out of their contexts and uses them as "thought conditioners," that is, psychological stimuli to produce an intended psychic reaction, and then to release the presumably miraculous psychic power. Those selected passages are directly put into use as they are. Thus, there is no place for a hermeneutical reflection, which emerges only from the explicit or implicit recognition of the historical, cultural, and semantic gap between the ancient text and the modern reader. On the one hand, the applied Christianity requires the so-called

literal reading of the scripture, or better the immediate reception of the presumably fixed, obvious “meaning.” Strictly speaking, “meaning” is an inappropriate word since what matters in the thought conditioners is not their meaning but their effect. On the other hand, the literal reading, the ban on interpretation and theological reflection, precisely at the time when the historical gap requires them, tends to make religion into pragmatic magic. To be “applied” to a certain externally imposed goal at all, religion ceases to be a live symbol, which engages itself in a critical, transformative, and creative interaction with the world, even risking its conventional identity. The pragmatic “use” of the Christian tradition amounts to the full recognition of its end as a living tradition. In Peale’s Positive Thinking, thus, Christianity as a dead symbol merges with psychology, and the American ideology of success. In the merger, Christianity is given a second life as a psychological tool to help pursue the American dream of success. An applied Christianity recycles a defunct tradition of Christianity. Protestantism in America has long become part of her cultural heritages to be retrieved for a variety of external uses. As far as a majority of Americans classify themselves as religious, however, religion might still have a considerable value for the culture industry. Peale’s practical Christianity could enjoy such a massive appeal only by transforming Christianity into a psychological tool to survive and thrive in the post-war American society.

Peale founded a religio-psychiatric clinic at his Marble Collegiate Church in New York City with professional psychiatrists such as Dr. Clarence W. Lieb and Dr. Smiley Blanton. The institutional collaboration of ministers and psychiatrists shows the theoretical convergence of religion and psychology, particularly in the field of pastoral counseling. Thus, Rev. Cho, Yong-gi is quite accurate when he introduces Peale as a

“prominent American counselor,” although his status as a counselor is questionable. As Meyer observes, Peale’s main concern is more of mass counseling, if such a thing is possible, than of personal counseling. Being a “mass counselor”, Peale “deliberately sought best-selling audiences, traveled perpetually to speak everywhere, processed his message into forms suitable for magazines, newspapers, radio, television.” (Meyer 1965 : 260) Unlike Hill, Peale never makes explicit his psychological theory, on which his practical instructions rely on. He remains through and through as a “God’s salesman” of the wonderful psychological technique than as a sophisticated theologian or a pastoral counselor with a solid theoretical foundation. He does not seem to have any reliable knowledge in psychoanalytic theory, which his psychiatric collaborators certainly have. Peale’s theological psychology, as assumed in his text, looks much closer to Hill’s cosmological psychology, although the former never elaborates it as the latter does.

Like Hill, Peale sees mental attitude as the most powerful determinant of one’s fate. And it is not only possible but also quite simple to change one’s mental attitude! Citing Ralph Waldo Emerson, William James, and another unnamed psychologist, Peale maintains: “Conditions are created by thoughts far more powerfully than conditions create thoughts.”(Peale 1952 : 204) Thoughts are not just an ineffectual hollowness but a dynamic force. Exactly like Hill, Peale also takes the motto as his fundamental principle that “thoughts are things.”(Peale 1952 : 204. Hill’s book has the same motto as its subtitle.) From the fundamental principle derives one of the greatest laws in the universe: “If you think in negative terms you will get negative results; If you think in positive terms you will achieve positive results.”(Peale 1952 : 205) A variation of the same law reads: “If you expect the best you will get the best, but if you expect the worst

you will get the worst.”(op. cit. 106) This law is said to be “at the basis of an astonishing law of prosperity and success.”(op. cit. 205) or to be “one of the most powerful laws in this world, a law recognized alike by psychology and religion.”(op. cit. 106) But Peale seems to be aware of the fact that this psychological law can stand by itself and owes nothing to Christianity. In a somewhat vague manner, Peale says:

This is one of the greatest laws in the universe. Fervently do I wish I had discovered it as a very young man. It dawned upon me much later in life and I found it to be one of the greatest if not my greatest discovery, outside of my relationship to God. And in a deep sense this law is a factor in one’s relationship with God because it channels God’s power into personality.(op. cit. 205)

According to the anecdote following this statement, Peale is said to have discovered the law at a time when his inspirational self-help magazine, *Guidepost*, confronted with a crisis. He admits the law to be one of the greatest laws, or rather maybe the greatest law, adding cautiously the proviso, “outside of my relationship to God.” Admitting the law of thought’s amazing power to change the external reality has nothing to do with his belief in God and secondary to the belief, Peale seems to try to say in this somewhat ambiguous passage that the law reveals the secret of how to tap God’s power into one’s personality. It may be the reason why he should have wanted to add that the apparently non-religious law is a factor of religious faith “in a deep sense.” Here one can glimpse the difficulty with which Peale as a Methodist minister faces when he attempt to make the traditional Christianity “applicable” to pragmatic pursue by means of pop-psychology. The result turns out to be neither the traditional Christianity nor a scientific psychology, but a mutant called “practical Christianity,” the psycho-cosmological technique of successful living. To simply call Peale’s version of Positive Thinking “religio-psychological interpretation” of Christianity is, thus, to forget the fact that both

Christianity and psychology go through a radical transformation to emerge again in the shape of magical psycho-technique.

Peale's psycho-technique hardly differs from Hill's in spite of their surface differences discussed above. Like Hill's technique of "autosuggestion," Peale's Positive Thinking consists in the conscious manipulation of the unconscious, the same method of saturating the presumed unconscious with positive thoughts through repeated recitation of written inspirational statements, specification of one's goal, imaginary enactment of its achievement through visualization, and methodical step by step action plan. Peale instructs readers:

Therefore take the best into your mind and only that. Nurture it, concentrate on it, emphasize it, visualize it, prayerize it, surround it with faith. Make it your obsession. Expect the best, and spiritually creative mind power aided by God power will produce the best.(Peale 1952 : 118)

At another occasion, he explicitly mentions "the technique of suggestive articulation, that is, repeat audibly some peaceful words" as an effective method to attain inner peace.(op. cit. 23) Words are said to have a "profound suggestive power, and there is healing in the saying of them."(Ibid.) Based on the same principle, Peale remakes prayer into a psycho-cosmic technique to tap the presumed infinite power of God for a finite goal. Peale recommends his readers to practice three-point prayer method – (1) prayerize, (2) picturize, and (3) actualize. To prayerize means to fill one's daily life with prayer so that "[t]he Presence came finally to dominate his consciousness and ultimately his unconscious thinking."(op. cit. 55) The whole psyche - both the conscious and the unconscious - must be saturated by the thought of the divine being, the ultimate source of positive assurance, who makes everything possible. To picturize means to make an idea

into a “realizable wish,” which Peale thinks to be the basic factor in psychology just like force is the basic factor in physics. Simply imagining one’s success can do it because a mental image tends to produce its equivalent in reality. In quite similar words to Hill’s, Peale says: “When either failure or success is picturized, it strongly tends to actualize in terms equivalent to the mental image pictured.”(Peale 1952 : 56) If one makes his desire into his obsession by imagining its fulfillment in pictorial details, the magnetized desire will miraculously attract the conditions of success. So the third step of actualizing is said to follow as the automatic result of the first two steps.

This new conception of prayer requires to revise the image of God accordingly. Thus, the traditional image of God as the Creator and Provider is replaced by the technological image of God as the Energizer. Thus, one of Peale’s friends is said to go to church regularly to “get his batteries recharged.”(Peale 1952 : 36) Spiritual power is explicitly compared to energy in the universe, the atomic energy, and the electric energy. It is not surprising, then, that religion should be regarded as “a workable and useful mechanism for preventing energy leak.”(op. cit. 37-38) In addition to this mechanical image of God as the Energizer, there is another image of God as the Senior Partner. If businesspeople take God as “a partner in their business, they will get more good ideas than they can ever use, and they can turn those ideas into assets.”(op. cit. 162) This image of God as the Senior Partner becomes Rev. Cho, Yong-gi’s favorite designation of the Holy Spirit: “I could succeed in my ministry because I always did it with the Holy Spirit as my Senior Partner.” It is symptomatic that these new images of God as the Energizer and the Senior Partner come from the two North American specialties – technology and business.

In a passage, Peale astonishingly goes further to identify machine with God Himself. In the chapter entitled “How To Have Constant Energy”, Peale first recommends readers as a solution to the problem of energy leak to go out and hear the sounds of nature for getting into “the time synchronization of Almighty God,” admitting that today’s people get easily tired because everything is speed up. Immediately after saying that the urban environment prevents people from experiencing such time synchronization, he boldly goes on to claim that a worker can experience it in a factory. Here he cites an anonymous friend of his, “an industrialist in Ohio,” who is told to say:

...if a worker works in harmony with the rhythm of his machine he does not get tired at the end of the day. ...the machine is an assembling of parts according to the law of God. When you love a machine and get to know it, you will be aware that it has a rhythm. It is one with the rhythm of the body, of the nerves, of the soul. It is in God’s rhythm, and you can work with that machine and not get tired if your are in harmony with it.(Peale 1952 : 41)

Here an assembly line is said to embody God’s rhythm, to which workers have to adjust themselves in order to prevent energy leak! The modern techno-scientific ideology of seamless machine world like a clock replaces the theological scandal of Incarnation that God becomes human in Jesus the Nazarene, the creative tension of the transcendence within the immanence. Machine is seen as embodying not only God’s rhythm but also human rhythm. In order not to get tired by work on an assembly line, therefore, one needs to be one with the divine machine. If an assembly line worker should feel tired, it indicates his disobedience to the divine rhythm of machine. Anything that goes astray from a machine’s demand results in weariness, illness, unhappiness, and failure in all the possible senses.

It is paradoxical that a book on positive thinking has to devote most space to “negative” feelings and thoughts such as the lack of self-confidence, the feeling

of energy sapping, unhappiness, fuming, fretting, low expectation, frustration, and worry habit, etc. The book presupposes the prevalence of those “negative” feelings and thoughts among the target readers. Readers are assumed to have to face the ever-present possibility of failure in their business, job, health, or interpersonal relationship. The fear of lay-off and unemployment, bankruptcy, business closing-down, stressful working condition, and the proneness to mental and physical illness casts its shadow on every page. Overblown optimism and compulsory repetition, which characterize Positive Thinking, only underscore the fact that the problems, which Positive Thinking addresses, are not only real but also overwhelming. However, Positive Thinking rarely deals with social conditions which perpetuate those problems. Social reform has no place in Positive Thinking since radical change must occur in the mental attitude of an individual. Society is, thus, exempted from critical reflection. Blame must be directed to individuals, the victims of the ill society. Positive Thinking perpetuates the real negativity in today’s social system through its compulsive exclusion of the negative feelings and thoughts. It is a brand new type of conformist thought in the guise of Christianity.

To think positively in Positive Thinking does not mean to open one’s mind to all kinds of spontaneous feelings, images, and thoughts with no censorship. Positive Thinking reverses the psychoanalytic practice of free-association. The method of free association intentionally lifts the censorship against prohibited thought images in order to let the repressed and disavowed impulses float on the surface yet still in condensed and displaced forms. On the contrary, Positive Thinking deliberately and persistently represses for the second time, hopefully to the point of the absolute oblivion, the “negative” thoughts and feelings which manage to enter the conscious mind. The crippled

should not be allowed into the sanctuary of success religion. If psychoanalysis is an attempt to recollect the scars that the modern society inflicts on the psyche, Positive Thinking is an attempt to purposefully forget them.

The censorship in Positive Thinking is not so much moral as technical. Thoughts and feelings are not measured by an ethical standard as in Protestantism. Morality has been reduced to the threadbare notion that one can do whatever he wants unless it does no harm to others. What really matters in Positive Thinking is to manage thoughts and feelings for those pragmatic goals such as the peace of mind, financial success, and health. Positive Thinking is more than a censorship. The conscious mind has to selectively allow only “productive” thoughts and feelings in the psyche. But also it has to “condition” the whole psyche, particularly the subconscious or the unconscious, with those positive thought images and feelings so that it could work with the maximum efficiency to attain the desired goals. Thus, Peale calls his edition of inspirational quotations from the Bible the “thought conditioner.” As a practical Christianity replaces Protestantism, a psycho-technique replaces ethics. But the historical transition from the Protestant ethics to Positive Thinking needs not be thought abrupt insofar as the Protestant ethics itself substantially consists in the methodical deployment of thoughts and feelings for a productive living.

Positive Thinking in the American Social Context

Napoleon Hill and Norman Vincent Peale can be seen as the caricatures of the age-old American ideal of self-made man. John J. Cawelti, a historian of American popular culture, observes that the swift industrialization since the late 19th century

in America invalidated the older ideal of the Emersonian self-cultured man or of the Horatio Agler style self-made success from rags to respectability, whose balance between religious and secular values “had depended on a static society in which the dominant occupations, like those of the small farmer, the artisan, and the shopkeeper, involved a direct relationship between individual effort and the resultant product.”(Cawelti 168-169) As monopoly and financial capitalism have become the major economic determinants, the idea of self-help was “away from the earlier balance of political, moral, religious, and economic values and in the direction of an overriding emphasis on the pursuit and use of wealth.”(Cawelti 169) With the change of the self-made man ideal into the success philosophy, the so called “success philosophers,” that is, success specialists, replaced clergymen, who had been the primary spokesmen for the traditional gospel of self-improvement. And the inspirational parable with its story of success or failure and short biography took the place of sermon.(Cawelti 175) Cawelti notes that even sermon itself transformed “from the careful exposition of virtues and vices to a quasi-scientific explanation of the ‘laws of success’ and the ease and certainty of their application.” (Cawelti 176) Now the ideal of self-improvement came to mean “a dynamic assertion of will and a tapping of mysterious and yet scientifically controllable inner energies.” (Cawelti 176) And these philosophers of success found the new media of dissemination in the popular middle class magazines such as *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Success*, which emerged at the turn of the century.

Cawelti, a conservative cultural critic, takes notice of positive thinkers’ ambivalence toward material success, which they frankly approve as the most important goal at one place and then subordinate it to the other presumably ultimate goal of inner

peace at another place.(Cawelti 209-214) This ambivalence is also reflected, he says, in the paradoxical fact that the “broken, distraught salesmen and executives who parade through the pages of *The Power of Positive Thinking* and *How to Win Friends and Influence People* were certainly planted there to show the need for positive thinking, but they are also eloquent testimonies to the failure of the business world to fulfill human needs.”(Cawelti 217) Divorced from religious and social sanction, he analyzes, material success brings only inner emptiness with enormous purchasing power. Positive thinkers’ oscillation between material success and inner peace reveals, in Cawelti’s view, the very failure of the dream of success in the mid-twentieth century America. In addition, he shows that the foundational notion of “the land of opportunities” has been a myth from the outset, citing sociological studies on social mobility in different historical periods. Monopoly has skewed the already uneven structure of economic opportunities. These observations are valuable but remains external to the psychic change accompanied with the progressive rationalization of the American society. Hence, his lament over the separation of material concern from religious and moral meaning as the prime cause of the tragedy of modern America in the midst of the very material success. Only an immanent critique of positive thinking can unveil its mesmerizing power on the American mass.

It is indeed hard to understand how such a theoretically ungrounded and stylistically poor book like Peale’s *Power of Positive Thinking*, could have enjoyed the record-breaking commercial success. It has been the bestseller for years, and translated into many languages, including Korean. Norman Vincent Peale became a national celebrity in America. The commercial success of the book and the popularity of

Peale as an inspirational speaker show not so much the logical persuasiveness of Positive Thinking as the socio-psychological physiognomy of the American society at the time. Both the form and the content of Peale's book need to be deciphered as the "symptoms" of the socio-psychological condition.

The popularity of *Power of Positive Thinking* owes partially to the fact that it directly address the prevailing psychological distresses such as fear, anxiety, lack of confidence, helplessness, desperation, frustration, anger, and resentment, etc. But this is hardly unique insofar as any commercially successful writer cannot possibly ignore the widespread sentiments among his readers. The peculiarity of Positive Thinking, as analyzed above, lies in its attempt to meet the problems by subjectively suppressing the results of the objective social oppression to the point of the absolute oblivion. It demands the victims of society to disavow the traces of its violence as well as the very existence of social oppression in the euphoric feeling of omnipotence and self-satisfaction.

It looks an irony that Positive Thinking, the cruel technique of suppressing the suppression, should have had to be so popular in the 1950s and 1960s precisely when the American capitalist economy enjoyed an unhindered expansion and headed toward the so-called "consumer society." Although the fear of unemployment, bankruptcy, and poverty had been considerably reduced after the World War II, Peale's episodes bear witness to the fact that it was still looming in the mind of ordinary people. But they show more than that: Even if they were employed and not in poverty, they still felt discontent, lack of energy, weary, and resent. The dissatisfaction was due not to the failure but to the very success of American capitalism, as Harry Braverman observes: "At least in part, dissatisfaction centered not so much on capitalism's inability to provide work as on the

work it provides, not on the collapse of its productive processes but on the appalling effects of these processes at their most “successful.”(Braverman 1974 : 14) Machinery has gradually taken workers’ control over their own work process by the separation of planning and execution. Through machinery, the capitalists’ control over workers has penetrated into the very domain of work process itself which had long been at workers’ own hands. The old means of labor regulation such as organization and rules have been replaced by far more impersonal assembly line.(Braverman 184-233) In addition to this, motion studies demands workers’ bodily movement into the most effective machinelike operation. Even office work has become manual labor.(Braverman 319-348) The inner realm of the psyche has not been exempted from the scientific control in the name of industrial psychology.(Braverman 141-145) It does not mean, of course, that workers have readily subjugated to such enormous degradation of work. They keep revolting until there remains little alternatives for working class.(Braverman 149) Positive thinking has furthered the historical defeat of working class by advising workers to “positively” adjust themselves to the de-spirited work, the machine godhead. It may be said to be the culmination in the long historical process of “spiritual automation,” as Donald B. Meyer aptly puts it, since the Protestant ethics, the pursuit of methodic management of life. Meyer 1980 : 163-194) The revitalization of Christianity in the form of applied Christianity signifies the completed colonization of the spiritual sphere, particularly the unconscious, the last hinterland yet to be colonized, by the ever expanding and intensifying capital logic – commodification and mechanization at once.

Import Substitute in South Korea

The incorporation of North America’s Positive Thinking into Korea’s modern

Christianity is part of the broader historical cultural transformation in South Korea since 1945, which might be called “cultural Americanization.” Since the U.S. army occupied the southern half of the Korean peninsular, American culture, whether it be “high” or “low,” has infiltrated into Koreans’ everyday life, mostly through army, administration, schools, cultural centers, churches, and mass media. It remains a matter of conjecture how Rev. Cho, Yong-gi encountered Hill and Peale. The YFGC’s publications provide no clue partly due to their typical writing style that makes no reference to the works they cite. One possible conjecture is that, having been an interpreter of the American missionaries from the Assemblies of God during the Bible school years, Rev. Cho might have had a greater chance to absorb their ideas, which had become very popular around the time in North America. Both Hill’s and Peale’s books were already known to the Korean reading public through translation published by the prominent publishers in the early 1970s. Anyhow he has been not only a zealous reader of the similar kind of books but also a determined practitioner, as an anecdote in Rev. Choi, Ja-shil’s autobiography recollects:

One day, I felt terribly troubled to see Pastor Cho living only on potatoes for all three meals a day. For a while I had managed to provide rice at least to Pastor Cho even under the hardest situations. I could not excuse myself in treating the servant of Lord with potatoes. I went to a rice store to buy a bag of rice on credit. But he (the owner of the store) rejected me, insisting on paying back the unpaid Balance first. I climbed up hill, biting my lip. When I got home and stood before the room, I heard a loud voice coming out from there.

“Cho, Yong-gi, you are not poor!”

“Cho, Yong-gi, you are rich!”

“Our church’s membership roll will increase to a thousand.”

“Cho, Yong-gi, you suffered from pneumonia. But look! Are you not healthy now?”

“Cho, Yong-gi, you have a faith, which can even move a mountain. Nothing is impossible to those who believe.”

It was so noisy that I peeped into the room. Cho was crying out in a loud voice, clenching his fist, looking at himself in a big mirror. I could barely suppress my throbbing heart. (Choi, Ja-shil, 360-361)

Cho, Yong-gi likes to attribute his own “success” as a minister to his own practice of the laws of success. He offers the unheard-of growth of the Yoido Full Gospel Church as the irrefutable evidence of the power of Positive Thinking. The figure of Rev. Cho, Yonggi, the cofounder and the Senior Pastor of the YFGC, emerges as the incarnation of his own teaching, the gospel of the three-beat salvation. The magnificent building of the world largest congregation lends the Senior Pastor an aura, which speaks louder than thousands of eloquent words.

In the Korean society so different from the American counterpart in the 1950s, however, the American success philosophy could not be used as it was. It needed to be modified particularly for the Pentecostal congregation. The text of Cho, Yong-gi’s programmatic book, *Three-Beat Salvation*, shows the way in which the author adapted the imported Positive Thinking to the peculiar conditions of the Korean Pentecostal cogregation. His work of redaction can be detected on the two different levels: the structural level and the substantial level. On the structural level, he allocates the typical themes from Positive Thinking to the relevant places within the general framework of the three-beat salvation theology. First of all, the very scheme of the three-beat salvation, i.e., spiritual, material, and physical well-being, models on the triple value of the American success philosophy - wealth, health, and happiness. The well-being of soul, the first beat of the three-beat salvation, as presented in *Three-Beat Salvation*,

preserves the legacy of the traditional Protestant ethics of renunciation of the worldly pleasure, which the classical Pentecostalism shares, too. The hedonism of Positive Thinking is abruptly added to the traditional notion of spiritual salvation through the renunciation of the bodily passions. The first beat, the spiritual well-being, contradicts other two beats, the material and physical well-being, at least at the surface level, although an in-depth analysis reveals them to constitute the continuum of repressive psychic manipulation, as shown in Chapter IV. Although the best accommodation for the themes of Positive Thinking might be the second beat, the material well-being, the third beat, the bodily well-being, provides no less comfortable accommodation for the themes insofar as personal health is another preoccupation of the American popular idea of a successful living. It is, thus, only logical that the themes from the American success philosophy are distributed in the chapters on the material and the physical well-being. But, even in these chapters, they have gone through a considerable modification. In the chapter on the material blessing, for example, as already observed, the traditional revivalist doctrine of tithing as a prerequisite of the material blessing, which does not appear in Positive Thinking, is added.

Besides this structural arrangement, the author's redaction is also done on the substantial level. The redaction on this level consists in simply replacing the extra-biblical illustrations, numerous episodes – real and imaginary - from the typical scenes of the modern American life, with the biblical illustrations and citations, while leaving the main tenets of Positive Thinking intact. For example, to describe the crucial importance of psychological attitude for achieving success, Rev. Cho, Yong-gi drops the pseudo-psychoanalytic theory or the Emersonian cosmology which both Hill and Peale draw on.

Instead, he offers a biblical passage as the motto: “Keep your heart with all vigilance; for from it flow the springs of life.”(Proverbs 4:23) This biblical passage, which underlines the critical importance of keeping the elders’ wisdom sayings in one’s mind, is mobilized, torn out of its context, to give the aura of the scriptural authority to the general assumption of the American success philosophy that the proper use of psychic forces determines one’s fate. In the same way, Jesus’ famous rebuke of popular eschatological preoccupation with deciphering the timetable of the world’s end – “The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There it is!’ For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you.”(Luke 17:20-21) – turns into the message that “we need to welcome God in our heart in order to do well in everything.”(TBS 174) The ritual and moral laws to be pure are made into the psychological demand for “mental hygiene”: “Holiness and purity are God’s properties. If we worry the Holy Spirit by not keeping our mental hygiene, God cannot dwell in us and consequently we cannot bear the fruit of the well-being in all.”(TBS 174) The author also discusses the seven mental attitudes leading to failure – hatred, anger, greed, perfectionism, guilty feeling, fear, and inferiority complex – mostly with a number of the biblical sayings and illustrations.

The structural and substantial redaction makes the text in its form and content look like a sermon based on the biblical tradition, although its hermeneutic horizon is predetermined by the American success philosophy. But it should be noted that the American success philosophy itself originated from Protestantism. Even the thoroughly secularized version like Hill’s relies on pseudo-religious concepts, however rationalized they are. Peale’s “applied Christianity,” of course, sounds more religious but actually

remakes religion into the psycho-technique for a successful living, depriving it of its intrinsic value to render it “relevant” to the modern secularized life. The key to the popular attraction of *Power of Positive Thinking* seems to lie in the fact that Peale accepts both popular disillusionment against the established Christianity and still remaining popular religious sentiment, and carefully demarcates the meaning of the religious teachings and practices to their pragmatic value, while evading the doctrinal and theological issues. Even Peale’s explicitly religious version of success philosophy needs to be repackaged with the more traditionally religious rhetoric for the Korean audience.

The image of the prospective readers that the author of *Three-Beat Salvation* has in mind surely guides the modification. As seen in Chapter I, Korea had already gone through modernization and enlightenment though the Japanese colonial rule, the nationalist endeavor to achieve national independence, and the Christian mission. The Japanese colonial rule, particularly during the war period since the 1930s, had rapidly industrialized Korea, and brought in modern, rational and paramilitary discipline to mold Koreans into the imperial and modern subjects. (Cf. Kim, Jin-kyun, et al. 1997) A significant portion of the Korean population got at least primary education, and were able to read and write, although the exact statistics is not available. They constituted the reading public of mass-produced newspapers and magazines. The Japanese colonial government and Christian churches alike tried to eradicate the Korean popular religion, shamanism, labeling it either superstition or paganism. Korea in the 1960s was entering the second wave of rapid industrialization with the already relatively well-educated population by the global standard at the time, as the economic planners frequently said that the well- educated work force was the only resource that Korea could mobilize for

her economic development. On the other hand, Korean Protestant churches have clung to Fundamentalism and the literal reading of the Bible, to the revulsion of the better educated strata. And also shamanism and popular practical religion have still survived by itself or in the hybrid forms mixed with other religious traditions particularly among the less educated in the wake of the Korean War. The imported Fundamentalist Christianity played a double role for Korea's modernization. It facilitated modernization and at the same time limited the progress of modernization due to its dual historical nature as a form of the modern reaction to modernity. It is an irony of history that the reaction to the Enlightenment in the western soil had to play the role of the promoter of the Enlightenment in Korea. But its role as the promoter of the Enlightenment in Korea was limited from the outset and soon turned into its opposite as the Enlightenment proceeded further. The soul of the Korean Christians was split by the seemingly irresolvable contradiction between reason and revelation. This intellectual predicament was shared among most theological students including the young Cho, Yong-gi. Moreover, the hairsplitting debate on the orthodoxy or the correct doctrine among the diverse denominations was so far away from the everyday concerns of pastors and laity, as Cho, Yong-gi lamented over. Liberal theology was already introduced, but has been largely unpopular up to date. The pragmatic revivalist Christianity was a possible choice, and actually more popular among the mass, which, however, had to risk the condemnation of being "shamanism." Another choice to stay in the mainline - Presbyterian or Methodist - might have been safer but empty and insipid. There was no a perfect choice for a minister. Thus, the actual pastoral practices oscillated between these alternatives, creating a widespread discontent among both pastors and laity. In such situation, it was

no accident that an ambitious young pastor like Cho, Yong-gi found the breakthrough in Positive Thinking, which was both America's most advanced psychic technology and the "applied Christianity" very popular in the most advanced society. Being consistent in pragmatic spirit, he re-applied the "applied Christianity" made in U.S.A. to the dominant culture of Korean Christianity at the time, in which Fundamentalism and biblicism prevailed. With the redaction discussed above, as it were, Rev. Cho, Yong-gi accomplishes his own miracle of transforming the Bible, the ancient text, into the ultra-modern manual on how to achieve a successful life in the contemporary society.

Needless to say, to make the Bible into an effective contemporary psycho-technical instruction requires to ignore the modern exegetical rules and hermeneutic reflection. However, the uniqueness of the three-beat salvation theology does not lie in biblicism itself because majority of Korean Christians share it. Far more important is the fact that the pseudo-scientific notion of the subconscious as the medium of Infinite Intelligence and the finite being makes such a literal reading of the magical sayings and the miracle stories in the Bible far more plausible. The Bible, being a pre-modern text, does contain magical elements probably inherited from popular religiosity. Rational theology has tried to neglect them either as primitive and secondary elements or attempted to de-mythologize them in modern language comprehensible to the enlightened consciousness. The prophetic mono-Yahwehism, the recognition of the only One God as the Creator, and the Christian doctrine of Incarnation, God becoming human, mark the crucial steps toward the millenniums long movement of the Enlightenment from animism. Reformation in the sixteenth century further purified Christianity of magical beliefs and practices prevalent in the medieval Catholicism. The American positive

thinkers in the mid-twentieth century suddenly rediscovered the efficacy of the magical elements in the Bible for the most industrialized society. Positive Thinking purifies, on the other hand, Christianity of history, tradition, doctrine, meaning, ethics, emotion, and depth, just like modern science and philosophical positivism oust thinking of the exactly same things. Positivism, the most rigorously scientific impulse to allow in the realm of legitimate knowledge only what is verifiable or is not falsifiable by empirical observation, appears at first sight to be the opposite of Positive Thinking, the belief in some mysterious power such as “Infinite Intelligence.” But both of them share the same belief only in what is immediately posited, the existing order of things in its immediacy – the exchange society and the current system of domination of the inner and external nature - which is in fact socially and historically mediated. Positivism and Positive Thinking ally with each other to excommunicate anything unfit to the rational exploitation of all beings for utility and profit. Hence, their antagonism toward speculative thinking, which draws on “negativity” to break the spell of the identity principle and emancipate the absolute other, and toward the “negative” feelings, which remind the memory of true happiness dialectically by the painful awareness of its absence. Positive Thinking makes a “positive science” with what positivism gives up for the sake of rigorous science, i.e., beliefs and feelings, and offers the “scientific laws” about them. But the so-called “scientific laws” in Positive Thinking frankly mirror in their very substance the mythological nature of the modern exchange society, in which a successful living - wealth, health, and happiness – can only be expected through an impenetrable magical operation. In this sense, Positive Thinking may be said as the hidden truth of positivism. Thus, it is not surprising that so many professors at colleges

and universities and highly educated professionals join the Pentecostal church with so little intellectual difficulty. As Horkheimer and Adorno see, the Enlightenment, the rational domination of the inner and outer nature, when it has lost its memory trace, has turned into a secondary myth.(Horkheimer and Adorno 1993) Modern society witnesses the revival of magic in the religion industry, as well as in other branches of the culture industry. The recycling of the biblical magic in Positive Thinking is part of the broader tendency in modern society toward secondary superstition.

As analyzed above, the popularity of Norman Vincent Peale and Napoleon Hill in the 1960s America is accountable by the widespread sense of discontent of working people due to the so-called “scientific management,” the micro-control over work process itself through motion studies and industrial psychology. Then, what historical conditions have contributed to the on-going popularity of the three-beat salvation theology throughout the 1960s, 70s, and 80s in South Korea? It seems not so persuasive to attribute its popularity to the remnant of the pre-modern religiosity among its adherents. It should be noted that the expansion of the YFGC is distinctively an urban phenomena in the metropolitan city of Seoul and that the church has been located in the ultra-modern district in the city. Also to remember is the fact that the church has pioneered the cutting edge mass-communication technologies from popular magazine to newspaper to radio to television up to internet broadcasting.

The three-beat salvation theology as the psycho-technique of adaptation to the ultra-modern social world of total administration can be seen as the latest version of disciplinary power, which Foucault thinks characterizes modern society.(Foucault 1979) Indeed, the modern Korea, particularly since 1945, provides a paradigmatic example of

what preoccupies Foucault's concern. Korea's "modernization" already began with the Japanese administrative colonialism, which already featured modern disciplinary power, although always accompanied with the pre-modern form of power, naked violence. Modern schools, army, factories, hospitals, literature, and arts were established throughout the peninsula. The national independence movement - both armed and peaceful - throughout the colonial period from 1905 to 1945 forced the colonial rulers to refine the system of surveillance and discipline. Military system was the most prominent among them because the Korean peninsula has gone through a series of wars - many peasant wars, the Sino-Japanese War, the Russo-Japanese War, the Independence war, the civil war in the form of guerilla warfare, and finally the full blown Korean War. The most devastating and critical was, of course, the Korean War which had broken out in 1950 and yet to end, even though major gunfire stopped since the 1953 armistice. Tragically the war "solves nothing; only the status quo ante was restored, only an armistice held the peace. Today tensions and the problems remain."(Cumings 1997: 298)

The Korean War wiped out the old class structure of landlords and tenant farmers at once. It almost eliminated the progressive elements from South Korea. And it also left the U.S. backed military, police, and intelligence agency as the only organized and most powerful groups in the South Korean society. While the first wave of industrialization in Korea was led by the Japanese military colonial government, the second wave in South Korea was led by first the U.S. military government and later by the indigenous military governments backed by the U.S. administrations. Thus, the militarization of Korean society has not weakened but intensified since the defeat of the Japanese colonial rule. The stronger the democratic and nationalistic aspiration among the people got over time,

the more sophisticated the military regimes needed to develop the measures of surveillance and discipline. The whole spectrum of social life from school, factory, local community, and even neighbor, not to mention the regular and reserve army through the mandatory draft system, was molded into a para-military system. The famous motto under the General Park, Chung-hee's military regime, "Let's build while fighting," nicely captures the interpenetration of defense and development. By promoting the traditional Confucian virtues such as loyalty to a king and obedience to the elders, the military regimes attempted to foster the habit of blind submission to the external authority. Spontaneous feeling and autonomous thinking would have been the most dangerous and disturbing to those living in such a society. But it must have been also the most difficult thing to thoroughly repress them. America had an advanced technology to do it effectively: Positive Thinking as the psycho-technique of "repressive sublimation."

Concerning the recent proliferation of psychological manuals on how to succeed, how to outdo your partner or competitor in the book market, Zizek remarks, reminding the Marxist dialectic of fetishization:

... the 'reification' of relations between people (the fact that they assume the form of phantasmagorical 'relations between things') is always redoubled by the apparently opposite process – by the false 'personalization' ('psychologization') of what is in fact objective social processes. It was in the 1930s that the first generation of Frankfurt School theoreticians drew attention to how – at the very moment when global market relations started to exert their full domination, making individual producer's success or failure dependent on market cycles totally out of his control – the notion of a charismatic 'business genius' reasserted itself in 'spontaneous capitalist ideology,' attributing the success or failure of a businessman to some mysterious *je ne sais quoi* which he possesses. And does not the same hold even more today, when abstraction of market relations that runs over lives is brought to an extreme? (Zizek 1999: 349)

Zizek's observation confirms the ultra-modernity or post-modernity of the three-beat

salvation theology, which tacitly anticipates and promotes the thorough colonization of the life world by market in South Korea and beyond. The YFGC shows in what form religion can survive in a world where no sphere of life from the institutional to the unconscious remains intact from alienating, reifying, abstracting, and mechanizing force of exchange relations. Interestingly, Zizek makes connection between 'psychologization,' and the disintegration of the symbolic order, the big Other (Law) in Lacanian sense, which he thinks characterizes post-modernity in contrast to modernity.(Zizek 1999 : 313-392) If the traditional Protestantism, the religion of ethics and eschatological expectation, was based on the symbolic order or the big Other (Law), then the contemporary Pentecostalism, the religion of direct experience of the supernatural power, is based on the short-circuit of the imaginary and the real at the price of the symbolic order. The image of Evil Magician, which Zizek sees in Bill Gates as an icon, instead of the image of Symbolic Master, can also be found in the successful Pentecostal leader as an icon. Nothing shows more clearly the suspension of the symbolic order than cynical pragmatism toward theology, ethics, and political ideologies whatsoever. As many admirers see, Rev. Cho, Yong-gi proves to be a pioneer of a new religiosity: post-modern consumer religion.

Chapter VI

Body

“Expect the miracle of Healing!”

Healing session is the hottest moment of the already “hot” worship services at the Yoido Full Gospel Church. If the expectation of miracle characterizes the church’s worship services, healing session is the very moment when Pentecostals anticipate miracles to actually happen right before their eyes or even to themselves if they are lucky enough. Tongue prayer, loud prayer, and shouting of “Amen!,” “Hallelujah!,” “Yes, I believe, Lord!” soar to the highest pitch. They sound like a thunder or a gigantic waterfall. This is also the moment that one can see many lifted hands, tight closed eyes, and a variety of intense kinetic bodily movements. The church not simply proclaims miracle but also performs it. In the YFGC’s regular Sunday worship services, alter-call and healing session constitute an inseparable unit. The unit immediately follows the sermon. While the other parts of the worship are performed by junior pastors and lay leaders, the unit consisted of sermon, alter call, and healing session is normally performed by the Senior Pastor, Rev. Cho, Yong-gi. The unit performed by Rev. Cho, Yong-gi still preserves some of spontaneity, informality, and unpredictability typical to the Pentecostal worship. The unit constitutes, as it were, the worship within a worship service. As a result, the other parts look like a preliminary before the feature presentation by a star player, or a framework wrapping the real thing. Rev. Cho, Yong-gi’s charisma can be seen by the fact that no other pastors can substitute his unique role in invoking such an excitement among his congregation even when using the same formula. Thus most believers say, “No one can do it like Rev. Cho.” Indeed Rev. Cho’s healing ministry has been one of the defining features of the YFGC along with tongue speaking from its earliest years.

The alter-call is offered specifically to those who want to believe Jesus for the first time or those who had once believed but have now fallen and want believe him anew. Those who want to receive the grace of God for the first time or anew answer to the call by coming out to the altar. Rev. Cho, Yonggi leads them into a formulaic prayer of revival style:

Lord, I was a sinner. I did not know whence I came and whereto I go. Forgive my sin. Now I am yours and you are my Lord.

Then follows a round of loud prayer for the sick, letting them lay their hands on the body part where their health problem is supposed to be located. It is precisely this moment that the intensity of prayer reaches a climax. High pitch tongue prayer mixes with loudest cries, shouting, kinetic movements, and sometimes with the Senior Pastor's own tongue prayer, which sounds rather soft, controlled, and short. In several minutes the church becomes like a balloon filled with hot air about to burst only with a slightest touch. Then comes the proclamation of healing from the charismatic leader:

Those who suffer from tumor, they are healed!

Those who have problem in their legs, now you are healed!

Demons ran away! Hallelujah!

To each of these announcements of healing, the congregation respond with the most excited exclamation of "Amen!" "Hallelujah!" or "Thank you, my Lord!," as if they were one body and soul. Occasionally a testimony of the person, who claims to be healed, is added, without any written announcement in the printed church bulletin. The audio-recordings of the worship services available since the early 1970s show that the procedure has remained exactly the same up to the present.

“Healing, the Foundation of the Kingdom” or Church as the Kingdom

Following the second beat of salvation, the well-being of the comprehensive “all,” the third one, the well-being of body, is introduced as if the well-being of “all” did not include it. This again suggests that the generic “all” as a code word mainly designates the financial sphere. Now the section on the third beat of the three-beat salvation specifically deals with faith healing, one of the two themes common to all brands of Pentecostalism, along with tongue speaking. (TBS 241-327) It is noteworthy that the book *Three-Beat Salvation* dedicates a whole chapter to the theme of faith healing but not a single page to the theme of speaking in tongues. In contrast, the earlier issues of the church’s monthly magazine, *Shinangge*, feature the theological articles and the testimonies on both tongue speaking and faith healing, but not yet on Positive Thinking.¹ Around 1977 when the book was published and the Yoido Full Gospel Church had already become an international celebrity, the theme of speaking in tongue almost disappeared from the theological discussion. It does not mean that the members of the YFGC stopped practicing tongue speaking. They did not stop it and have kept practicing it up to the present day. However the contrast suggests a shift in the church’s emphasis from the classical Pentecostalism to Positive Thinking. The shift may have already begun as early as 1967 when the first issue of *Shin-ang-ge* was published. (Shin-ang-ge 1967 February) In the issue, Cho, Yonn-gi already introduces the notion of the good god.

The Pentecostal theme of faith healing seems to go through a series of relocation and displacement before it finally find its place in the general framework of the three-beat salvation theology. The theological framework effectively reduce the meaning of the Kingdom of God to the three definite blessings – spiritual wellbeing, wealth, and health. Thus, even though healing is

¹ For example, “What are the Benefit of Tongue Speaking” by Cho, Yonggi in *Shinangge* May 1967, “the Gift of Tongue Speaking” by Cho, Jung-hee in December 1967.

said to be “a sign of the coming Kingdom of God” at one place (TBS 289), in the same page it subtly changes into “the foundation of the heavenly Kingdom.” Healing does not point, as a sign, to the eschatological Kingdom, a profound transformation of the world as a whole, which must be much larger than its partial aspect of healing, as the Gospels depict, but becomes the most important content of the Kingdom by itself. A part is (mis)-recognized as the whole. Or the signifier confounds with the signified.

This peculiar confusion of category can also be observed in the use of the term “salvation.” When it means the general deliverance, say, both spiritual and material, from sin and sufferings, healing becomes one of its many aspects. But more often healing is given an equal status with “salvation:”

We proclaim the truth that those who are saved must also receive healing, because we acknowledge salvation and the gift of healing at the same time. The Bible shows that all the disciples of Jesus taught salvation and healing as equally important. The mission work of Peter, the disciple, mainly consists in witness to the salvation of soul and powerful healing.(TBS 298)

In this way, the disciples of the earliest church regarded the evangelism for the salvation of soul and the miracle of healing equally important and sought for them.(TBS 299)

Here Rev. Cho, Yong_gi challenges the predominant tendency in modern church to deny the possibility and necessity of faith healing: “...modern church has truncated the baptism into a abbreviated form, been contented with a few communion services, and ousted healing as an impossibility. This clearly shows how modern church is far from the Word of God.”(TBS 284) Thus, the juxtaposition of salvation and healing might be understood as a way of emphasizing the hitherto neglected element in modern ministry. Even if it is the case, the fact still remains that healing is treated as an additional category separable from the notion of “salvation,” which appears to be intended to refer specifically to spiritual well-being. This separation of “salvation” and “healing” presumes the traditional division of soul and body. “Salvation” is related to soul

and “healing” to body. The formulation does not challenge the conventional notion of salvation confined to the realm of soul as maintains it. Instead of questioning the conventional notion of salvation, as a liberation theology would do (Cf. Gutierrez 1994), he mathematically adds the new thematic item of healing to it. He must have deliberately chosen the traditional notion of salvation as the salvation of soul since the debate on the political meaning of salvation in the 1970s forced Korean ministers to make their position clear. Thus he says in *Three-Beat Salvation*: “John anticipated a political Messiah but Jesus demonstrated himself to be a Messiah liberating and ransoming humanity bound by the spiritual demon far more frightful than Rome.”(TBS 264) Thus, the gospel of healing at the YFGC remains trapped in the traditional soul-body dualism that reflects the unequal division of labor between spiritual and manual labor. It only diversifies the church’s religious commodity to meet the consumers’ need that is pre-determined by the division of labor. To call the three-beat salvation theology a holistic theology is misleading since its approach is synthetic than organic.

Sometimes healing is said to be one of the divine blessings: “Like other blessings, healing also comes to those who really desires it.”(TBS 304) Here the “other blessings,” of course, refer to the well-being of soul and the well-being of “all,” the first and second beats of the three-beat salvation. In the theology, as discussed in Chapter IV, the terms “blessing” and “salvation” are used interchangeably. It is already noted that the up-to-date formulation of “fivefold salvation and threefold blessing” replaces the old formulation of “three-beat salvation” with “threefold blessing.” What appears as a categorical confusion indicates the YFGC’s lack of serious interest in the theological questions rather than its lack of intelligence. Their intelligence proves to be sharp enough even to make such a subtle distinction between the differential efficacy of a mere tithe and a additional offering beyond the former, for instance. The church’s

lack of theological interest is nothing but the obverse of its burning concern about the practical matters such as wealth, health, happiness, and more than anything else “church growth.” Popular religious pragmatism sees no difference between “salvation” and “blessing.” The unconscious confusion of salvation with blessing also marks the transformation of Christianity from a salvation religion to a magic religion in modern time.

The Power of the Unsophisticated

Almost every religion concerns health and the cure of disease. Pre-modern religions can hardly be distinguished from medicine. The New Testament contains a significant number of miraculous healing stories, particularly in the Gospels and the Acts of Apostles. Biblical archeologists find healing scenes predominant in the pre-Constantinian Christian art.(See for example, Crossan 1995 : 18-20, 191-198) Curiously the Old Testament contains far less healing stories in spite of the frequent metaphorical uses of “healing” with reference to the revitalization of nation. Faith healing practice has been officially suppressed by the ecclesiastical order since the sixth century, and even more so after the Reformation, yet has survived at the margin.(Kelsey 157-242) It was not so significant as tongue speaking even in the classical Pentecostal movement, and has become central only in the neo-Pentecostal movement since 1960s.(op. cit. 4) With the favorable reception of the neo-Pentecostalism among almost all denominations of Christianity since the 1960s, “faith healing” or what neo-Pentecostals prefers to call “spiritual healing,” has now been officially recognized as an important Christian sacrament in many churches.

The fame and popularity of the Yoido Full Gospel Church in South Korea is indebted particularly to its presumably “successful” healing practice. Endless series of “witnesses” to successful cure has been disseminated mouth-to-mouth through the sprawled cell groups, in

addition to the church's cutting-edge mass media including magazine, newspaper, radio, audio cassette tape recording, later satellite television, and recently web broadcasting at www.yfgc.com. Diseases that are claimed to be cured range from minor temporary symptoms to chronic diseases, often including those cases that medical professionals decide "impossible" to cure. Even there was once a heated controversy on the rumor that a girl actually rose from the dead at the church. The church had to make it clear that it was merely a rumor about which the church had nothing to do with.(Cf. International Theological Institute 1993A : 259-266) But such a scandal did neither keep the church from practicing and promoting faith healing nor undermined its popularity.

Neo-Pentecostal groups tend to stretch the meaning of healing. According to Meredith McGuire's research on American middle-class Charismatic Christians, the situations they submit to "spiritual healing" include: emotional problems such as fear, anxiety, bitterness, resentment, compulsiveness, grieving, suicidal urges, tension, interpersonal problems such as disintegrating marriage, troubled relationship with a child or sibling, coping with a handicap, adjusting to having an aged parent move into the house, getting along with obnoxious boss, as well as physical illnesses, handicaps, chronic conditions.(McGuire 40) Morton Kelsey, a neo-Pentecostal theologian, too, puts heavier emphasis on the cure of psychological or psychologically induced physical disturbances, while cautiously admitting the possibility of the cure of biophysical illnesses.(Kelsey 243-306) The wider acceptance of spiritual healing since the 1960s seems to be partly due to this rationalization. The YFGC makes no attempt to distinguish psychopathological illnesses from biophysical ones, although claiming over and over again that over 80 percent of all diseases occur from psychic disturbance. Nor it tries to articulate a theory of mind-body interaction like the one Kelsey tries to do with his reading of the Jungian

psychoanalysis.(Ibid.) The efficacy of faith healing is simply claimed and testified to, but never examined. Faith healing at the YFGC remains simple and straightforwardly practical. It is indiscriminate as much as rudimentary. Everything that is diagnosed as an “illness” or detected as a “health problem” either by a patient himself or by a medical professional can be submitted to faith healing. The church has no alternative diagnostic system except a crude quantitative differentiation: the ordinary cases relatively easy to cure and the extraordinary ones which requires the far stronger measures such as “fasting and prayer.” Without an alternative system of diagnosis, the patients at the YFGC describe their pain and symptom either in non-professional everyday language or in professional medical terms which they happen to pick up at the clinics. Suspicion on the modern medicine does not prevent them from identifying their illnesses in those medical terms. The YFGC’s healing practice is far less sophisticated than other types of non-medical healing such as metaphysical movements, eastern meditation, and human potential groups, which have more or less elaborated alternative views of body, environment, society, and health with corresponding systems of diagnosis.(Cf. McGuire 79-129)

“No Shaman Ritual”

The three-beat salvation theology displays an array of the pre-modern views of disease, which attributes disease to violation of taboo, spirit intrusion, and disease sorcery.(Cf. Kim, Kwang-il in Ryu, Tong-sik, et al. 243-247) It is, thus, no accident that the church’s religiosity is often viewed “shamanistic.” But such a characterization usually implies that the church is non-Christian or non-biblical. To this accusation, the YFGC replies that its practice of spiritual healing is not shamanistic but fundamentally based on the biblical tradition. They say that they are far more faithful to the biblical tradition in their practice of spiritual healing and tongue speaking than those who deny or only opportunistically admit them. Both sides in the

controversy assume the incompatibility of the biblical tradition and shamanism, which can no longer be sustained. Today's critical biblical scholarship shows that healing is indeed an essential part of both the historical Jesus' work and the earliest Jesus movement.(Cf. Crossan 1991; Borg 1998)

Moreover it is undeniable that the healing stories of Jesus in the Gospels reflect the animistic, magical, broadly "shamanistic," concept of illness and the method of cure. To be "shamanistic" does not necessarily means non-Christian or non-biblical. The dichotomy of Christianity and shamanism reflects not only the modernist's gaze but also that of the dominant Christian culture after it became a establishment for the ruling class, which has subdued the animistic, magical, practical, popular religiosity. It is no accident that some radical Christian theologians pay attention to Jesus as a subversive exorcist, an embodiment of people's struggle to liberate themselves from the spell of demonic social forces.(For example, Chung, Hyun-kyung 66)

Actually this image of a revolutionary shaman than a Pentecostal faith healer seems to be closer to that of the historical Jesus as a teacher of subversive wisdom and a healer.(See Borg 1998) In contrast to the image of a subversive shaman, a Pentecostal healer appears as a paramedical professional, who thrives at the crack of the modern medicine. This is why their claim to be faithful to the biblical tradition sounds dubious however their practice of spiritual healing resembles the biblical healing stories on the surface.

As much to the Pentecostals as to the mainliners in South Korea, however, the label "shamanism" stands for idolatry, the cardinal sin in Christianity. To call a Christian "shamanistic" amounts to an anathema. Thus, the Pentecostals find themselves in a paradoxical situation, in which they have to deny their "shamanism," while maintaining the notion of the

supernatural intervention of demons and deity into our everyday life. Their ingenious leader, however, faces no shortage of argument. In a sermon entitled “Why Does Shamanism Not Disappear?” Rev. Cho, Yonggi ingeniously blames the failure of modern churches to proclaim the efficacy of the precious Blood of Jesus Christ in incurring wealth, health, and the peace of mind. Because they do not preach the precious Blood, he argues, people pray to the moon, stars, rocks and trees, bow down before the statue of Buddha, and rely on shamans in vain.(Cho, Yonggi 1996A vol. 6 : 241-253) One may read this argument as a proclamation of monotheism in the midst of the predominant polytheistic folk religion, recognizing only one truly effective deity. The proclamation of Jesus Christ as the only effective deity might be compared to Jewish monotheism that marks a significant step toward the Enlightenment with its de-mystification or de-sacramentalization of nature through its categorical inhibition of idolatry in any form. Such a comparison may contain some grain of truth. But shamanistic beliefs and practices survived merely at the margin of the modern Korea, which had gone through “modernization” not only by the zealous Christian evangelism but also by the national campaigns of the state apparatus and the non-governmental organizations. And this anti-shamanistic argument unwittingly re-shamanizes the supposedly non-shamanistic Christianity by putting Jesus Christ on the same level of other shamanistic deities. All deities are made comparable in terms of their efficacy in bringing about the practical goods. There is no qualitative difference among the deities. Jesus Christ is the best simply because it proves to be most effective. Here lies the secret worship of the existing power relationship in the world system under the domination of the west. At the same time, the emphasis on the miraculous efficacy of the precious Blood in engendering wealth, health, and happiness in this life ironically reintroduces practical animism into Christianity.

Moreover it should be noted that shamanism as a coherent organization with more or less

systematic rituals and beliefs managed to survive only at the margin of Korean society in the 1960s. "Shamanism," in a loose sense of the popular religious culture for the ordinary people, has been nothing more than an occasional, rudimentary, casual practice of the by-gone tradition with little binding force and seriousness. They perform a "shamanistic" ritual, knowing it a superstition, simply because it is the transmitted form of ritual in which they can express their individual or communal wishes: a good luck for a theatrical production, an entrance exam, a new investment, and even an election, etc. On the other hand, the YFGC's Pentecostalism can be regarded as "shamanistic," insofar as it sees the world as an arena in which good and evil spirits are warring against each other. It is therefore impossible to measure how much the Korean folk religion and the imported Pentecostalism respectively contribute to the so-called "shamanistic" element in South Korea's modern Pentecostalism. But it can be definitely said that the Pentecostalism turns the modern Christianity into a magic and rejuvenates "shamanistic" religiosity, which has already been marginalized in the South Korean society.

On the other hand, it is also true that the YFGC has tried to contain the "shamanistic" elements within the boundary that the literal reading of the Bible stories allows. This is what distinguishes the YFGC from the other Christian healing groups which develop a more elaborate demonology beyond the boundary. For example, a Christian healing group led by Rev. Kim, Ki-dong features a systemic demonology, according to which demons are said to be the forms of the unbelievers' spiritual afterlife and each of them has a name. Besides the demons named after the personal names of the deceased, there are the "shaman demon," the "beggar demon," the "widow demon," the "Chun-ahn demon,"² the "elder brother demon," and the "general demon left alone after his men ran away," etc.(Kim, Kwang-il in Ryu, Tong-sik, et. al. : 239-240. Also see Suh,

² Chun-ahn is the name of a city in South Korea.

Kwang-sun's observation in Ryu, Tong-sik, et al. 64)³ These demons are said to be resentful and want to harm the living since they died with resentment in this life. Rev. Kim, Ki-dong is known to be able to talk with, actually see, and expel them. They work, it is said, under the command of Satan known as the fallen angel. Satan is thought not as an imaginary being or psychological state but as a tangible existence, who sends demons into human bodies to make them sick both mentally and physically.(Ryu, Tong-sik, et al. 240) This kind of full-blown demonology is not found in the YFGC's publication except some reminiscence of it in Rev. Choi, Jashil's autobiography, *I was Hallelujah Aunt: the "grungy beggar demon at Mt. Sam-gak,"*(Choi, Jashil 188).⁴ The other names of demons in her story achieve a higher level of abstraction as the personifications of various problems rather than of specific personas and locales: Hence, the poverty demon, the disease demon, the liquor demon.(op. cit. 267 and 268) Even the diluted demonology does not appear in the YFGC's foundational text, *Three-Beat Salvation*, and the later theological works. Comparatively speaking, the YFGC version of spiritual healing may be said to be far less "shamanistic" than the other Christian healing groups.' The Pentecostal imperative to be faithful to the literal reading of the bible stories seems to impose a certain limit on the church's public use of an elaborate demonology, which circulates in a variety of healing groups. Thus, one should not doubt the YFGC's claim that it has tried to remain thoroughly "biblical." The attempt to stick to the biblical tradition in the literal sense results in Christening shamanism and shamanizing Christianity at the same time in the modern Korea. It may be said that the YFGC has walked on a narrow path between popular shamanism and post-animistic Christianity. Here lies the unique position the YFGC has occupied in Korea's religious culture. But this unique position alone does not fully account for the church's incomparable expansion.

³ Here Dr. Kim. Kwang-il cites Kang, Sung-jin's master thesis, *An Experimental Study of the Phenomenon of Exorcism – focused on the Exorcism of Rev. Kim, Ki-dong.* Seoul : Yonsei University, 1979.

The real breakthrough lies in the merge of the Pentecostal notion of faith healing and the psycho-technique of Positive Thinking.

Eternal Life as Uninterrupted Bodily Functioning

The chapter on the third beat of salvation, the well-being of body begins with an outrageous claim that illness and death are unnatural:

God wants our bodies to be healthy. Death all human beings today are afraid of is abnormal from the beginning. God created human beings not to die. It was our original destiny to live forever with God in the Garden of Eden, eating from the Tree of Life. But human beings were fallen, and brought in death. Thus, they came to live in corruptible bodies, enslaved to illness, the instrument of death. This is why the cosmic plan of God to save human beings includes deliverance from illness. He had Jesus, His only begotten Son, bear the task. His wish for our health was that strong.(TBS 243)

This statement may not sound outrageous if one takes it as a popular and childish utopian imagination on the restoration to the original state of things in which everything is peaceful, blissful, and perfect. But it starts looking uncanny when the extravagant vision of a cosmic salvation, instead of remaining as an unreachable dream, is made real in the Pentecostal practice of spiritual healing. The short circuit of utopia and reality in the Pentecostal universe makes the eternal life not in spiritual sense but in physical sense, in other words, “eternal youth,” a real possibility. In Lacanian terms, the short circuit makes “eternal youth” as the object-cause of desire, a *petit objet a* which sets a desire in motion and keeps a subject desiring.

The interpolation of the word “health” as an exchangeable term with “eternal life” in this context is not insignificant as it appears at the first glance. “Health” is one of the key motifs in North America’s success philosophy. The author of *Three-Beat Salvation* finds a biblical reference in the generic greeting of the third letter by John (III John 2), which, in his mind, supports the identification of health and the eternal life: “Beloved, I pray that all may go well

⁴ Sam-gak is the name of a mountain in the city of Seoul, literally meaning triangle.

with you and that you may be in good health just as it is well with your soul.” On the one hand, the interpolation of the medical term “health” reduces the deathless life in the restored Paradise or the eternal life, to the uninterrupted functioning of body, as distinguished from the well being of spirit and mind. On the other hand, “health,” inserted into the Creation Myth, attains an ethereal dimension beyond the nature’s limits. Life freed from the power of death means neither the eternal life as a spiritual mode of being the Gospel according to John (Cf. John 3:1-16) describes. Nor is it the resurrection in a new body after dying in the old body Paul the apostle tries to convey in his epistle.(Cf. I Corinthians 15) The “eternal life” in the three-beat salvation theology means rather the endless continuation of life in the present body without malfunctioning and interruption. Correspondingly, Satan’s “power of death,” the metaphor of the cosmic power of destruction, is also reduced to the power of engendering and reinforcing disease in the modern medical sense which leads ultimately to death. At the same time modern pathology, mixed with the idea of spiritual cosmic power, attains the dimension of mythology. The crossbreeding of the modern medicine and the ancient myth produces a new hybrid species which can only be called “medicalized mythology” or “mythologized medicine.”

Also noteworthy is that illness is regarded as a harbinger of the approaching death. No attempt is made to distinguish those diseases as the moments of biophysical readjustment from those as the symptoms of aging. The gospel of health regards the symptoms of aging, the natural decay of biophysical functioning, as “illness” leading to death, thus unwittingly following today’s tendency toward the medicalization of life. It is, on the other hand, a logical conclusion of the assumption that illness and death is originally abnormal. Paradoxically, the de-naturalized conception of illness and death through re-mythologization goes perfectly well with the modern technological view of nature as the Other to be conquered. In the modern Pentecostal notion of

spiritual healing converge mythology and technology. The general fear of death, which the author of *Three-Beat Salvation* mentions in the quotation above, thus, refers neither to a spontaneous feeling about the inescapable limit of every mortal's life as the ancient admonition *memento mori* tried to remind. Rather death (and illness as its harbinger) is feared as an alien intruder which derails the smooth operation of the ever-same world. Death is understood neither as a link in the ecological cycle nor as an instance in a historical process. Nor is it understood as a critical moment of dialectical movement leading to the final resurrection through radical discontinuity and contradiction. The Pentecostal notion of spiritual healing takes death simply as a halt in the physical functioning of an individual's body.

In the chapter on the salvation of soul, the first beat of the threefold salvation, as already seen above, body is regarded as the source of all evils, the site for nothing good, to be repeatedly destroyed by those religious practices such as fasting, prayer, and repentance. While mind can still be disciplined to the service of God's purpose, it is said, body is hopeless. For salvation, body is only to be "killed." In the chapter on health, the third beat, however, body abruptly appears as the site of salvation. The same "good God" requires thorough destruction of body as the source of all illicit passions, on the one hand, but at the same time care for body as the site of physical (and even emotional) functioning, on the other. It is a sheer contradiction, on the surface. But it does not have to be so on the level of the unconscious. To the "good God," body is nothing but a physical instrument which is supposed to execute His commands in the most effective way and without friction. Body should not be "killed" in the literal sense but disintegrated into the most efficient machine, deprived of its own rights. The three-beat salvation theology, which some Pentecostal theologians boast of being "holistic," (For example,

International Theological Institute 1993A : 125-131), actually is precisely the opposite of holism, which would fully recognize body's own claim.

“The Origins of Illness” or Intelligible Inconsistency

The author of *Three-Beat Salvation* attributes illness to three mythological origins - Sin, Satan, and Curse:

Satan, Sin, and Curse are the three major powers which bring us illness. They always act together, work together, and thus inseparable from each other. Satan tempts human beings to commit sin before God, sin brings in the Curse of God.(TBS 244)

The inseparability of the three mythological pathogens is not only explicitly mentioned but also elaborated by retelling the primordial myth of the temptation, the fall, and the resultant curse. Since the “three origins” of illness are actually the three components constituting a coherent story line, the designation of them as the “three origins” is awkward. But the author even goes further to elaborate each of the “three origins” in the three sub-sections respectively dedicated to each of them as if they were independent forces: 1) Sin, 2) Satan, and 3) Curse.(245-256). It is interesting to note that the sequence of the three origins in the subsections – Sin-Satan-Curse - differs from the narrative sequence - Satan-Sin-Curse. Again this absurdity should not be dismissed merely as the author's logical sloppiness. The logical inconsistency seems to originate from his pastiche-style theology that tries to bring together, with no serious intention to be logically consistent but to produce a certain psychological effects, several heterogeneous views on the origin of illness: Penal, animistic or “shamanistic,” and mythological conceptions of disease. The YFGC's inconsistency is partially attributable to its stubborn literal dependence on the biblical tradition that is itself far from consist on the origin of disease. The Bible describes disease sometimes as God's punishment for mortals' sin but at other times as the work of the demons. As Herbert Loewe warns: “It is not safe to dogmatize or to differentiate between the

attitude of the Pentateuch and the Prophets; it is unwise to establish distinctions of time or place, because in no subject is there greater scope of inconsistency.”(Loewe 756) However, the penal conception of disease, which sees illness as God’s retribution against human transgression, prevails in the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the extra-canonical literature of Judaism, and the animistic conception of disease as the work of the demonic powers appears only in the post-exilic texts such as Tobit, 1 Enoch, Jubilees, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the New Testament, particularly Gospels and Acts.(Kee 659-660; Loewe 755-757) No attempt has been made to harmonize these two conceptions in the biblical tradition. It was the Palestine Rabbis who took notice of the incompatibility of the two views and denied the demonic origin of disease in an effort to remain consistent with the penal conception.(Loewe 757) The notion of the Curse in the three-beat salvation theology remains ambiguous because Rev. Cho, Yong-gi describes it both as the penalty against particular sins and as a primordial fate of human beings due to the original sin.

It confuses the two biblical pathogenic views, through a questionable interpretation of the biblical myth on the Fall. The uniqueness of the YFGC’s understanding of disease lies in the juxtaposition of the three heterogeneous conceptions with little care of consistency. It suggests, on the one hand, the church’s literal faithfulness to the biblical tradition, to the point of blindness. On the other hand, it implies its unfaithfulness to any notion of pathogens. Blind literalness and logical inconsistency make any conception bereft of substance, a sure sign of pragmatic cynicism.

Notwithstanding the invocation of sin as a pathogen, precisely what constitutes “sin” is left obscure besides the generic notion of disobedience to God’s sovereign will, as observed in Chapter V. Thus, the content of repentance as a prerequisite of cure also remains vague. In a

stark contrast to the brevity on the content of sin, the later section entitled “Ways to Get Cure from Illness” spends almost ten pages to elaborate how “guilt feeling” affects health.(TBS 312-318) The vague use of the term “sin” was already observed in the primitive Methodist revival meetings, the direct ascendant of Pentecostalism.(Cf. E. P. Thompson 366) The stock list of sin – swearing, gaming, drunkenness, idleness, sexual looseness, “desire of the flesh,” “pride of this world,” and “temptation of eyes” etc. – inherited from the Methodist tradition is utterly truncated in the three-beat salvation to the point that one can barely identify it. It is not surprising because the theology for a new era tries to replace the old God, the fearful Overseer with the new one, the benevolent Provider. But this does not mean that the notion of sin itself disappears or undermined. Rather the notion of sin is given an uncanny dimension. As the three-beat salvation theology evacuates almost all substance of the concept of sin, the latter becomes an empty, formal signifier like Kant’s categorical imperative. In other words, sin bereft of any specific content becomes Sin in a purely formal sense.

The most clearly specified sin is violation of the law of full tithing, the cardinal sin in the three-beat salvation. However, tithing is also presented as the symbol of God’s absolute sovereignty that allows no question at all. In Kantian language, the law of tithing is purified of any “pathological” consideration on its purpose and effects. Thus, it would be wrong to conclude that the lifting-up of substantial laws, “de-regulation,” one might say, liberates the Pentecostal subjects from heteronomy or external coercion. The exact opposite is true. The formalization of law leads, precisely because of its emptiness, to boundless totalitarianism, to which unconditional obedience is the only proper response. This is why the new (post)-modern “good God” is much more arbitrary and authoritarian than the old one as the God as Overseer and Judge. The linguistic obscurity typical to this church’s writing can be said to point to the

same empty and thus boundless totalitarian deity, who transcends even the most elementary linguistic norms: the mirror image of the (post)-modern narcissistic subject.

The subsection entitled “Sin”(TBS 245-247) focuses on the original Sin and its on-going effect. Nothing is mentioned on contemporary sins. The doctrine of the original Sin that human beings are *a priori* fallen and unable to deliver themselves on their own from the power of death has long been part of the most fundamental Christian doctrine however it has been differently interpreted in different contexts. There is nothing unusual, thus, in attributing the human enslavement under the power of death to the original Sin. What is peculiar is soul-body dualism which Rev. Cho, Yonggi introduces in his peculiar understanding of death. He starts with a commonplace statement: “As Adam and Eve rebelled against God and committed sin, their souls was immediately separated from the communion with God and dead.”(TBS 245) And then he hurriedly adds: “This death does not mean disappearance, but enslavement to Satan, the source of death.”(TBS 245-246) Here the author refers to the souls of Adam and Eve, suggesting that their souls did not disappear but were subjugated to the deadly power of Satan, while their body was still waiting for gradual decay leading to final death. This supplementary explanation is, of course, required because the biblical narrative does not portray the first human couple as immediately dying, contradicting God’s word that they shall die if they eat the fruits from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.(Cf. Genesis 2:17) The etiological myth simply accounts for how humans beings come to be mortals who have to toil and die. But literal reading can not accept such an etiological interpretation, and must harmonize the obvious discrepancy by introducing the aforementioned soul-body dualism:

Thus, the death of our soul came from Sin, and the death of our body came from the death of our soul, which was the first son of death. And the death of body begins with illness. Human beings never die without disease, except the cases of accidental death. Therefore the origin of disease lies in Sin.(TBS 247)

The dualism presents body as dependent on soul. But its logical consistency is again collapsed by the immediately following paragraph that suggests some autonomy of body: “We should not find the cure of disease only in physical realm. When we try to find its origin and cure in spiritual realm, we can get a faster and fuller healing.”(TBS 247) This statement by itself may be taken as a plausible insight of psychosomatic medicine. But the blanket assertion of the primacy of spiritual realm again blurs the elementary distinction between biophysical disorders and psychophysical disorders, with which psychosomatic medicine should begin. Moreover, the call for repentance as a prerequisite of healing.(Ibid.) remains empty insofar as disease is attributed to the original Sin. How can one repent on the sin that he did not commit? Not a single idea – be it theological or medical - is logically developed particularly when *Three-Beat Salvation* deals with concepts. In contrast, it becomes suddenly far more eloquent when it deals with practical methods. This again shows that the substance of the three-beat salvation theology lies not in its concepts but in the psychological effects those non-concepts stimulate among the audience.

Here again the logical inconsistency should not be simply attributed to the lack of intelligence in the author and his audience. It rather indicates the post-Christian condition of modernity, in which the traditional Christian views of illness have irrevocably lost their substance, their symbolic binding force. They can only be secondarily mobilized as rhetorical devices for an external purpose. In the process, they cannot but being extricated from their own cultural contexts and bereft of their logical consistency. Only an external motif imposes the semblance of consistency on those incompatible elements confiscated from various cultural traditions. This is what we find in the pastiche style of the three-beat salvation theology. Specifically in the chapter on the third beat of salvation, the unifying motif is, of course, the

pragmatic interests in health. All theological concepts – ethical, mythological, or animistic – and medical insights are not pursued for their inherent value but merely invoked to stimulate the desire of the audience for miraculous healing. The notion of “God’s concern for our health,” which the church invokes, is itself merely a rhetorical device to manipulate the wide spread desire for miraculous healing on behalf of the church’s own interests. Whether particular illness is actually cured or not, the church has no responsibility, since the ultimate responsibility theoretically falls on believers. Similar to Lotto, where there is no one to blame for a bad luck but participants’ own fault in picking a wrong number, in the spiritual healing at the YFGC there is no one to blame for an uncured disease but believers’ own insufficient faith. In both instances, miscarriage does not cool off but rather enflame the desire for divine blessing. The success of spiritual healing business does not depend on the warranted cure of illnesses. Rather it depends on keeping the desire alive. It depends indeed on “faith” and “prayer” rather than on their proven effects. The Pentecostal theology of spiritual healing is a fantasy framework that presents healing as the object-cause of the desire in Lacanian terms. The Pentecostal fantasy maintains itself by producing and reproducing the desire, which in turn sustains the fantasy. Sufficient evidence is not required to support the fantasy, as in any ideology. Sufficient is only a little piece of the real, that is, any coincidence between belief and “fact,” however contingent and in whatever aspect.

Beneath the logical inconsistency, thus, lies psychological consistency, which the three-beat salvation theology keeps playing upon. The invocation of the mythological elements such as the original Sin, Satan, and Curse speaks for the real powerlessness of individuals who are utterly dependent on the societal forces they neither comprehend nor control. The more rationalized society gets, the more impenetrable it becomes, and the more it resembles a world of

mythic fate. As the Enlightenment as the domination of external nature and human nature is accomplished, the ancient elemental spirits are finally given a second life. Insofar as the world is seized by those mythological powers, it is said, the entire effort of modern medicine cannot but default whatever improvement it may make:

This passage shows the fact that every one is given to Satan and under the curse of disease. Therefore disease cannot be conquered merely by modern medicine. As soon as it conquers one, Satan makes another incurable disease.(TBS 254)

Even though today's science is making a great effort to liberate human beings from disease and death, I can not escape the impression that the number of patients at hospitals keeps increasing and more incurable diseases are discovered than the ones conquered. (TBS 253)

Whether or not his "impression" proves to be true, the figures of those mythological powers do give an expression to the real feeling of impotence and dependence among the people in the world that alienates them. The figures are true insofar as they represent the universal enslavement of living individuals in modern capitalist world system. They are false insofar as they misplace the real social problem to the mythological realm. In the same way, the figure of Jesus Christ is disfigured into the mythological Healer, taking apart it from its socio-historical context: "John (the Baptist) anticipated a political Messiah, but Jesus proved himself to be a Messiah who liberates and ransom humanity bound by spiritual demons who are far more dreadful than the Roman empire."(TBS 264)⁵ What Rev. Cho, Yong-gi intends here with the unnecessary modifier "spiritual" for demons is to mean simply that Jesus Christ has nothing to do with the political but with the spiritual understood as the mythological realm of the primordial Sin, Curse, and Satan.

⁵ The modifier "spiritual" for demons is redundant, since demons are spiritual beings. There can be no such things as "physical demons."

“Power of Words,” or Spiritual Healing Rationalized

In contrast to the mumbo-jumbo on the origins of illness in the first section, the final section on the methods to get healing shows far greater logical consistency. It is probably because the last section openly discusses practical methods to attain healing, thus better befitting the general tenet of pragmatism in the three-beat salvation theology as a whole. One can easily locate the source of the practical instructions in North America’s success philosophy and Positive Thinking. It is, thus, no accident that the methods to get healing are not so different from the methods to receive get financial blessing. Rev. Cho, Yonggi openly asserts:

Like other blessings, the blessing of healing can be bestowed only to those who have a burning desire for it. God can give nothing to those who do not want and desire. The salvation of spiritual wellbeing, as well as healing, would be of no use to those who do not want it, even though the eternal life has become readily available through the death of Jesus Christ, to every one who believes in Him. The blessing of well-being of everything has also come close at hand to us. But it would have no effect on those who do not have a burning desire for it. Therefore, if you want to receive the atonement of disease, first of all, you have to have a burning desire for health.(304-305)

Healing, according to the three-beat salvation theology, is merely one of the blessings that God has made readily available to us. Everyone can enjoy those blessings! But people are still struggling in distress. Rev. Cho, Yonggi ingeniously compares them to the children who won’t eat at the feast their parents prepare for them, or to those who do not prepare a container and open its to hold the sweet rain, that is, the heavenly blessing.(TBS 304) It may sound like the old folksy optimism based on their timeless intercourse with the nature through communal labor in the pre-capitalist modes of production. But in the modern world, in which where everything is commodified and privatized for the production of the maximum profit, such optimism turns into an advertising slogan of a questionable panacea, into a psychological trick to manipulate the sense of impotence among the desperate individuals. The analogy not only presents society as a whole to be ultimately beneficial to every individual, thus, covering up its injustice, but also

displaces responsibility from the society's structural contradiction to individuals' fault: "You, a fool, you don't get what you can readily get!"

Such ideological displacement has traditionally been done by falsely projecting real contradictions to some transcendental realms. The pathogenic conceptions in the three-beat salvation theology retain the same transcendental projection. But that is not all. The theology subjects those transcendental forces to the psycho-technique. Cosmology is psychologized, psychology cosmologized. This again reveals the (post)-modern phenomenon of de-differentiation. Thus, the practical instructions for healing include (TBS 303-327):

- Have a burning desire for health;
- Repent your sins;
- Be forgiven and do forgive, that is, eliminate guilt feeling and hatred;
- Believe in salvation and signs, that is, visualize and verbalize your burning desire; and
- Do not commit sins again, that is, fill your heart with the thought of God.

It is tricky to distinguish the primordial mode of magic wishing from a "burning desire" as the crucial prerequisite of blessing. As seen in chapter IV, the emphatic expression, "burning desire," is taken from Napoleon Hill's success philosophy, in which Hill makes it clear that a mere wish and a burning desire are two different things. He even goes on to explain it, relying on a popularized psychoanalytic theory, as a libidinalized wish. To make a wish into a burning desire, one has to pour her heart on it, visualize and verbalize again and again until it is inscribed in her subconscious. Hill himself uses the term "auto-suggestion" for the procedure. Rev. Cho, Yonggi does not explicitly mention Hill's success philosophy in this particular section. Nor he offer a psychological background of his instructions. Instead, he illustrates the idea with the biblical stories. But the isolation of the "wishing" motif from the biblical narratives as one of methods to receive the blessing of healing, as well as the repeated use of the emphatic expression, a "burning" wish or desire, unmistakably points to the ingenious merge of

Christianity and the success philosophy. As a result, Christianity is psychologized, and pop-psychology Christianized.

More accurately, both religion and science becomes something alien to them. For example, the three-beat salvation theology translates the Christian ethic of forgiving into the psycho-technique of eliminating the “negative” feelings such as guilt feeling and hatred. Repentance and the atonement of sin is, too, transformed into the method of removing guilt feeling. Belief in salvation and signs turns into the pop-psychological technique of visualizing and verbalizing a given wish until it gets inscribed in the “sub-conscious” and becomes a mysterious attractor of the power of the Infinite. Jesus’ commandment not to commit sin again is also made into the psycho-technique of filling mind with a positive image. Psychology, on the other hand, which aims at an understanding of human mind, is not left as what it is, but disfigured into a technology. Both science – psychology and medicine - and religion are reduced to mere instrumentality. Moreover, the transcendental deity, whom any law cannot bind by definition, comes to be bound by the psycho-technique. On the other hand, instrumentality attains a sublime dimension precisely as the technique of mobilizing the Infinite one one’s interests. In this impossible merge, in which “the unconditional becomes fact, the conditional an immediate essence,”(Adorno 1994 : 128) lies the general characteristics of modern occultism, of which the modern Pentecostalism of South Korea is a variation .

“Assert You Are Already Healed!”

In the fantasy world of the three-beat salvation theology, thus, it is not only impossible but also unnecessary to distinguish dream from reality. The church’s method of faith healing forecloses, precisely in principle, the possibility of failed cure precisely because the expectation

of a failure itself would fail the cure. The church, of course, acknowledges in a later theological publication that not every one can be practically healed.(International Institute of Theology 1993B : 197) To be healed, however, one should purify one's heart of negative thoughts, fill one's heart only with positive images, and verbally assert that "I am already healed!" Even prayer is confused with positive declaration, which is said to bring about the reality equivalent to the declaration. Rev. Cho, Yonggi cites James 5:15a: "[A]nd the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up," and goes on to say:

The prayer of faith is not a prayer expecting an unlikely coincidence or luck, half-believing and half-doubting. The prayer of faith is a creative declaration that you are actually seeing and expecting something that is not here and now as it is actually there. (TBS 318)

After presenting the standard evangelical doctrine of a born-again Christian as opposed to a mere Christian and of the inseparability of the belief in "signs, miracles from the belief in salvation through the grace of Jesus Christ, Rev. Cho, Yonggi adds as if those requirements were not sufficient to get healing:

Furthermore we need to visualize the image that we are getting healed, and verbally affirm and believe healing as if we are already restored to health. In words lies the power of healing.(TBS 324)

This is, of course, the typical autosuggestion technique borrowed from Napoleon Hills and Norman V. Peale, which has nothing to do with the traditional doctrine of vicarious atonement Rev. Cho describes immediately before. And it is precisely what the author of *Three-Beat Salvation* adds to the arsenal of the Korean Pentecostalism. Interestingly here Rev. Cho, Yong-gi relies on a homespun pseudo-psychophysiology:

Because words comes out of our thought, belief in healing changes our thought, the thought in its turn commands health to the whole system of neuron, and vitality is to

be distributed throughout the body according to the command.(TBS 324-325)

Whether this rather surprising psycho-physiological explanation on the efficacy of the declared words is valid or not, the form of argument is more of science than of religion. It offers a causal chain among belief in healing, thought, words, the whole system of neuron, and body. And it assumes the causal chain to reside in an isolated organism, a monad, as modern medicine tends to do. This type of “religious” healing has nothing to do with communal and emotional support for patients and their beloved to help them better cope with their crises. The religion of compassion turns into a cold science.

The same happens to one of the most essential religious terms like “faith.” Rev. Cho, Yonggi continues to say: “Therefore we need to get *mid-um* more than anything else.”(TBS 325) Here Rev. Cho, Yong-gi plays upon the multiple connotations of the Korean word *mid-um* to confuse religion with psycho-technique. The Korean word normally means faith, belief, or piety in religious context. In non-religious context it could mean trust or assurance. Thus, the wording, to “get faith,” is awkward in religious context, but it could mean to “get assurance” in non-religious context. But with the wording “get faith” in religious context instead of the usual expression, “have faith in God,” he is mixing religion and psychology:

If you cannot get *mid-um* by ordinary praying, you have to get an unwavering *mid-um* in your heart by practicing midnight fasting prayer. *Mid-um* cannot be attained by an intellectual understanding. Nor it is a vague hope for the future. *Mid-um* is always a matter of the present. Right at this moment you need to experience a blazing encounter with Jesus Christ and to possess *mid-um* in God in such an excitement. Thus, only those who already have received *mid-um* know what *mid-um* is like. When *mid-um* comes to us, Spirit embraces our hearts like a mist and leads to the world of mysterious miracles and signs.(TBS 325)

Mid-um in this passage does not mean faith as the religious attitude of the subject’s active commitment to God’s incomprehensible cause at the risk of one’s life or of the “courage to be,” an adventure into the unknown, the praxis of abyssal freedom by existential decision at the

margin of symbolic order. Faith in this sense involves a certain “irrational” leap, traumatic cut, founding gesture, or “event,” from which a subject and a symbolic order emerge as secondary retroactive constructions in the form of always-already. Faith in this sense comes close to a truly revolutionary praxis or Lacanian “Act” which consists in death to the symbolic order and committing oneself to an unknown, undetermined, unwarranted, and open-ended future. (Cf. Zizek 1999 : 127-170) While faith in this sense attempts to transcend the existing order by confronting it, *Mid-um* in the three-beat salvation theology attempts to do so by withdrawing into the imaginary realm of narcissistic wish-fulfillment at the price of the loss of reality. In Lacanian terms, faith as Act transcends the symbolic order by symbolic death, “dying to the laws,” while *Mid-um* in the three-beat salvation disintegrates the symbolic order by the short-circuit of Superego injunction (“Enjoy!”) and id (drive). (Zizek 1992B : 31-46, 1995 : 7-28) To “get an unwavering *mid-um*” in one’s heart means to libidinalize his wish until dream and reality become hardly distinguishable. The “blazing encounter with Jesus Christ” will lead one to the “world of mysterious miracles and signs” where Spirit like “a mist” blurs the boundary between reality and dream. Entering this blurry make-believe world points to nothing other than psychological regression to narcissism. And the image of the “embracing Spirit” like a mist is nothing less than the image of the self-indulging ego which loses its capacity to test reality, to grasp the objective world through conceptual labor, in short, the capacity as *ratio*. Pentecostal “Spirit” is, thus, the opposite of Hegelian “spirit” whose vitality is said to lie in its courage of “tarrying with the negative” (Hegel 1977 : 19).⁶ Today’s outcry for “spirit” is both a mourn on the spiritlessness of the world and a sign of the de-spirited spirit at once.

⁶ “But the life of Spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it. It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself. It is this power, not as something positive, which does closes its eyes to the negative, as when we say of something that it is nothing or is false, and then, having done with it, turn away and pass on to something else; on the contrary,

Melancholic Christianity

The three-beat salvation theology like the American success philosophy and Positive Thinking invokes the phantasmatic sense of omnipotence among its adherents, as its slogan has it: "Nothing is impossible to the believers." As discussed above, the surrealistic confidence on the part of subject with no ground in reality indicates what is called "secondary narcissism" in psychoanalysis. Before discussing the relationship between secondary narcissism and modern Pentecostalism, the curious relationship between Pentecostalism and melancholia is to be noted first.

Sigmund Freud, in his famous paper entitled "Mourning and Melancholia,"(Freud 1963 : 164-179) takes notice of the distinctive characteristics of melancholia as opposed to ordinary grief, a psychological process apparently similar to the former. The former shares the common features with the latter, including "a profoundly painful dejection, abrogation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, and inhibition of all activity."(Freud 1963 : 165) But melancholia has an additional feature: "a lowering of the self-regarding feelings to the degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-revilings, and culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment." (Ibid.) What distinguishes pathological melancholia from the normal process of mourning for the loss of the beloved lies precisely in this additional feature of self-reproaching. Suicidal impulse, sleeplessness, and cyclical shift into the opposite, i.e. mania, also characterize melancholia.

Most of the features of melancholia in the specifically psychopathological sense can be found in the autobiography, *I Was Hallelujah Aunt* by Rev. Choi, Ja-shil, the initial founder of the YFGC and the mother-in-law of Rev. Cho, Yonggi, the Senior Pastor. First of all, chronic

Spirit is this power only by looking the negative in the face, and tarrying with it. This tarrying with the negative is the magical power that converts it into being."(Hegel 1977 : 19)

psychological depression and self-reproach permeates her autobiography. Upon the death of her first daughter, which occurred merely ten days after the death of her mother, it was written: “I felt my heart broken with reprehension that I lost my daughter only ten days after my mother had passed for the price of my sin, my love of money more than anything else in the world and my pride of a luxurious life as one of a few owners of an automobile.”(Choi, Ja-shil 112) Then follows a very strange scene:

Instead of thinking about my daughter’s funeral, I was giving thanks in prayer while I was weeping. I felt like I would die if I blamed [God or her?] instead of giving thanks.(op. cit. 113)

According to this remembered story, she appears to have been aware of the idiosyncrasy of her own behavior. It is expressed in her sister-in-law’s warning: “Sister, please back to your sense. How could you give thanks before the dead body of your daughter? It would not even sufficient to shed tears. You will be ashamed.”(op. cit. 113) Then, Rev. Choi, Ja-shil describes a sudden shift of her psychic mood, which was incomprehensible to her:

A sudden belief came into my heart that worldly goods were nothing else than useless trash and that the ultimate purpose of life was to live for the glory of God and enter the Kingdom of God. According to common sense, I had had to cry for my daughter. But it came to my mind, though I did not know why, that Bok-jah (her first daughter’s name, literally means a “blessed child” – the present writer’s note) was blessed as her name had it. And I burst into thanks-giving. But I did not understand why I was giving thanks. It was because Spirit compelled me into a prayer of thanks-giving.(Ibid.)

The sudden shift of mood from self-reproach to thanks-giving needs not to be read merely as a mere ritual lip service to such a notion that even death is a blessing for Christians. Rather its unusual nature suggests the likeliness of the strange psychic event. There are enough indicators in the quotation which point to the compulsive nature of the sudden transition of mood: the coming of a sudden belief, Spirit’s compelling, and incomprehensibility on her part. Bursting into thanks-giving before the body of her dead daughter amounts to jumping into a hallucination,

which is the hallmark of the psychotic loss of reality.(Freud 1963 : 204) “Life for the glory of God” she suddenly found as the ultimate purpose of her life is based on this loss of reality, in which the worldly goods turns into trash, and she felt compelled into thanks-giving against her will and understanding. It is important here to note that the moment she was literally “beside herself” came at the point that her self-reproach became unbearable, as described in the previous quotation that she felt like dying if she did not give thanks. It does not necessarily mean that she permanently fell into psychosis. Actually the hallucinatory thanks-giving did not last long.

The pattern of the sudden psychological shift from depression to hilarious religious experience based on the momentary loss of reality, however, recurs throughout the later part of the autobiography. It is psychological depression that leads to the most dramatic event in her life, her born-again experience. It follows immediately the experience of hallucinatory thanks-giving. Reproaching her “sins” such as the violation of tithing in the form of auditory hallucination (Choi, Ja-shil 116-117) intensifies her sense of guilt, leading to a suicidal impulse: “I was overwhelmed by the incessant sense of guilt. The strong impulse to give up my life was pounding my heart like drum beats.”(op. cit. 117) Later, the same impulse is expressed as “being possessed by the Suicide Demon” in the mouth of her friend who invited her to a revival gathering at a prayer mountain.(op. cit. 122) At the gathering she wants to get “crazy” again.(op. cit. 123) Offering a “prayer of repentance” over the night, she finally experiences the first tongue-speaking, which later becomes her favorite but compulsive behavior. Even after this initial “blessing of Spirit,” which gives her the sense of peace and bliss, however, she is not free from the recurrent attack of depression, against which tongue-prayer is said to have been the most powerful weapon:

Indeed as the saying goes that Satan envies you for the grace of God that you are given, the thought of my mother and daughter, who has gone to heaven, occasionally distressed

me to the point that I could barely stand. It was certainly Satan's attack. Sometimes I fell back again in depression because of guilt feeling. But every time I sought for Spirit's help by tongue-prayer. Then Satan scattered away on the seven roads and I could felt the living water peacefully flowing like a river in my stomach.(op. cit. 133)

Tongue-prayer is described as a pleasurable experience. "A river in my stomach" indicates the gratification she gets from tongue-prayer. Insofar as tongue-prayer involves the momentary loss of reality or mental disassociation, as argued in the chapter on speaking-in-tongues, the gratification must be based on the same psychological experience. It is also compared to the sensation of quenching thirst or breathing. Consulting with a minister on her plan to apply for a theological institute, she writes:

I was disappointed with his answer. He said I could go to the Holiness Theological Seminary if I gave up tongue-prayer. But I could not give it up. Every time I did tongue prayer, I felt released and sweet, freed from the thought of my deceased daughter and empowered with a renewed courage. When I went several days without tongue prayer, my heart felt a strange thirst, which is hardly describable. It was because tongue prayer was a secret conversation between God and I, and my soul could breathe.(Choi, Ja-shil 130)

Memorizing the biblical passages is said to have the same effect of warding off Satan's intrusion. In this case, too, Satan's attack makes it a compulsory behavior.

... I could not help memorizing the Word of God that was sweeter than honey. It was because I could not bear Satan's accusation without memorizing the Word. The Word of God was my weapon, with which I fought Satan.(op. cit. 135)

If tongue prayer, at least as Rev. Choi, Jashil practices it, is related to the chronic depression often dubbed as the fearful "Satan's attack," then, it is also tempting to ask whether the practices of fasting and staying overnight can be related to the same psychic disturbance. It is precisely because sleeplessness and the refusal of nourishment characterize melancholia.(Freud 1963 : 167) It is interesting to note here that Rev. Choi, Ja-shil advocates the "three-beat prayer," tongue prayer, fasting prayer, and overnight prayer.(op. cit. 456)

Freud also notes that a melancholic tends to criticize his beloved ones in the guise of self-reproach: "If one listens patiently to the many and various self-accusations of the melancholiac, one can not in the end avoid the impression that often the most violent of them are hardly at all applicable to the patient himself, but that with insignificant modifications they do fit someone else, some person whom the patient loves, has loved, or ought to love."(Freud 1963 : 169) Rev. Choi, Ja-shil's autobiography is not short of such incidents. During the crisis due to the construction of the Yoido church building with an insufficient fund, she prayed in a prayer pit, repenting her excessive desire. The prayer of repentance "poured out," not far from the uninhibited talks flowing out of psychoanalytic free association. While she was praying,

...the things of the bygone past came alive as in a kaleidoscope. In 1968, when I came back from the Taiwan revival mission trip, God spoke through Rev. Cho, Yong-gi, "Pastor Choi, Ja-shil will be sent as a missionary to Japan and German." And I complained, "Rev. Cho wants to drive me out since the membership roll increases up to 10,000." And I lay down on a sick bed. Now I came to know that it was Satan's test to bring bitterness, misunderstanding, and resentment, and thus I repented for it.(Choi, Ja-shil 427)

But her repentance seems not to be able to entirely overcome Satan's test. Even before 1968 the subtle power game between Rev. Cho, Yong-gi and Pastor Choi, Ja-shil seems to have been an on-going problem, as she explicitly says: "Up to this moment, Satanic force has incessantly come to set apart Rev. Cho and me, and pit one against another."(op. cit. 365) And as a matter of fact, as she frankly says, she did not dislike her supporters' coaxing words, their appreciation of her crucial contribution to the church's enormous growth.(op. cit. 364) But she concludes the episode with the reconciliatory note: "With the help of the Holy Spirit, Rev. Cho and I has fought against those Satanic forces, encouraging each other."(op. cit. 366) However, the official statement of harmony barely conceals the repressed sense of bitterness and resentment. Praying in a prayer pit, in a space shut off physically and symbolically from any external intervention,

allows, as in free association, the repressed memory, the traumatic experience, to float above the unconscious, although in the negative forms of “Satanic test” and “repentance.”

The same repressed conflict also returns in a hallucination during her mission trip to

Taiwan:

When I came back to my room and started praying for the church and the remaining days of the revival meeting, all of a sudden the Suh-dae-moon Church (the old name of the YFGC when it was located in the county of Suh-dae-moon – the present writer’s note) appeared to my eyes. And I felt my soul get out of my body and sit on the church building. The whole congregation gathered together, including the president of the Women’s Club. I saw at the sanctuary a dark one sitting there, almost twice as the size of an ordinary person, and beneath it a woman even fatter than the dark one, standing and saying:

“Now we drove out Pastor Choi, Ja-shil to Japan.”

And she introduced herself as a new pastor. Then the congregation that filled the church stood up one by one and scattered away. They passed by me but they did not know I was there.(Choi, Ja-shil 450)

This visual hallucination is also said to have occurred during a private prayer session.

Interestingly it contains the same narrative components with the episodes analyzed above: the Suh-dae-moon church, the president of the Women’s Club, and the motif of driving her out as a missionary abroad. Only in this version, these recurring elements appear not in the context of repentance but in that of the temporary separation of soul from body, the mystic experience reminiscing the prophet Ezekiel’s. Another modification is that a newly installed woman pastor, who supposedly replaces Pastor Choi, Ja-shil, makes the traumatic announcement instead of Rev. Cho, Yong-gi, the Senior Pastor. But it is implied that the new woman pastor does so at the command of the “dark one” sitting above at the sanctuary. But their identities remain in the dark. Both are said to have an extraordinarily large figure, suggesting monstrosity, with the new pastor “even fatter than the dark one,” thus far more despiteful than the latter. With the help of the parallel episodes discussed above, it can be inferred that the “dark one” and the fat woman in

her account of the hallucination are probably the displaced images of the Senior Pastor and the president of the Women's Club respectively, who are fantasized to conspire to drive her out. In the "repentance," she apparently blames herself but substantially "Satan." In this hallucination she directly blames the monstrous figures, whose identities are left veiled. Repression and displacement in these episodes indicate her ambivalence toward her beloved son-in-law, her narcissistic object of love since the time when they first met at the Bible institute.

Psychoanalytic insight helps understand why the traumatic experience keeps coming back in spite of her repeated "repentance." Her "repentance" is nothing other than the mechanism through which the trauma returns in the form of negation in the specifically psychoanalytic sense: "a way of taking account of what is repressed; indeed, it is actually a removal of the repression, though not, of course, an acceptance of what is repressed."(Freud 1963 : 214) A prayer pit is the most private place where any repressed memory, feeling, or impulse is allowed to come back to the conscious, although only in the form of psychoanalytical negation. It may be said in this sense that a prayer pit has a liberating moment in its function of releasing the repressed. But the liberated zone is contained from the outset by its form as a pit. In the same way, "repentance" provides an occasion for the repressed to break through repression but contains them again in the realm of inferno. Thus, the Pentecostal practices of compulsory "prayer" and "repentance" are no so much cures as symptoms.

One should be cautious in generalizing Rev. Choi, Ja-shil's melancholia into the characteristics of the Korean Pentecostalism in general. However there are some independent evidences which indicate the peculiar relation between melancholia and Pentecostalism. In an interview conducted in the early 1980s by a researcher (Chung, Chin-hong in Ryu, Ton-sik, et al. 136), Rev. Choi, ja-shil explicitly mentions "melancholia" as a typical problem among the

middle-aged women, the most frequent visitors to the Prayer Mountain, which she founds and heads. But the use of the medical term does not necessarily mean her scientific understanding of melancholia. Probably she knew what it is like from her own suffering. And her own experience probably convinces her that her formula of the “three-beat prayer” – fasting, overnight, tongue prayer, provides an effective cure. The popularity of the three-beat prayer, particularly among the middle-aged women, suggests the wider distribution of the psychological disposition of melancholia. It would be instructive at this juncture to note the findings of the recent comparative empirical researches on the interrelationship between religion and health that, in the United States, too, Pentecostals are more likely caught in depression, and that the frequency of major depression among Pentecostals is three times higher than that among non-Pentecostals, controlling those variables such as gender, race, socio-economic status, unexpected life event, and social support. (Koenig, et al. 121-122) These findings lead us to ask whether the elements in the Pentecostal beliefs and practices have to do with the particular psychological makeup that characterizes melancholia.

Secondary Narcissism and Pentecostalism

The present study concerns not so much individual cases as the wide spread socio-psychological tendency to examine the societal condition of the popularity of Pentecostalism in the South Korean society. It assumes that such a striking social phenomenon like the largest single congregation in the world must be due to the fact that the church’s religiosity effectively embodies the socio-psychological tendency. The above case study of Rev. Choi, Ja-shil’s melancholia may have any significance only insofar as the case is accepted as an “ideal” or “model” of the Pentecostal religiosity among the followers, and thus go beyond mere an idiosyncrasy.

The first thing to note in elucidating the wider socio-psychological disposition is the coexistence of the seemingly two opposing tendencies, melancholia and megalomania, in the church's doctrines and practices. It may be said that the two tendencies are roughly personified in the two co-founders and "spiritual leaders," Rev. Choi, Ja-shil and Rev. Cho, Yong-gi, or theologized in respectively the doctrines of the three-beat prayer and the three-beat salvation. But this is indeed a rough observation, for the two psychic tendencies are interwoven in one and the same persona. In the case of Rev. Choi, Ja-shil, thus, recurrent psychic depressions leads as a rule to the heightened sense of "spiritual" power and to frantic activity. Rev. Cho, Yong-gi's theology of the three-beat salvation is obviously based on the megalomaniac sense of omnipotence – "Nothing is impossible in God!" – but at the expense of the sense of reality. Common in both cases is what may be called the "objectless inwardness," the Kierkegaardian subjectivity that is constructed merely by omitting the external world.(Adorno 1989 : 29)⁷ In a passing remark, it is noteworthy that mourning "can be shown, pragmatically, to be Kierkegaard's central affect in the foundational nexus in his philosophy" and that the subjectivity, "in the form of objectless inwardness, mourns in its painful affects for the world of things as for 'meaning'."(op. cit. 30) The difference between Kierkegaard and Pentecostalism lies in the fact that while the former confronts the loss of reality and meaninglessness without illusion, the latter tries to escape it with the illusion of the full and immediate presence of meaning in the positive religious experience and institutions.

It is again psychoanalytic insight to throw light on the deeper common ground of the two seemingly opposing psychic tendencies, melancholia and megalomania. On the level of clinical

⁷ "He [Kierkegaard] is not a philosopher of identity; nor does he recognize any positive being that transcends consciousness. The world of things is for him neither part of the subject nor independent of it. Rather, this world is omitted. It supplies the subject with mere 'occasion' for deed, with mere resistance to the act of faith. In itself, this

observation, melancholia and megalomania tends to alternate regularly in one and the same person, hence “circular insanity.” It suggests the common ground of the two opposites. It is secondary narcissism, according to Freud, that adds specifically melancholic excess to ordinary grief: “Some of the features of melancholia, therefore, are borrowed from grief, and others from the process of regression from narcissistic object-choice to narcissism.”(Freud 1963 : 171) The latter is, of course, what turns grief into a “pathological” variation. And it is why a wider variety of occasions give rise to melancholia such as being wounded, hurt, neglected, out of favor, or disappointed, while only the loss of a love object gives rise to mourning. The case of Rev. Choi, Ja-shil provides again a paradigmatic example, for her depression was occasioned not only by the loss of her mother and daughter but also the sense of being neglected by her beloved son-in-law, Rev. Cho, Yong-gi and her husband. It is also the same psychological regression to secondary narcissism that makes possible the cyclical alteration of melancholia and mania: “Of the three conditioning factors in melancholia – loss of object, ambivalence, and regression of libido into the ego – the first two are found also in the obsessional reproaches arising after the death of loved persons. In these it is indubitably the ambivalence that motivates the conflict, and observation shows that after it run its course nothing in the nature of a triumph or a manic state of mind is left. We are thus directed to the third factor as the only one that can have this effect. That accumulation of cathexis which is first of all “bound” and then after the termination of work of melancholia, becomes free and makes mania possible must be connected with the regression of the libido into narcissism. The conflict in the ego, which in melancholia is substituted for the struggle surging around the object, must act like a painful wound which calls out unusually strong anti-cathexes.”(Freud 1963 : 179) In the work of melancholia, the subject’s love-hate

world remains random and totally indeterminate. Participation in ‘meaning’ is not one of its potential.” (Adorno 1989 : 29)

relationship toward her narcissistic love-object turns, upon its loss, into the love-hate relationship toward the ego, manifested in the form of self-reproach, that strengthens narcissistic regression even further by acting like a psychological wound collecting libidinal energy into the ego. According to Freud's economic view, the libidinal energy for maniac phase comes from the libido previously collected onto the ego in melancholic phase and now freed after the work of melancholia is completed.

Freud calls the reinvestment of libidinal energy, previously recalled from the external world, onto the ego "secondary narcissism" to distinguish it from primary narcissism, a normal process of psychic development from auto-eroticism to object-love, which constitutes the foundation of ego formation. The former is "regressive," for it represents the backward movement from object-love to auto-eroticism. Regression to narcissism consists of two stages: the withdrawal of libidinal energy from the external world and the reinvestment of the energy onto the ego, instead of an external object.

Now it is not difficult to see how the YFGC's Pentecostalism is structured on the psychic regression to secondary narcissism. The withdrawal of libidinal energy from the external world leads to the loss of interest in persons and things in the world. It can be total as shown in Schreber's notorious hallucination of the "end of the world." (Cf. Freud 1963 : 38-39) But more often it is partial, leaving some connection to reality intact although distorted. The Christian eschatology does not always imply the total recall of interest from the external world. Rather it demands far keener interest in the course of the world, as shown in Jesus of Nazareth and Thomas Müntzer. Insofar as the Christian eschatology is the doctrine about the telos of history rather than the termination of the world, it has been upheld by revolutionary sects and become a threat to the established orders. Even the ardent belief in the impending end of the world among

the classical Pentecostals contains the anticipation of a radically egalitarian world. Although the immanent Second Coming of Christ is of course included in the YFGC's official creed of the fivefold gospel, the restatement of "Fundamentals" which the classical Pentecostalism inherited from Fundamentalism, the church sporadically mentions eschatology in its sermons and publications, to researchers' surprise. (Cf. Suh, Kwang-sun 59 and Chung, Jin-hong 157 in Ryu, Tong-sik, et al.) In *Three-Beat Salvation*, it is neither mentioned nor alluded to at all. But on rare occasions, the imminent end of the world is emphasized to refute the radical Christian social movements for democratization and national liberation as fertile human-centered endeavor to intervene the divine providence. In a sermon entitled "Is a True Peace in the World Possible?"

Rev. Cho, Yong-gi says:

Therefore we proclaim to the people in the world. "There is no peace in this world. The utopia can not be built how further we enhance our knowledge, develop science and civilization. The wheel of History will get stuck in the swamp in the end, and the world will end with wars. So come under the Cross and receive salvation before it is too late." (Cho, Yong-gi 1996A : vol. 8, 83)

The sinful world is condemned to doom. No human intervention can change its course. In this way, the Christian eschatology is usurped to make history a matter of indifference. The psychic equivalent of such an attitude is the withdrawal of libido energy from the outer world. If painful experience with the external world tends to bring about such libidinal withdrawal, it is understandable that the prolonged and overwhelming pain due to the madness of the Korean War and a series of the military regimes in the context of the extremely hostile division of nation should have significantly turned off the interests in the outer world on a massive scale. Pre-individualistic communal mode of life has been either destroyed by the modern war-mobilization and the state-led industrialization, or regimented for the service of the totalitarian rule. Burgeoning modern subjectivity in Korea's recent history has been brutally oppressed by the

disproportionately outgrown state apparatus sprawling classrooms, workshops, offices, mass media, churches, and town halls, not to mention military bases and prison houses. As a folk song goes, Korea has been a society, where “those who can speak eloquently are sent to prison-cells; those who are strong are conscripted.” Having smart children has been a trouble for parents instead of a blessing. Having interest in the external world, probing its rationality and meaning amounts to risking one’ life in a society based on brutal violence both physical and mental. The famous warning by a progressive Christian intellectual that “only the people who think can live!” ironically reveals the social reality in which thinking becomes an anathema. It is not surprising in the situation that life is reduced to the level of mere self-preservation for most individuals.

As life is reduced to the level of self-preservation, religion is also reduced to practical magic to bring in goods and ward off evils for the individuals cut off from their traditional communal bonds and any consistent ideology. The religious situation after the Korean War provides a perfect example of Max Weber’s observation that practical magic or “workaday mass religion”(Alltagsreligion) constitutes the most common matrix of popular religiosity, which survives the rise and fall of the great systems of religion and ideologies.(Weber 1964 : 24-25. See also Schreier’s notion of “the baseline religiosity 134) Christianity, too, is reduced to the peculiar form often called in Korean, “*Kih-bog-shin-ang*,” a form of faith which aims at the egoistic pursuit of material blessing through a variety of magical practices. The religious regression to the basic popular magic is nothing other than the embodiment of the socio-historical tendency toward the psychological regression to narcissism, reinvestment of libidinal energy, formerly withdrawn from the external object, onto the ego. What specifically characterizes the beliefs and practices of the YGFC –the psycho-technique of autosuggestion, the delusionary sense of omnipotence, and the belief in the miraculous efficacy of words - are

precisely those narcissistic elements that Freud observes in the mental life of children and primitive people: “an overestimation of wishes and mental processes, the ‘omnipotence of thoughts,’ a belief in the magical virtue of words, and a method of dealing with the outer world – the art of ‘magic’ which appears to be a logical application of these grandiose premises.”(Freud 1963 : 58) In contrast to the latter, however, the former, the adults’ narcissism in modern time, is secondary, the product of psychological regression induced by the progressive enlightenment on a global scale. In other words, Weber’s workaday mass religion not merely survives rationalization but tends to be revived with the accomplished rationalization of the world.

In psychoanalysis, secondary narcissism is known as the common libidinal structure, which leads to a variety of psychopathological disturbances such as melancholia, neuroses, paranoia, and psychoses. But to say that secondary narcissism constitutes the libidinal foundation of the YFGC’s beliefs and practices does not necessarily mean that most of its members suffer from “malfunctioning” or “maladjustment” in the real world. In spite of the apparently idiosyncratic style of their worshiping, singing, and praying, there is no sign that those Pentecostals are “abnormal,” “crazy” or “invalid.” Rather the three-beat salvation theology aims at production of subjectivity better adjusted to the command of a totalitarian society: those subjects with a submissive soul and a robust body. A narcissistic megalomania is precisely whom the totalitarian order needs to perpetuate its frictionless operation. Breaking the Catholic’s external formalism, the Protestant ethics penetrates into the inner world of desire, feeling, will, motives. Hence Methodism was once called the “religion of heart.” The Protestant’s God oversees and judges not merely external action but also internal motives so that nothing can be hidden from His inquisitive gaze. In this system, however, the gap is still preserved that separates the subject from the deity, the condition of possibility of the subject’s freedom and

responsibility. On the contrary, the “good God” of the modern Pentecostalism actively intervenes into the unconscious to transform it, like the preemptory measures, to keep off the “negative” feelings. This technique of the colonization of the unconscious is the same one used in today’s advertisement and propaganda as well as the culture industry in general. Rev. Cho, Yong-gi has been its faithful disciple. The three-beat salvation theology is thus not merely a religious embodiment of the socio-psychological tendency toward secondary narcissism. More accurately it is the very mechanism that reinforces the same tendency, in other word, religion industry which intentionally exploits it for the church’s own interests. The so-called “success” of Pentecostalism in South Korea, thus, indicates the madness of its society as a whole, which both results from and leads to the disintegration of public sphere and its psychological equivalent, the ego function. The lack of the elementary rule of laws and the savage sacrifice of reason characterizes the Pentecostalism as well as society as a whole in South Korea, the half-nation state of perennial emergency at the frontline of the global cold war. The YFGC’s ignorance of linguistic laws in its broken discourse and tongue speaking reflects the real suspension of the symbolic law in the South Korean society.

Chapter VII

Conclusion

Many Korean Christians like to boast of South Korea as “New Jerusalem,” the center of Christian world mission for a new millennium. Foreign journalists often call her a “Christian Korea,” probably the most prominently Christian country today. Unlike Islamic Fundamentalism, however, Christianity in South Korea is not a state religion imposed by the state. South Korea has never had a state religion and always been a “religious free market,” in which diverse religious groups are competing each other. The fact that the “Christian South Korea” is built by choice but not by force makes the South Korean Christianity more interesting to sociology.

Several hypertrophies characterize the South Korean society. Economic growth symbolized by the transnational conglomerates called “chae-bols” is probably the best known. Less known are the seamless state apparatus with its regular army, police, and intelligence agency of a disproportional size, the paramilitary mobilization system of the whole population, and the state controlled mass media and school system. The persistent militancy of student activists and workers now seems to be recognized fairly well. Almost universal network of corruption, which deserves a serious sociological analysis, is another hypertrophy. And the last one is of course religious fervor, particularly the Pentecostal brand of Christianity, on which the present analysis focuses.

The South Korean Christianity, in which the self-proclaimed “orthodox conservatives” predominates, has been criticized of its co-option with a series of authoritarian governments. While they openly or tacitly supported anti-communism and other anti-democratic measures taken by military leadership, along with the U.S.

intervention, they preached the separation of politics and religion to other Christians struggling for democracy and national independence. But their co-optation with authoritarian states has been done not so much by explicitly political messages as by specifically “religious,” that is, apparently non-political, beliefs and practices. It is often said that religion tends to distract people’s interest from this world to the world beyond and thus makes them withdraw from political action to realize their real interests. But religion in South Korea has not been imposed at all by the political authority. It has been largely a matter of choice. As Rev. Cho, Yonggi, the Senior Pastor of the Yoido Full Gospel Church says, the world largest single congregation with the current membership roll of over 700,000 persons, whose beliefs and practices are analyzed here: “I had no intention to make my church this large. I could not help! People just wanted to come.” Thus, the question to ask is why so many people willingly make the irrational choice in the sense that the choice reinforces the authoritarian social structure and is thus detrimental to their own objective interests. The present analysis of the YFGC’s beliefs and practices sheds some light on the question.

The religiosity of the YFGC is predominantly pragmatic and magical. Its ultimate concern lies in the perceived possibility to achieve practical goals such as wealth, health, and happiness than in the correct doctrine or righteous way of life. The YFGC’s beliefs and practices focus on “miracle” mainly in the spheres of finance, health, and interpersonal relationship, as its slogan has: “Christianity is a religion of miracle.” Faith means no longer the re-orientation of one’ life toward a sublime purpose or the ultimate meaning. Now it becomes a technique of manipulating the supernatural power to achieve one’s own “successful life.” What matters in religion is its effectiveness but not its truth.

It is no surprise that this “applied Christianity” favors those pseudo-scientific terms such as “application,” “use,” “laws,” and “effects.” Although Max Weber’s observation that spontaneous popular religion tends to be pragmatic and magical may be applied to the Korean indigenous folk religiosity, the decisive influence on the YFGC’s pragmatic Christianity comes from North America’s Positive Thinking and success philosophy.

However, Rev. Cho, Yong-gi does not merely copy the American Positive Thinking but adapts it to Korea’s popular Christian culture, variously characterized as “indigenous Pentecostalism,” or “shamanistic Christianity,” which features biblicism, pragmatic animism, and Fundamentalism. He does it simply by translating the psycho-technical terms from Positive Thinking into Christian terms. Thus, the “auto-suggestion” and “positive declaration” techniques in Positive Thinking are translated into a peculiar form of prayer called “specifying prayer,” prayer focused on a particular demand as specific as possible up to the minute details of the wished item, for example, its color, shape, maker, price, etc. The “imagination” or “visualization” technique is translated into “faith” itself. The mundane goal of a wealthy, healthy, happy life is translated into the “three-beat salvation,” or the “three-fold blessing.” As psycho-technique becomes religious practice, religion is converted into self-help method based the pop-psychological notion of “auto-suggestion,” a version of the vulgarized psychoanalysis. The instrumentalization of religion means not only that the religion as a living symbolic order ends but also that it can now survive merely as one of the traditional cultural resources to be recycled at the service of the seamless functioning of the existing social system.

The adapted version of Positive Thinking is introduced with the notion of the good God, who not only allows but also empowers his children to enjoy wealth, health, and happiness in this world, not to mention the world beyond. With the new notion of the good God, Rev. Cho, Yong-gi challenges the traditional image of God as the fearsome Overseer along with its concomitant moral asceticism of the traditional Protestant ethics. It is even said that to live a wealthy, healthy, and happy life is every Christian's duty. It is thus all the more striking that the seemingly hedonistic theology of the YFGC follows the traditional repressive tripartite view of human being, the notion of human being consisted in spirit (or soul), mind, and body. For the salvation of soul, according to the theological anthropology, spirit, the only channel capable of communicating with the divine, has to discipline mind, the potentially useful servant if properly trained, and "kill" body, the hopeless site of sinful desire. This apparent contradiction is partly due to the general lack of interest in logical consistency in Rev. Cho, Yong-gi's pastiche style of writings. But at the libidinal level, the repressive tripartite anthropology constitutes the very foundation of the psycho-technique called Positive Thinking. The tripartite anthropology looks similar to psychoanalysis in recognizing perennial conflict among the three different parts of the psyche - soul, mind, and body. But contrary to psychoanalysis, which seeks to register scars beneath the surface peace by exposing repression in the light, the tripartite theological anthropology exalts the bloody peace attained by violent oppression against mind and body as the salvation of soul. Positive Thinking also contains the same repressive moment precisely in its demand to force out "negative" thoughts, feelings, and images. In this sense, Positive Thinking represents an advanced version of work discipline in the era of

transnational capital, which replaces the old Protestant ethics just like the so-called “scientific management” based motion studies and industrial psychology replaces the older patrimonial type of management based on the religious duty. Positive Thinking can be properly characterized as the “reversed psychoanalysis,” because it consists in two steps of conscious manipulation of the psychic forces – the intentional repression of the “negative” impulses and the intentional libidinalization of the “positive” impulses. The transition from ethics to psycho-technique in modern Christianity reflects the intensification of social administration up to the point that even the unconscious becomes the object of technological control. Psycho-technique, both in religious and secular versions, signifies not so much the empowerment of individuals as their “de-psychologization,” stripping their spirit of its substance, its autonomy, its power to face the abyssal freedom, making it into a mere predictable social functionary seamlessly incorporated into to society’s demand. Psychologically speaking, it is nothing less than to the elimination of ego function, the intermediary between the superego and the id. Its social equivalent is the disintegration of the public sphere. Reason, the ego’s capacity of reality testing, is reduced to the domestic servant of the social status quo, and thus turns into irrationality in attending the self-destructive tendency. Such a self-destructive tendency is also expressed in both the Pentecostals’ belief in the imminent end of the world and their lack of interest in history.

Thus, totalitarian tendency in the YFGC’s Pentecostalism lies not only in its explicit political view, which has always parroted what a series of anticommunist and authoritarian governments wanted to bang into people’s head. More important and interesting is the totalitarian tendency embodied in its specifically religious beliefs and

practices. The most obvious theological doctrine that embodies totalitarian tendency is the church's notion of God's sovereignty claimed to be symbolized by two positive ecclesiastical institutions: Fundamentalist doctrine as the symbol of God's sovereignty in the spiritual domain and tithing as the same in the material domain. The finite institutions, which are to be bound by a specific socio-historical horizon, are arbitrarily bestowed the status of the absolute to which blind obedience constitutes the only proper attitude. The prophetic ban on any form of idolatry in the Old Testament, which asks radical abstinence from the temptation to identify the finite with the infinite, turns into its opposite, the fetishism of the merely existing. Such fetishism culminates in the notion of a pastor's exclusive claim to the so-called spiritual realm.¹ The theological notion of transcendental God as the absolute other, the non-identity, which thus illuminates the limitation and imperfection of a given positive order and pushes mortals to go beyond the status quo, turns into the principle of inviolability of the positive order. The expression "full gospel" unwittingly implies that Truth is fully manifested in a handful of positive doctrines and practices. In the notion of the "full gospel" Protestantism goes back to the medieval notion of the papal infallibility. The medieval notion of the papal infallibility, however, allows a space for theoretical reflection, as much as the status of the Pope remains purely symbolic and thus can never be fully identified with any positive content. On the contrary, the second-handed notion of the pastor's infallibility loses its symbolic lack that opens up a free space for interpretation, precisely because it is completely filled up by positive contents without remainder. Insofar as God's sovereign will and Truth are believed to be immediately and fully available in the Fundamentalist-Pentecostal

¹ Recently a group of elders accused Rev. Cho, Yonggi of illicit handling of a large amount of church money. Rev. Cho, Yonggi in an interview with a secular monthly magazine characterizes this action as "a

universe, it forecloses question and reflection. The divine loses its inherent elusiveness, mysteriousness, and structural ambiguity. Here Pentecostalism unwittingly comes close to philosophical positivism. The certainty of salvation consists in blind acceptance of what is merely given in full and in the final form, just like the certainty of scientific knowledge consists in blind, mechanical, registration of what is given in experience. Spiritualism may have been revolutionary when it, with its claim to direct communication with God, put into question the claim of the intermediary ecclesiastical institutions to the only legitimate channel of the divine revelation. But the claim to direct communication with God in today's secularized world, where there exists no longer the exclusive intermediary institution, becomes the authoritarian claim of the so-called "spiritual leaders" over lay people. In a similar vein, epistemological empiricism may have been critical only when it could shatter the illusion of a self-contained concept, but in today's disenchanted world, empiricism becomes the enchantment of the merely existing. In this closure of the symbolic sphere, whose structural lack allows doctrinal dispute or theoretical reflection - lies Pentecostalism's totalitarian moment.

Once the closure of the symbolic sphere with the immediate and full manifestation of the divine in a given set of beliefs and practices renders doctrinal dispute or theoretical reflection redundant, religion becomes "experiential." Indeed it is the belief that the divine can directly be experienced today as in the biblical time that distinguishes Pentecostalism from Fundamentalism, which is hardly distinguishable from the former otherwise. Emphasis on religious experience is not important by itself insofar as it can be found in the other types of Christianity such as the medieval mysticism, the primitive Methodism, the Holiness Movement, and the North American tent revivalism. Far more serious challenge against pastor's right to spiritual realm. www.shindonga.com October, 2001

significant is the specifically Pentecostal notion of “spiritual experience” as an evidence of baptism in Spirit. Among many possible forms of “spiritual experiences,” the most prominent is speaking-in-tongue because of its dramatic visibility, audibility, and probably broader accessibility. Although Pentecostals claim return to the original and authentic Christianity with their “spiritual experience,” its form and content remains thoroughly modern. First, the Pentecostal notion of “spiritual experience” is conditioned by the modern division of labor, in which the religious sphere is set aside from the non-religious, and the spiritual from the material. The so-called “spiritual experience” is presented to belong to a far more specific sphere which transcends nature and reason. Thus, it comes closer to the world of occultism, which is revived in modern time as a form of regression of the consciousness.(Cf. Adorno 1994 : 128) Second, experience is taken as an irrefutable evidence of the truthfulness of Christian doctrine. The truthfulness of Christianity can be empirically proven, so to speak, by “spiritual experience,” as the numerous “testimonies” try to persuade. It is of course a caricature of epistemological empiricism insofar as it leaps from a piece of sense data, say, the experience of automatic vocalization of meaningless syllables, to the sublime notion of “speaking-in-tongue,” the tangible presence of the divine. But it is also the mirror image of epistemological empiricism insofar as the latter tends to take “experience” as immediately given rather than mediated through the dialectic interaction of the subject and the object. Or Pentecostal’s emphasis on experience can also be seen to conceal the Phenomenologist impulse for the intuition of essence, the direct and full experience of meaning in its immediacy. Pentecostalism may be said to merge Positivism and Phenomenology in one. Or better it represents a popular attempt, easy yet false, to bridge in one stroke the

unbridgeable gap between fact and meaning, the separation of the subject and the object, which the historical tendency toward the Enlightenment as the domination of the inner nature and the external nature opens up. It attempts to quickly quench the specifically modern thirst for certainty and meaning, but only at the price of freedom and reason. It tries to give an easy answer to the inherent deadlock and the condition of possibility of modernity. But it is not so much an answer as an escape. Third, what Pentecostals call “spiritual experience” is always already prescribed and bound by the fixed doctrine. The Pentecostal experience never leads to a creative insight beyond the given dogma or the existing order of things. It merely affirms the ever-same schema of the world. What Pentecostals call “spiritual experience” is always already regimented for the self-preservation of the church as an institution and society at large, no less than the empiricist notion of “experience” as the ultimate foundation of scientific knowledge is. The preoccupation with the immediate revelation indicates not only the constitutive dilemma of the Enlightenment as domination but also its false solution. What Adorno says concerning two main branches of modern philosophy – positivism and phenomenology - in his study on the experiential content of Hegel’s philosophy applies today’s religion: “The less human immediacy is tolerated by the omnipresent mediating mechanisms of exchange, the more fervently a compliant philosophy asserts that it possesses the basis of things in the immediate.” (Adorno 1993 : 55) True experience is the whole process of dynamic thinking “both to capture spirit interpretively in its experience of the world and to construct experience through the movement of spirit.”(op. cit. 56) Experience in this sense does not exclude the speculative, subjective, and interpretative moment. Rather subjective involvement makes the experience of object fuller rather than poorer, and vice

versa.(Cf. Adorno 1982B) In short, experience may be said to be nothing other than dialectic or immanent critique. And this notion of experience as the never-ending dialectical interaction of thought and object goes beyond epistemology to the ontology of becoming, or history, which is not alien to the Christian tradition as Ernst Bloch tries to show.(Bloch 2000) It is even tempting to say that the Hegelian notions of spirit and experience as the whole process of subject-object interaction comes much closer to the traditional Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit as not only the third and final mode of the divine manifestation but also the dynamic power to create a new community out of the old one and its self-consciousness.

The formal features of the YFGC's linguistic practice also show its totalitarian tendency. It seems to allow only two forms of languages: speaking-in-tongues and rigid formula. Both speeches are automatic and require little thinking. Both forms indicate the same historical development, the collapse of the Lacanian symbolic order or the big Other in two different ways. Speaking-in-tongue suspends the operation of the symbolic order or language by withdrawing from the chain of signification. Tongue-speaking can be free from the constraint of the symbolic order precisely because it remains meaningless, hence, as a non-language. It can be seen as "primal language," authentic language before contaminated by the linguistic abuse of today's political and commercial propaganda, as Harvey Cox tries to show.(See Chapter III) But it can be so only under the condition that it should not be language at all in the proper sense of the word. The use of rigid formula halts the operation of the symbolic order by filling in the structural gap of a linguistic sign system with immediate and full meaning, and thus choking up the open space that alone allows the act of interpretation and inter-textual play. As a fixed

meaning amounts to meaninglessness, the petrification of the signified amounts to an empty signifier, the linguistic practice of rigid formula is not far from glossolalia. It is why the speakers of mysterious angelic tongues are also those who repeat the same formula over and over again in their sermons, testimonies, and even “theologies.” Classification, cataloging, and tabulation such as the “three-beat” salvation or the “fivefold salvation and the threefold blessing” are the linguistic forms of administration, to which religion and society as a whole are succumbed. The jargon of authenticity has always been inherent to a totalitarian society, in which language must remain as abracadabra except the endless parroting of the same slogan.(Cf. Adorno 1973 : 9-20) In a sense, Pentecostal glossolalia is the mimicry of incomprehensible tongues spoken by modern specialists, whose specialized knowledge loses any human significance. Speaking-in-tongue, in which the silliest gesture of automatic vocalization of senseless syllables is given the sublime meaning, points to the modern society in which the most intimate turns into the most alien. People speak like aliens in an automated society when they do not speak like speaking robots.

The totalitarian moment discussed above appears to contradict the fact that, in contrast to the classical Pentecostalism, the YFGC does not condemn the pursuit of wealth, health, and happiness. Indeed the church promotes a happy life in this world as Christian duty. And the church’s real innovation lies not simply in approving the hedonistic desire but in offering practical method to achieve the goal. It is true here again that the church faithfully follows the official ideology of South Korea’s totalitarian regime that is put into notorious slogans such as “economic development” and “let’s live affluent, too!” It is also true that the developmental state’s official ideology reflects

people's spontaneous aspiration to some extent, particularly in such a circumstance in which war both hot and cold has destroyed the already rudimentary system of production and violently oppressed any consistent political ideology including the elementary form of representative democracy. The practical method that the church offers for securing blessing is not the traditional Protestant ethics of the inner-worldly asceticism centered on thrift, industriousness, and the renunciation of pleasure. The YFGC offers technique rather than ethics. It is the psycho-religious technique of Positive Thinking. It reflects the North American capitalist society of the 1950's, in which consumerism compelled by perennial overproduction outdates the old way of thrift and monopoly capital finally gains control over distribution and labor process by means of "scientific management." Positive Thinking in South Korea emerged at the margin but now has been recognized as a sure formula for church growth. In Positive Thinking, both psychology and religion, losing their own purposes, merge into the technique to achieve some prescribed goals by the exchange society. Notwithstanding pseudo-scientific and Christian terms it uses, Positive Thinking is based on the magical belief that the power of thought can change the outer world. Thus, the collection of the biblical passages to boost the power of thought is called "thought conditioner." The tendency toward psychologization always indicates the objective impotence of the subject. It is often said that Positive Thinking empowers people in a desperate situation and gives them hope. (For example, see Yonsei Church History Study Group 1996) But the empowerment in Positive Thinking actually means the further subordination of the subjects to society's whim over which they have no control at all. It is no surprise that all those basic human needs such as wealth, health, and happiness should be expected only through "miracle."

Modern belief in the magical power of thought is a secondary superstition in the sense that it indicates regression to the pre-modern mode of thinking. Its psychological correlative would be regression from object-love to secondary narcissism. The YFGC's Pentecostalism features melancholia and megalomania, two forms in which secondary narcissism manifests itself. Tongue speaking is recommended as an effective way to ward off the "Satanic impulse" to commit suicide, a prominent symptom of melancholia. Positive Thinking gives a theological form to the phantasmagoric feeling of narcissistic omnipotence, a symptom of megalomania. It is easy to provide a canonical justification for the magic religion since the pre-modern biblical writings, particularly the Gospels and the Acts, contain a plentiful of proof texts. A simple selection of miracle texts and their literal reading would suffice to support the modern magic religion. Time evaporates in the short circuit of the past text and the present reality. Pentecostal universe, the make-believe world of narcissistic omnipotence, is built on the loss of reality and thus history. Regression to secondary narcissism in Pentecostalism takes the form of psychosis, the substitution of objective reality with phantasmatic one, rather than that of hysteria, the disavowal of objective reality.

But it does not necessarily mean that the Pentecostals at the YFGC are really psychopathological and socially dysfunctional. Most of them are "normal" and effective, may be more so, in their social functioning. Here we encounter the Pentecostals' curiously cynical attitude toward their beliefs and practices. Actually they do not seriously believe what they say they believe. The rather forced tone of their loud and repeated "Yes, I truly believe, my Lord!" seems to come from the lack of inner conviction. They pretend to believe. It is no surprise insofar as fundamental pragmatism,

which characterizes the YFGC's Pentecostalism, keeps serious religion at bay and turns it into mere instrumentality, making God into a gear, Word into thought conditioner, Spirit into a business partner, and Church into a success club. It seems to be this cynical distance toward faith that keeps them from falling into real psychosis. In spite of or because of such distancing, however, the semblance of faith must be saved in order to keep unbearable inner emptiness out of sight. Cynicism becomes universal ideology in the era of post-ideology. It can be said that South Korea has been a peculiar kind of post-ideological society since the Korean War, which destroyed lives and land, eliminated the traditional class structure of landlords and tenant farmers, and wiped out any logically consistent worldview. Even the official ideologies of a series of totalitarian regimes such as liberal democracy and anti-communism have been more of mere slogans than of consistent political principles. To the extent that those ideologies are empty, they need to be zealously upheld through the endless repetition of empty rituals.

But eerier cynicism can be found in ministers' attitude to think their ministry in terms of instrumentality. As the church as a positive institution, the instrument of the divine plan, turns into the ultimate goal, the ministry of Word turns into the ministry of the ecclesiastical organization. The "church growth studies," of which the YFGC is one of the world leaders, tends to conceive ministry as the technique of attracting mass. The technique consists in manipulation of the existing socio-psychological tendency, that is, the ego weakness accompanying the breakdown of the symbolic order in the (post-) modern society where every aspect of life from cradle to tomb is regimented to realize the iron law of capitalist accumulation. Pentecostal leaders sense the desperate "needs" of the people in such a society, as they often boast of themselves just like successful

businessmen, but never penetrate into the irrationality of the objective social condition that keeps frustrating them and forcing them into dependency. They simply take the situation as it is and exploit the widespread regressive tendency among the mass, into which today's society disfigures living individuals. As in the Fascist propaganda and the culture industry, they calmly enumerate and plan their messages and practices in the way that unleashes the regressive tendency toward secondary narcissism and provides libidinal satisfaction for the benefit of their own organization, the church. Thus, the spirit of technicality becomes the Holy Spirit in the modern Pentecostalism. If religion has long been a branch of the culture industry from the time when it is given a section along with art, literature, and music, etc., in a popular magazine, now ministry at a local church becomes a business, too. Today's religious entrepreneurship as a branch of the culture industry incarnates in the classificatory system of congregational needs, "problems," standardized doctrines and practices, the intensive use of mass media, the church building like a gigantic stadium, the computerized "management" of tens of thousands of membership rolls, and the multi-national mission network. The ultimate end of "mission" is never reflected upon and made clear. Means replaces end. The limitless expansion of a local congregation is simply identified with the ultimate end of mission. It is interesting to note that as the church comes closer to a sales organization, the latter tends to be like religion, as seen in the so-called "inspirational talks" at the meetings of sales representatives. Exchange relation abolishes every boundary and transubstantiates everything, even the divine, into utility. And mere utility becomes the divine.

Thus, the modern Pentecostalism in Korea attests the general social tendency toward what Frederic Jameson calls "de-differentiation," interpenetration of economy,

politics, and culture as the realization of the logic of capital at the latest phase of its historical development. It is no surprise that the contemporary Pentecostalism shares the characteristics of cultural post-modernism that Jameson identifies with the cultural logic of transnational financial capitalism: flatness, the waning of affect and the predominance of euphoria, pastiche writing, the primacy of spatiality over temporality and the elimination of history.(Jameson 1992 : 1-66) The YFGC's "theology," as analyzed above, does not allow a hermeneutic space as, say, Andy Warhol's shoes either in contrast to Van Gogh's. Flatness or depthlessness characterizes the religion that is reduced to mere utility. In spite of excited mood, which prevails Pentecostal gatherings, the wealth of humane emotions such as delight, fear, anger, sadness, and joy, those feelings toward the objects external to the subject, are curiously absent in them, pointing to what Jameson calls "the waning of affect in postmodern culture."(op. cit. : 10) Like postmodern paintings lose the distinctive individual brush stroke, the Pentecostal testimonies and even "theological" writings, in their mechanical repetition of the same forms and terms, show no personal touch, which is of course correlated to the disintegration of the ego function. What prevails in the modern Pentecostal experience, say, speaking-in-tongue, can be compared to the emotional dominant of the postmodern culture, that is, euphoria or hallucinogenic intensity, which involves not only the loss of reality but also the indescribable vividness of an immediate presence, which is overwhelmingly engulfing the subject. The groundless but sure sense of omnipotence in Positive Thinking points to the same direction. The pastiche style of "theology" and the lack of logical consistency in the YFGC's broken discourse are attributable not so much to the lack of intelligence of the Pentecostal writers to the objective tendency in the postmodern era when all

embracing exchange relationship neutralize all living symbolic traditions into ready-made cultural resources, waiting to be recycled for an external, secondary use. The evaporation of temporality along with the elimination of history in the postmodern culture cannot be seen more paradigmatically else where than in the Pentecostal slogan that “God was, is, and is to be the same.” Thus, the notion of “church growth” is taken merely as the spatial expansion of the ever-same gospel but not as the temporal transformation through structural discontinuity. To these features, one can add the change in the notion of truthfulness of religion, which the YFGC’s Pentecostalism reduces to utility, effectiveness in achieving the externally imposed goals such as wealth, health, and happiness. Thus the YFGC’s Pentecostalism can be said to be a form of the religious postmodern, a religious form which adjusts itself to the cultural logic of the latest form of capitalism.

But it does not mean that cultural postmodernism has been the cultural dominant in the South Korean society during the period of state-led economic development since 1960. The South Korean society and culture from 1960 to 1987 cannot be called “postmodern” by any standard. South Korea has been still “modernizing,” so to speak. However, it should also be noted that Korea’s modernization already began in the late nineteenth century and proceeded to a considerable extent during the colonial period. Moreover South Korea’s strategic position in the geo-political scheme of the United States, the new hegemonic superpower in the capitalist world system since 1945, means a far greater American influence in military, political, economic, and cultural spheres. The very birth of South Korean as a half-nation state and the economic development can be largely attributed to the close intervention of the united States. Military, schools, mass

media, and churches have disseminated the conservative anticommunist Christianity and the American success philosophy as well as the US dollar and modern military organization and technology. Some young Korean ministers, who were frustrated with both the hopelessness of social situation and the sterility of traditional ministry, found a breakthrough in the American health and wealth gospel preacher such as Robert Schuler, Oral Roberts, and Norman Vincent Peale. This type of Christianity has not been publicly recognized as a legitimate form among the mainstream leaders until the late-1980s when secret admiration has turned into open praise. Now many ministers recognize the Pentecostalism combined with the wealth and health gospel to be the most effective, if not necessarily truthful, formula for a “successful” ministry. And the practicing mega-churches with more than tens of thousands of membership rolls become the model to follow. Throughout the years in which the wheel of the authoritarian state developmental regime has run and created all facets of the South Korean society in its image, the YFGC’s version of Pentecostalism has thrived precisely it had anticipated what comes next. Around the late 1980s, when South Korea’s capitalism has attained the relative autonomy to reproduce itself at the global scale without depending on the state’s protection, and the falls of the former communist regimes debilitated the prospective of an alternative route of development other than capitalism, the modern Pentecostalism started prevailing even in the previously non-Pentecostal denominations. Pentecostalism seems little intact by the collapse of the military authoritarian government in 1987. Its unchanging massive attraction testifies the stronger and deeper social tendency toward totalitarianism driven by the capital logic at the global scale and the systematized division of Korea, the “division system,” into the two antagonistic but symbiotic half-nation states

under the U.S. hegemony.(For the notion of the “division system,” see Paik, Nak-chung 1993A, 1996, 2000) But it remains an open question whether the “postmodern” Christianity or better the spirit of transnational capitalism will be the religious dominant in South Korea insofar as the comparably strong social forces including radical religious social movements, not to mention labor, student, feminist, ecologist movements, also thrive in the exactly same period. There is no question, however, in that no true emancipation will be possible without emancipating religion from the iron cage of capitalist rationality which is nothing less than global irrationality.

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