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This article was originally published as:
Brook, A. (2008). Towards a theology of liberation. ,.

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Towards a Theology of Liberation

Angus Brook

In 1971 Gustavo Gutierrez was the first theologian to pronounce the advent of the *theology of liberation*. This book received both praise and criticism for its 'radical new' approach to theological endeavour. This paper will attempt to provide a broad overview of the complex processes or possibilities which led to the publishing of this book. In doing so, I will focus my discussion upon what has made liberation theology possible; the cultural environment, the intellectual inspiration, and the events that have played an important role in its development. Of course, I cannot hope to give depth to the breadth of the issues. Therefore, the discussion will be at times incomplete and brief in the interests of analysing the 'big picture'.

The first general assumption of this paper is that the work of Gutierrez is a product of a cultural history or multiple cultural histories. His work is one moment in a movement of humanity and human expression in the process of history. By this, I mean to say that *A Theology of Liberation* is an expression and response to a reality which cannot be disengaged from that historical and cultural reality. In this paper I hope to give a general picture of what this reality may have been and what informed that reality.

A full account of the formation of this reality would necessarily begin with an account of pre-Christian Latin America, the religion and culture of its inhabitants and how this culture and religion moved into the Catholic faith. Although I cannot give any account of pre-Catholic Latin America I presume that the pre-Christian culture was not destroyed; but rather subsumed, pushed underground, or similarly to other conversions to Christianity; incorporated into Catholicism.

This paper will begin with a discussion of the Spanish Catholic impetus, again in a broad and brief sense, acknowledging the historical formation and drawing out those points which are arguably of central importance to the formation of liberation theology. Following this, it will discuss the influence of Hegel and Marx on the thought of Gutierrez. I will assert that Hegel influenced Gutierrez's theological framework heavily, both directly and indirectly, while Marxist theory was used as a tool for socio-economic critique by Gutierrez. Finally, I will discuss two works or Gustavo Gutierrez, *Towards a Theology of Liberation* and *A Theology of Liberation*.

The Latin American Context:

In this section of this paper I will discuss the historical impetus' in Latin America which have lead to Gustavo Gutierrez's *A Theology of Liberation*. I will divide this discussion into four parts, dealing with the Spanish Empire, Revolutions against Spain, Modern Peruvian history and modern influences. Through this discussion I will outline the shaping of the Roman Catholic Faith in Latin America, with special consideration to Peru, the home of Gustavo Gutierrez's. This is especially important as Peru, or more specifically Lima, was the environment in which Gutierrez began to promote and practice a liberation theology.

The colonisation of a large portion of Latin America by Spain left three main legacies that have influenced Catholic faith there. Right from the beginning there was a strong link between Church and State in the colonies. The origins of this link go back to the re-conquest of Spain from Muslim rule: "When the ancient sees were liberated, the princes appointed bishops."[1]

With the gradual re-conquest of Spain the monarchy followed the practice of the previous Gothic Arian Kings in dominating the Church. However, in the case of the re-conquest, the Pope began to recognise the rights of patronage in the Spanish Kingdom. In this period patronage was particular[2]; a balance between the choice of the Pope and the Monarch. While the Pope chose which cleric to promote for patronage, the monarch could object and request that the Pope found a new ecclesiastic. As the re-conquest progressed and more ecclesiastical districts were created the monarchs began to request patronage for those areas taken from the Muslims; "Gregory VII in 1073 recognised conquest as the title to patronage…"[3] By the time of Ferdinand and Isabella, the Spanish crown had gained patronage over much of Spain and by 1486 the Pope had granted the Spanish monarchy universal patronage in their conquered territories. In 1523, universal patronage was recognised over Spanish colonies. This meant that with the colonisation of Latin America Spain came to have more power over the church there than in Spain proper. This led to a complete dependence of the Catholic Church in Latin America upon the Spanish monarchy; "The union of altar and throne was much more intimate in America than in Spain. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive of a more absolute jurisdiction than that which the kings of Spain exercised over all the ecclesiastical affairs of the Indies."[4] This link between Church and

State became an almost natural feature of the Church in Latin America and shaped the future role of the Church.

This link led to a church whose hierarchy and priests naturally fell into political roles; where the church in various stages of history would be allied to political forces and could participate in the political arena without qualm. On the other hand, as the Catholic Church became a political force in itself, differing political movements such as the revolutionaries would appeal to the church for political support. Importantly, the link between church and state never became fully disentangled; to the time of Gutierrez religion and state had few boundaries between them.

A second legacy of the Spanish Empire was the wealth of the Church. Although the church tithes belonged to the crown most of this was left to the church's discretion. Beyond this the church was given money by the Papacy; it had its own court system and was granted vast amounts of land by the crown. “The vast wealth of the colonial clergy was notorious, and was represented not only in ecclesiastical buildings and their ornate furnishings, but also in revenue producing lands and capital loaned at interest on property or individuals. In Peru on the eve of independence there was scarcely an estate of any size which did not belong… to the clerics.”[5] Schooling especially was controlled by the Church; thus the intellectuals and the middle class were entirely dominated by the Catholic faith and by Catholic religious symbolism.

The third legacy of the Spanish Empire was the vast amount of Catholics with only the outward trappings of Catholic faith. The clergy in Latin America were not encouraged to teach a deep Catholic faith but to implant the Catholic Church as a representative of the crown into the Spanish colonies. As a result of this we find that “Spanish colonials, high and low, were superficially instructed in the mysteries of religion…”[6] There have been various explanations given for this type of Catholic Faith[7], called ‘folk religion’ and the impact of this on the history of Catholicism in Latin America. This type of faith led to a dual nature in Latin American culture; “It is obvious that Catholicism has struck deep roots in the culture of the continent… On the other hand, the same observer finds an amazing superficiality…”[8] This dual nature has shaped many of the issues which Gustavo has tried to address in Liberation Theology; issues, due to the connection between Church and State, that could only be dealt with within a Catholic framework.

The revolutions against the Spanish Empire further politicised the nature of the Catholic Church in Latin America. On the one hand, these revolutions were the first attempts

to separate Church and State in Latin America by Liberators such as Simon Bolivar. On the other, the revolutions disconnected the connection between Papacy and Latin American Catholicism; giving clerics free reign to become further embroiled in politics and revolutionary movements.

The political nature of the Catholic Church during this period is exemplified by the split in the hierarchy of the church; "the lower clergy generally supported the revolution, whereas the higher ecclesiastics remained loyal to the Spanish cause…"[9] Importantly, this split did not occur over arguments about theological truths, but rather, over the politics of power and authority. The lower clergy predominantly allied themselves to revolutionary movements; helping the liberators, with some even taking active roles in the revolutions. This tendency within the lower clergy continued on to the time of Gutierrez; playing a pivotal role in the development and nature of Liberation Theology.

With the military success of many of the revolutionary movements most of the higher ecclesiastics were expelled cutting off the papacy from the Latin American Catholic Church. The exception to this was in Mexico where the high ecclesiastics reversed their position after ten years of supporting the Spanish crown. In this case, however, anti-clericalism was stronger and the Papacy as a result disconnected from the Church there. Ironically, the disconnection of the papacy and Catholic Church in Latin America was the culmination of politics. In the revolutions against Spain, the Papacy was caught up by the connections between Church and State. The Pope could not appoint new bishops without acknowledging that Spain was no longer politically supreme in Latin America. At the same time, neither Spain nor any other European nation would recognise the political independence of those newly formed nations in Latin America and the Papacy would not be the first to do so. On the other hand, Spain was in no position to fulfil their right of patronage in Latin America of which it now controlled very little; "The revolt and emancipation of Spanish America created problems… These problems were political and religious in nature… The principal question which confronted the Vatican was: Should the Holy See recognise the independence of the Spanish-American republics?"[10] The Papacy could not recognise these new nations for political reasons to the cost of their religious obligations and did not until Grenada was recognised by European nations. The Pope was again able to communicate to the Latin American Catholic Church but by this time, in 1848, almost fifty years had past in which the Vatican had little or no communication with the church. Without directions from higher ecclesiastics or the Papacy the clergy in Latin America were left to their own means to

manage the problems of the Church. As a result, the clergy tended to follow tradition by teaching the external trappings of Catholicism and involve themselves in political endeavours. At the same time, because no new clergy could be appointed, there was a rapid decline of the number of clergy serving a growing population.

The political liberators of this time were on the whole strongly Catholic in their beliefs. A few, such as Simon Bolivar, had been influenced by the French Enlightenment and made attempts to separate Church and State. However, these reforms were met with vehement opposition by the church and wealthy alike - and were as a result unsuccessful. What is notable, however, is the slow transition in the legal status of the Catholic Church due to the attempted reforms of the liberators; "… As a result of the revolution, profound changes (occurred) in its political and legal status."[11] The revolutions against Spain resulted in a slow separation of the Church from the state and the dissolution of the churches special legal rights. The churches private legal system became accountable to secular law and events such as marriage, birth, and death came to be under the jurisdiction of the state. However, this change did not end the clergy's activities in the realm of politics. Within the formation of the newly recognised nations the clergy were able to serve as politicians or engage in political debate as clerics. Accordingly, this encouraged the formation of Christian political parties.

In summary, the revolutions against Spain caused three major trends: the clergy left to their own devices became more politically orientated, the lack of communication between the Papacy and the Latin American Catholic Church led to a decline in the ratio of clergy to population, which in turn restricted the role of the clergy in spiritual and theological matters, and finally, this further promoted the phenomenon of a Catholic faith dominated by symbolic external rituals and the integration of pre-Christian beliefs into Catholicism.

The Peruvian Influence on Liberation Theology:

Gutierrez is a Peruvian whose thinking is greatly influenced by the modern history of Peru. In the following discussion, it is my intention to provide a brief outline of historical forces which have affected Peruvian culture and thus Gutierrez's theological bent. It will focus on modern developments in greater detail than on earlier history.

In Peru "the system of interdependence of state and church is one of the most comprehensive and absolute in Latin America."[12] Because of this "no anticlerical campaign in Peru has (ever) gained much headway."[13] Similarly to other nations of Latin America the severing of ties with Spain and the Pope resulted in a situation wherein "the lower clergy

were left very much to their own devices"[14] Peru was also left with a low clergy to population ratio[15] and accordingly, a vast amount of what gets called *folk Catholics*.[16]

In more recent history there were a number of developments pivotal to the development of Gutierrez's formulation of liberation theology. There was a movement towards the separation of Church and State that was successful on the institutional level encouraged by the clergy themselves. This period was also marked by the birth and growth of a middle class in Peru which left an extensive impact on modern Peruvian Catholicism. The middle and educated classes in Peru developed out of an elitist education system provided by the Catholic Church. This elitist education resulted in a socially conscious middle class who developed a utopian, if elitist, program for reform. This reform owes much of its origins to the *indigenista movement*.

The indigenista movement began with Spanish colonisation. Accounts provided by clergy and government officials wrote of the indigenous population both glorifying them and asserting their backwardness. With the growth of middle class, and as social problems became recognised, politicians and educated Peruvians began to call for reforms to benefit the indigenous population. Later, when socialism became popular, political activists began to politicise the plight of the indigenous people who constitute the majority of the Peruvian population. This movement reflected the growing social consciousness of the Church and the Peruvian Catholic education. It was the Catholic Universities which set up research to study the plight of the indigenous people and their "folk Catholicism". As a result of this growing "knowledge of their own people (the) social revolutionaries (were able) to make their plans and summon the people to rise up."[17] Irrespective of whether or not these movements were successful, we can see the role of the Catholic Church and even connect this movement to the later development of Liberation Theology.

Reform, even anti-clerical reform, in Peru was never anti-Catholic, but rather a movement that intended to transform Latin Catholicism from a focus on external trappings to "the cause of social justice" imbued with religious symbolism[18]. Importantly, this middle class reformism contained radical political practices which coexisted with very conservative Catholic symbolism. This type of reform reached its heights just after WWII and was utopian in outlook. This utopianism was associated with modernisation, the communist revolution, and a breakdown of traditional cultural structures. During this period political parties such as the Christian Democratic Party and Popular Action were popularly supported. The Church

likewise became heavily involved in the push for reform. In 1958, the Peruvian Bishops published a document titled *On the Social Question*[19] which called for social reform.

It is important to note that both the Indigenista and reform movements were born in and dominated by the middle class. The middle class were generally educated at Catholic schools and shared the same characteristics of conservative religious symbolism combined with radical political action. This radical political stance has been termed 'radical clericalism' which is "the appropriation of old means to serve new ends."[20] Characteristic of this type of reform is elitism; "the majority of Church movements which went through the radicalisation process in the 1960's recruited out of the well-to-do sectors of Latin America's rigidly stratified societies."[21] What we find then in the reform movements of Peru is that they were predominately middle class Catholic educated people attempting to reach out to the indigenous people of Peru. This trend of reformism plays an integral role in the motivation and content of the Liberation Theology developed by Gutierrez.

There were three important events which shaped both Peruvian and Latin American Catholic faith in the 20th century; the Cuban Revolution, Medellin, and the second Vatican Council. The Cuban Revolution was viewed positively and as a role model by many politically active Latin Americans. As a result of this politics became, at least in theory, affected by Marxism, "for a better understanding of this reality, which these Catholics were now encountering first-hand, the most appropriate conceptual instruments they found were those which … they had learned from Marxism."[22] Marxism became the political platform for middle class utopianism. The Peruvian like Marx were attempting to achieve social reform through the empowerment of the masses. For Gutierrez, his friend Camillo Torres was a priest who joined the revolutionary movement and later died in the struggle. Secondly, Gutierrez seems to have been greatly inspired by the symbol of the Cuban revolution which was the paradigm of Catholicism combined with Marxism, and the social critiques of Marx.

Medellin, where Gutierrez served as a theological advisor to the bishops, was another key event in the development of Liberation Theology. In general, the Medellin conference discussed "the issue of moral validity of the present economic and political system in Latin America… Latin Americans were growing impatient with the meagre results of the 'development' that had been promised."[23] Democratic reform and progress seemed to be failing and in the light of Vatican II and the Cuban Revolution Bishops in Latin America felt the need to meet these issues head on. Medellin had on its agenda the issues of European economic imperialism, oppression of the poor, revolution and violence, condemnation of

capitalism, and religious colonialism.[24] It was a paper written and presented just prior to the Medellin conference, entitled *Towards a Theology of Liberation* pushed Gutierrez into the theological limelight.

When Pope John XXIII called for a Vatican council in 1963, he brought about an overhaul of the Roman Catholic position on the world around it. Vatican II, which lasted for two years, brought the Roman Catholic Church into the modern world by addressing issues such as ecumenicism and religious freedom. Most importantly for the Latin American Catholic Church was the discussion of culture and economic life of people. In this discussion, the Vatican Council "denounced economic inequality and disparities between rich and poor nations, and based human freedom and interdependence on the dignity of man and his creation by God."[25] This section of Vatican II gave credence to a socially conscious Christian faith. Many phrases used in Vatican II are comparable to phrases utilised by Marx which many felt "endorsed dialogue with the Marxist left."[26] This view is not hard to justify - for example: "The fundamental purpose of this productivity must not be the mere multiplication of products… Rather, it must be the service of man…"[27]

Hegel

In approaching Hegel's philosophy the paper will have two tasks. I will attempt to show that there is a strong link between Hegel's philosophy and Gutierrez's formulation of liberation theology. I will also argue that Hegel's thought provided the framework for Gutierrez's liberation theology, while Marx has been used as a tool for social analysis, and no more than this. The foundation of this argument is based upon the connections of both Hegel and Gutierrez to Christianity and Christ as the focus and basis of their systems of thought. At the very least, Hegel's philosophical system is more malleable to a Christian theological framework than Marx's. Moreover, Marxist critiques and analysis of capitalist society can be merged with Christianity through Hegelian philosophy without having to take on his historical materialism. As a result of these tasks, Hegel's philosophy will not receive a full analysis but will rather consist of a broad interpretation intending to draw out the possible implications or grounds for the Liberation Theology of Gustavo Gutierrez. There are four main possibilities that I will draw out in Hegel's philosophy for Liberation Theology.

These possibilities of course, originate in Hegel's social context and his response to it. One force that shaped Hegel's thought was the French Revolution and Napoleon. Hegel was

close enough to France to be caught up in its positive cry for 'freedom' and yet far enough away to be able to idealise it. As a student in Tubingen, Hegel took the side of the patriots in the debates for and against the French Revolution.[28] From a young age Hegel was interested in the idea of freedom which was to shape his philosophy later in life. Hegel read the works of French and German Enlightenment thinkers but early on his main inspiration was drawn from Greek philosophy from which he learnt "how reason and desire, religion and politics could be harmonised in actual social life."[29] In Hegel's University years he began the task of confronting the legacy of the great German Enlightenment figure Kant. The main task Hegel set himself was to unify *subject* and *object* which Kant had left estranged. In this brief summary of Hegel's social context there are then three forces which influenced Hegel's philosophy; a vision of freedom, a desire for harmony between secular and sacred, and the quest to unify subject and object. The synthesis of these forces results in a fertile field of possible appropriation for the liberation theologian.

Hegel's philosophy was profoundly religious and Christian even if in a quite radical way. In his philosophical attempts to unify subject and object through harmony and with the ultimate goal of freedom Hegel in a sense proposed a radical new perspective on theology. I have mentioned previously that there are four main possible themes of appropriation for Gutierrez in Hegelian thought. These are listed as follows: that God is in the world, that God is in history, the idea of estrangement or alienation, and finally teleology. Although these subjects are interrelated in Hegel's philosophical system, I will discuss them separately to give a simpler overview of the connections between Hegel and Gutierrez.

For Hegel, God in the world is a necessary truth of philosophical thought. For, if God is not in the world how can the subject and object be harmonised? This harmony is found in a quasi-mystical definition of God; where God is outside of creation and unknowable: "the first divine history is outside the world, it is not in space, but outside finitude as such…"[30] God is also in the world as the force of providence in History: "The second locale is the world,… God having his determinate being in the world, God revealed to us through the remembered past".[31] God is also in the world through humanity: "Thirdly there is the inner place, the community, first of all in the world, but simultaneously raises itself to heaven, or already has heaven within itself on earth."[32] In God then, we find harmony between subject and object, for God encompasses both of them and is in both of them. God can therefore be outside and in the world. However, this leads to a necessary self-estrangement or alienation of God from

God. That part of God which is in the world becomes alienated to the totality of God and has only partial awareness as a human being.

This brings us to the concept of God in history. When the fall occurred; the act of redemption through the self-estrangement of God from God, Hegel argues that humanity lost their innocent harmony with God. The fall leads to a self-consciousness within humanity which moves humanity from innocent unity to an ultimately better state of alienation from the full awareness of God. From this point onwards providence, or God in history, becomes a force which leads creation back towards a total awareness of God.[33] Thus, throughout history the force of providence or the logos leads humanity and human history in a certain direction. The path is not straight but circular; with human history going through cycles of day and night, freedom and alienation, but still moving towards the absolute.[34]

Jesus plays an important function in Hegel's view of God in history. Jesus is the ultimate God in man, the divine purpose revealed, and the arrow pointing towards God: "The Christian gospel features as a decisive turning point in the education of the human race; a definitive revelation of the true meaning of freedom."[35] It is important to realise Hegel's christocentricity in relation to thinking about its influence on liberation theology. Hegel interprets Christ to be the Liberator of humanity in the sense that Christ teaches humanity how to be free. This freedom is attainable for Hegel within history, through history, and towards the end of history. Freedom is the goal of history while the kingdom of God is the fulfilment of freedom and unity with God. The role of Jesus is not only historical but also political: "God is to be grasped as being present throughout the whole length and breadth of human history, wherever there is some experience of liberation… And where God is 'made flesh' in the individuality, and hence the mortality of the particular historical individual Jesus, this is also… a profoundly political event."[36]

We have, of course, in discussing God in history moved into Hegel's Teleology. Teleology is defined as being a "doctrine of final causes."[37] This doctrine has also been defined as "the philosophical study of manifestations of design or purpose in natural processes or occurrences."[38] Hegel's Teleology has also been called an eschatological-teleology in that the purpose of history is posited as the end that history moves towards. Thus, the Teleology of Hegel reaches fruition in eschatological terms. Hegel's Teleology is not external; his system relies on purpose which is derived from within history. "Hegel insists that the end of history and nature must be internal to history and nature themselves."[39] This Teleology is not merely internal but strives to become external: "The end is therefore the

subjective concept, as essential striving and urge to posit itself externally."[40] Although Hegel's philosophical system is not expressly eschatological in content it still provides foundations or possibilities for alternative Christian eschatologies. Traditionally, Christian eschatology has been constituted as external to the world. Judgement comes when human individuals die and God destroys the old Earth. It is God, externally, who takes action, while humanity by our very nature sinful, can do nothing for our redemption save have faith. "This basic tenant of Christian Eschatology, that there is no historical hope for man, but that the redemption and salvation of man will occur at the end of history."[41] The possibility imbedded in Hegel's Teleology is for the development of a theological-historical eschatology. In this, human beings would be able to positively contribute to their own salvation, the salvation of the world, and the kingdom of God could be established on Earth. This is exactly what Liberation Theology proposes.

There are thus three main characteristics within Hegel's philosophy which can be seen in Gutierrez's writings. First, humanity plays a role in the process of salvation which is essentially within history and a historical movement. Moreover, Jesus is the paradigm and turning point of the historical process of salvation. Finally, salvation in history is marked by the process of human history towards freedom and away from alienation.

Marx

In discussing Hegel, I indicated my view that Marx has influenced Gutierrez in terms of social critique rather than religious. A reason for this can be found in the very nature of Catholicism in Latin America as has been mentioned previously - its dual nature. Another reason can be linked to the Cuban revolution. Catholicism was so imbued in the infrastructure of Latin American culture that when Socialist, Communist, or Marxist political thought became popular Catholicism, Catholic practices, and its symbolism was synthesised with these political ideologies. Latin American revolutionary leaders appropriated these political ideologies as it suited their social environment without taking on the historical materialism of those ideologies.

For Gutierrez, there is no doubt that Marxist thought is a tool to analyse society and not a system to replace the Catholic faith. "Gutierrez, while accepting Marx's social analysis, rejects his historical materialism. His vision is determined by religious and not ideological faith."[42] Much of Gutierrez's theological writings utilises phrases and ideas of Marx just as documents of Vatican II did. However, the use of Marx's thinking is restricted to socio-

economic critique and is never used for theological ends. For this reason, although Marx is quoted so often in Gutierrez's works, I would argue that the framework for his system owes a greater debt to Hegel and existential philosophy than to Marx.[43]

Gutierrez

Thus far in the paper every discussion has been oriented towards possibilities for a Liberation Theology. Although this will not cease, I will now begin to discuss the theological writings of Gutierrez, partially distinct to the previous sections, drawing links to previous arguments and briefly linking his theology to contemporary theologians. I will be discussing two of his theological works, *Towards a Theology of Liberation* and *A Theology of Liberation*. Both of these works are early works and only go so far as to announce the advent of Liberation theology.

I will begin with a brief biographical of Gutierrez. He was born in Lima in 1928, and at a young age suffered from asteomyeletis, which kept him in bed for six years. During this time, he came to love reading, especially about psychology and theology. He began his academic career studying to be a psychologist at the University of San Marcos in Lima. After three years, he changed his studies and began preparing himself for ordination. He was sent by his bishop, after his ordination, to Belgium where at Louvain he studied philosophy, psychology and theology. Upon returning to Peru, he taught theology at the Pontifical Catholic University and served as an advisor to the National Union of Catholic students. In the 1960's he attended some sessions of Vatican II, after which he was inspired to study the culture of his nation in great depth. During the Medellin conference, he acted as theological advisor to the bishops.[44] There were apparently three major steps in the production of Gutierrez's liberation theology, which were: Brazil 1964, Montreal 1967, *The Church and Poverty*, and 1969 with the presentation of *Towards a Theology of Liberation*, just one month prior to the Medellin conference.[45] In 1971, Gutierrez published *Teologia de la Liberacion: perspectivas*, which was published in 1973 as *A Theology of Liberation* in English.

Hacia una teologia de la liberacion (Towards a Theology of Liberation) was published just one month before the Medellin conference. In this paper Gutierrez attempts to define what theology is and as a discipline what foundational principles it should have. The paper begins with a discussion of "what we mean by theology."[46] Gutierrez (and we shall see that this is an extremely common practice for Gutierrez) outlines a historical movement in the

traditional usage's of theology. He defines theology as being "an intellectual understanding of the faith."[47] Faith is defined as a "commitment to God and to human beings".[48] This commitment is a loving one, to God and to human beings, "consequently, when we speak of theology, we are not talking about an abstract and timeless truth, but rather about an existential stance, which tries to understand and see this commitment in the light of revelation."[49] Gutierrez asserts that theology is comprised of three things; it is a progressive and continuous understanding, that it is reflective, or a reflection that comes after action derived from commitment, and finally, theology must continually change in order to reflect the commitment of Christians in their social context.

Quoting Pascal, Gutierrez asserts that commitment must revolve around charity, and thus theology must reflect upon the act of charity in changing social context. "If faith is a commitment to God and human beings, it is not possible to live in today's world without a commitment to the process of liberation."[50] Gutierrez refers to Vatican II as first acknowledging that a commitment to liberation is a "sign of the times".[51] Gutierrez sees that for the Latin American reality, theologians need to be prepared to utilise the modern sciences to reflect on their social context. Gutierrez goes on to discuss salvation, where he connects the historical kingdom of God to salvation. "The theology of liberation means establishing the relationship that exists between human emancipation - and the kingdom of God."[52]

In this paper, Vatican II is obviously referred to as an inspiration to liberation theology. Vatican II is the point at which the clergy become liberated to reflect upon their social context. We can see the Hegelian influence through the conceptual framework of salvation, the kingdom of God, and emancipation. We can perhaps also see the connection between existential theologians Paul Tillich and Rudolf Bultmann to Gutierrez's existential approach. We can also see Gutierrez's use of Marx, where he extols the use of Marxist social critiques for a grasp of the Latin American social context.

Much of what Gustavo Gutierrez wrote in *A Theology of Liberation* is an extension of his arguments from *Towards a Theology of Liberation*. The book is divided into four parts and thirteen chapters. Part one is an extension of his previous discussion of theology, in that he defines it, and proposes the basis for his own understanding of Liberation theology. Part Two and Three involves a detailed discussion of the social context of Latin America and options which the Catholic Church has in Liberation Theology. Part Four returns to a theological debate, discussing salvation, God in history, political eschatology, the church, and poverty.

In part one, Gutierrez extends his previous arguments about the nature of theology by asserting that it must be a critical reflection on praxis. This he asserts began with St. Augustines work, *The City of God*. Gutierrez, again, describes a movement in theological discourse from wisdom, rational knowledge to critical reflection on praxis. This trend has a parallel movement in Christian spirituality in which the latest stage is an anthropological spirituality. "Man is the measure of all things, since God became man"[53] Christian faith has moved towards a more social orientation. Similarly to Hegel, Gutierrez sees this as a product of a growing 'consciousness' in humanity. For theology to reflect the social context of today's world, it must share and express the growing social awareness of humanity. This social awareness has led to the phenomena of ortho-praxis, or proper action. Gutierrez is asserting (in my understanding) that theology as a critical reflection of praxis is oriented towards ortho-praxis. Whether an action is proper or not can only be answered through the principles of commitment combined with the needs of the social context. Theology's ultimate aim is "the liberating transformation of the history of mankind…"[54]

Part Two of this book details patterns of historical development, parallel to those of theology and spirituality. Politically, Gutierrez asserts the growing political consciousness of human beings. "The behaviour of man (is) evermore conscious of being an active subject of history."[55] He also describes the development of Latin American culture in the 20th Century, detailing the movement from developmentalism in the 1950's to dependence theories and then the political revolutionary movements. Gutierrez identifies the historical roles of the Catholic Church in Latin America and then proposes ways in which the Church may be active in the future. Chapter 8 is devoted to the Medellin conference, discussing the issues involved and the theological shifts which occurred as a result.

Part 4 of this book returns to theological principles. The discussion begins with salvation. Gutierrez again, discusses the historical development of the idea of salvation, which he asserts has moved from quantitative to qualitative, from external to internal.[56] From this discussion, Gutierrez asserts the historical nature of salvation, where creation is the first salvific act of God. One in which God is alienated from God. Then he discusses the political nature of salvation, in which man political activities may bring the world closer to God. Very similarly to Hegel, Gutierrez then discusses salvation in terms of the complete fulfilment of history, which leads into a discussion on eschatology. Christ is seen as the keystone to complete liberation[57]. In Chapter Ten, Gutierrez reinterprets the command to love God and the neighbour. He does this by pronouncing that to know God is to do justice.[58]

In Chapter Twelve and Thirteen, Gutierrez discusses the connection between symbolism in the Catholic faith and Liberation theology, where he brilliantly interprets tradition symbols so important to Latin American Catholicism in terms of social justice, class struggle and liberation.

From my discussion of this book, we can see links between Gutierrez's theological work and 'possibilities' previously discussed in the paper. We can see how the political nature of the Latin American Catholic Church has been shaped by historical forces, which in turn has shaped Gutierrez's theology. We can also see the combination of religious symbolism and political ideology which has been attributed to 'folk' Catholicism. We can see the impetus which Vatican II had in promoting socially conscious Catholic theology.

However, thus far I have not mentioned theological influences of Gutierrez. When I picked up and read the works of Gustavo Gutierrez, I became quickly impressed with the range and depth of theologians he refers to and utilises. Those mentioned most commonly are as follows: Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann, Paul Tillich, Jacques Maritain, the Niebuhr brothers, Hans Kung, Karl Rahner, Yves Congar, Harvey Cox, Edward Schillebeeckx, Johann Metz and Jurgen Moltmann.

Conclusion

The primary intention of this paper has been to provide a discussion about the development of Liberation Theology in its early forms. Because of this, I have not made any criticisms or referred to criticisms of Liberation Theology or Gustavo Gutierrez. Accordingly, I have not interpreted theories, such as Marx's according to their original intent but rather according to how those theories have been used by Gutierrez in his social context. In formulating a theology of liberation Gustavo Gutierrez utilised a vast variety of intellectual thought to cast new light on his own unique social and religious situation. His theology of Liberation is a combination of conservative religious beliefs and a radical position towards politics and social action. However, I would argue that the ultimate inspiration for liberation theology is not as many would suggest, Marxist theory, but is rather the teleological-eschatology of salvation through history as formulated in Hegel's philosophy.

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[1] J. Lloyd Mecham, *Church and State in Latin America, A History of Politico-Ecclesiastical Relations* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Pres, 1966) p.7
[2] Ibid. p.8
[3] Ibid. p.9

[4] Ibid. p.12
[5] Ibid. p.39
[6] Ibid. p.41
[7] W.J. Coleman, *Latin American Catholicism: A self-evaluation* (New York: World Horizon, 1958) pp.4-5
[8] William. J. Coleman, *Latin American Catholicism*, p.4
[9] Mecham, *Church and State in Latin America,* p.42
[10] Ibid. p.61
[11] Ibid. p.60
[12] Ibid. p.160
[13] Ibid. p.160
[14] Ibid. p.161
[15] Ibid. p.177
[16] Coleman, *Latin American Catholicism,* p.28
[17] J.L. Klaiber, *Religion and Revolution in Peru*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977) p.199
[18] Ibid. p.5
[19] C. Romero, 'The Peruvian Church', *The Progressive Church in Latin America*, S. Mainwaring and A. Wilde (eds.) (Notre Dame: University Of Notre Dame Press, 1989) p.257
[20] L. Pasara, 'Peru: "The Leftist Angels"', *The Progressive Church in Latin America*, p.296
[21] I. Vallier, *Radical Priests and the Revolution*, quoted by L. Pasara, 'Peru: The Leftist Angels"', p.296
[22] Pasara, 'Peru: "The Leftist Angels"', p.279
[23] P.E. Sigmund, *Liberation Theology at the Crossroads: Democracy or Revolution?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,1990) p.26
[24] D.E. Mutcher, *The Church as a Political Factor in Latin America*, (New York: Praeger, 1971) pp.98-102
[25] Sigmund, *Liberation Theology at the Crossroads: Democracy or Revolution?*, p.18
[26] Ibid., p.19
[27] W.M. Abbott and J. Gallagher (Eds.), *The Documents of Vatican II* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1967), p. 273, pp.271-289
[28] F.C. Beiser (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) p.26
[29] Ibid. p.28
[30] A. Shanks, *Hegel's Political Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) p.61
[31] Ibid. p.61
[32] Ibid. p.61
[33] For an analysis of Hegel's conception of the Fall, see: Daniel Berthold-Bond, *Hegel's Grand Synthesis* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), p.56; M.J. Inwood, *Hegel* (London: Routledge, 1983) pp.94-97; A. Shanks, *Hegel's Political Theology*, pp.85-6
[34] This has sometimes been called thesis-antithesis-synthesis. However this view seems less organic and simplistic than Hegel's philosophical arguments.
[35] Shanks, *Hegel's Political Theology*, p.16
[36] Ibid. p.16
[37] J.M. Hawkins (ed.) *The Australian Reference dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986)
[38] R. Ilson (ed.) *The Readers Digest Universal Dictionary* (London, 1988) p.1554
[39] Frederick C. Beiser, 'Hegel on Religion and Philosophy', *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, p.289
[40] Inwood, *Hegel*, p.342
[41] Berthold-Bond, *Hegel's Grand Synthesis*, p.120
[42] Alistair Kee, *Marx and the Failure of Liberation Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1990) p.168
[43] Ibid. chapter 7 – provides a more detailed discussion of this
[44] Biographical information from: James B. Nickoloff, *Gustavo Gutierrez, Essential Writings* (New York: Orbis Books, 1996) pp.1-6
[45] Ibid. p.5
[46] Ibid. p.24
[47] Ibid. p.24
[48] Ibid. p.24
[49] Ibid. p.24
[50] Ibid. p.25
[51] Ibid. p.25
[52] Ibid. p.26
[53] Karl Barth quoted by G. Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (London: SCM Press, 1973) p.7
[54] Gutierrez, A *Theology of Liberation*, p.15.

[55] Ibid. p.46
[56] Ibid. pp.150-1
[57] Ibid. pp.168-75
[58] Ibid. p.194