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The Ends of Economics: Towards a Theological Economics of Eschatology

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Abstract:

Eschatology, the area of study concerning the final ends of humanity, is of particular importance to theologically-informed systems of belief. While eschatological inquiry may seem outside the purview of Economics, any discipline attempting to articulate a long-run understanding of the world must have beliefs about final ends. Economics, as such, likely already engages in eschatological thinking, just not systematically or explicitly. Several risks exist if systems of thought, such as Economics, are unable or unwilling to address the eschatological. This paper will explore descriptive and prescriptive elements of eschatology. Attention will then be turned towards understanding how the eschatological is and can be approached in Economics. Lastly, the implications of an eschatological approach for Economics on further research and policy prescription are discussed. By reconstruction and renegotiation society can create a healthier vision of the future.

I'm going where there's no depression
To the lovely land that's free from care
I'll leave this world of toil and trouble
My home's in Heaven, I'm going there
-The Carter Family, "No Depression (In Heaven)"

1. Background

What awaits us at the end: of our lives, of this period in history, of our planet, of this universe? These questions have been subject to religious inquiry for millenia, which taken together form eschatology. Eschatology, the area of study concerning the final ends of humanity, is of particular importance to theologically informed systems of belief. The theological beliefs of Christianity specifically place a strong emphasis on this eschatological element. The New Testament scriptures, the Hebrew traditions with which they engage, and the following two millennia of Christian theology all concern themselves with the examination of apocalyptic themes underlying the proclamations of Christ.

While eschatology seems to fit well as the subject of religious study, it would then appear to be outside the scope of the field of Economics. However, recent scholarship seems to suggest that interdisciplinary inquiry using elements of both may have broad benefits. Tatum argues that Theology and Economics once worked together to mutual benefit, and suggests that "the conditions may be right for a renaissance in theologically-informed economic inquiry."¹ If the two are reunited, economic inquiry will benefit in three ways: in methodology, in the understanding of economic systems, and in policy making and analysis². As such, this paper seeks to venture beyond the initial reaction that eschatology is outside the scope of economics and explore some of the ways in which it is both *already* present in economic analysis and the ways in which the eschatological *should* be present in economic analysis. Just because it has traditionally been the purview of religious thought, eschatological inquiry may still be within the scope of more secular approaches such as Economics.

For instance, if we look to physics (the 'king of the sciences' which Economics often attempts to emulate) we can see a collection of potential answers to the questions posed in the opening line above. Physicists believe that, in time, Earth is certain to be destroyed. If it hasn't already occurred by one of several chance phenomena, in roughly 7.5 billion years the forces of solar evolution will cause the planet to be engulfed by the sun.³ In 10¹⁰⁰ years, scientists posit that the 'dark era' will begin, spelling the end of a

¹ Tatum, Robert. "Homo Economicus as Fallen Man: The Need for Theological Economics," *Journal of Markets and Morality* 20, no. 1 (Spring 2017), 128

² Tatum, Robert. 2017. "A Theology of Economic Reform." *Faith and Economics* 69 (Spring), 66-73.

³ Schultz, Colin, "Earth Will Die a Hot Horrible Death When the Sun Expands and Swallows Us, and Now We Know What That Looks Like," *Smithsonian Magazine* (Smithsonian Institute, August 21, 2012) <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/earth-will-die-a-hot-horrible-death-when-the-sun-expands-and-swallows-us-and-now-we-know-what-that-looks-like-28965223/>.

universe that is anything like what we know or can even comprehend.⁴ Planets, stars, nebulae, and even black holes will give way to emptiness and unstructured particles. These answers to questions of the universe's final ends, while not predictions of complete certainty, are of sound method and are generally accepted as plausible theories (at least given the limitations of our knowledge about the far future.) With this example from physics, we can see that even the most secular of fields can attempt to answer questions that border on the eschatological.

This paper's key working assumption and belief is as follows: *any discipline attempting to articulate a long-run understanding of the world must have an eschatology*. Even if it just pertains to its own subject of study, it must attempt to answer questions of ends. As such, Economics already engages in eschatological thinking, just not systematically or explicitly. It seems reasonable to assume that economic history will end sometime before the 'dark age' of the universe, and while what counts as the end of Economics and what it will look like will be explored in later sections of the paper, this point should suffice to motivate further questioning.

In order to begin exploring the implications of the key assumption, this paper will narrow its focus to just a few initial questions. First, what is the importance of eschatology, and why must Economics address it? Second, what are the descriptive and prescriptive elements of eschatology? Finally, how are the eschatological aspects of Economics approached and how should they be?

Christianity's rich tradition of engagement with eschatological questions make it a ripe resource. It can help us find the kinds of questions that are within the scope of broad-based eschatological inquiry. It helps us understand how eschatological frameworks explain things descriptively. Lastly, it can help inform the normative prescriptions of our economic narratives. Perhaps by reconstruction and renegotiation, we as a society can create a healthier vision of, and attitude toward, the future.

This paper will begin by exploring how Eschatology is defined and depicted within theology. Attention will then turn to narratives present within the field of economics and how they parallel the eschatological. This will be used as an example of eschatological thinking that can aid our economic understanding. The implications of this example will then be drawn out and a further call to inquiry will be made.

2. Theology

Before eschatological thinking can be used to inform economic thinking, one must understand why eschatological thinking is so important to Christian theology in the first place. For this, Hans Schwarz seminal work *Eschatology* serves as a useful guide.⁵ For Schwarz: "In its broadest sense the term "eschatology" includes all concepts of life beyond death and everything connected with it such as heaven and hell, paradise and immortality, resurrection and transmigration of the rebirth and reincarnation, and last judgment and doomsday."⁶ Expanding on Kaufman's description of eschatology's image

⁴ "Physics Offers Glimpse into the Universe's Dark Era," University of Michigan News (University of Michigan, January 13, 1997) <https://news.umich.edu/physics-offers-glimpse-into-the-universe-s-dark-era/>.

⁵ Schwarz, Hans. 2000. *Eschatology*. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans.

as “the most questionable and speculative of Christian doctrines,” Schwarz characterizes the recent history of eschatological inquiry as one in which the dominance of secular thought has made it merely the domain of “extremists.”⁷

In light of this, Schwarz rejects the tendency to abandon the topic from theological discourse. Instead he poses three foundational questions that eschatology seeks to answer: what happens after death? What is the point of the cycle of life and death? Will ‘evil’ continue or will ‘good’ prevail?⁸ Lastly, when it comes to Christian theology in particular, there is a central focus placed on the traditional answers to these questions. That is to say the New Testament doctrine is fundamentally apocalyptic in nature, and to cast aside this element is to reject scripturally-informed theology.⁹

The New Testament proclamation’s answers to these questions give us the shape of its eschatological picture. What happens after death? Christian scripture death represents a complete end, a radical transition that cannot be viewed as a continuation beyond life.¹⁰ In the fallen world at least, death is defined in its strongest sense. “[D]eath puts an end to the whole man.”¹¹

The cycle of the sin of fallen life and subsequent lack of hope for something beyond death almost immediately brings forward questions of meaning. Is there a point to this? Will the evils of this world be overcome? Christianity’s answers here cement the centrality of its apocalyptic doctrine: Christ’s teachings emphasize a redemptive eschaton bringing about completion and perfection over death and decay, good over evil.¹² All of this is symbolized within the death and resurrection of Christ, with the resurrection event serving as disclosure for hope in the universal resurrection. In Schwarz’s words “through the resurrection of Jesus Christ the apocalyptic *idea* of a common resurrection is transformed into the Christian *hope* in the resurrection.”¹³

The arc of Christian eschatology can thus be presented in three parts. Beginning in a fallen world which hosts death, sin, and toil. Christ’s death and resurrection event then discloses the future universal resurrection, a sign of what’s to come. The end then occurs with the eschaton where death, evil, and sin are overcome by a redemptive apocalypse.

This eschatological arc has important implications for the moral calling of scripture. Tatum notes *proleptic anticipation* as one of these core moral implications, which he defines as “acting in the present with knowledge and understanding of the new

⁶ Ibid. 365

⁷ Kaufman, Gordon. *Systematic Theology: A Historicist Perspective* (New York: Scribner, 1968), 314 cited by Schwarz, Hans. 2000. *Eschatology*. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 365

⁸ Ibid. 366-367

⁹ Ibid. 366

¹⁰ Ibid. 276

¹¹ Rahner, Karl. “Life of the Dead,” in Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigation*, Vol. 4, *More Recent Writings*, trans. Kevin Smyth (Baltimore:Halicon, 1966), 351 cited by Schwarz, Hans. 2000. *Eschatology*. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 276

¹² Ibid. 389

¹³ Ibid. 287

world to come.”¹⁴ This principle is motivated by the location scripture places us within, between the disclosure and coming of the universal resurrection.

It is important to emphasize the universality of the fundamental questions -- answers here are not limited to what can be found in the domain of Christian scripture. As Schwarz puts it:

Eschatology also is determined by and determines our understanding of humanity, of body and soul, and of value systems and worldviews. A naturalistic concept of the human species will result in a different concept of eschatology than will a spiritualistic one, and a dualistic concept of body and soul will result in yet a different outlook on eschatology.¹⁵

Instead, taking a broader definition, eschatological inquiry is the rightful subject of any cosmological system, religious or secular. As such, the theological perspective should support the eschatological exploration of Economic thought. This gives useful motivation to the next task at hand, which is determining if Economics supports the exploration of its own eschatological ideas.

3. Economics

Before going further, it must be affirmed that eschatological stories and economic models are even comparable. This perspective is supported on the theological side through Schwarz, since he sees eschatological content as capable of existing within a variety of secular frameworks. However, the equivalent support has not yet been established on the economic end. For this, Tomas Sedláček's *Economics of Good and Evil* and Tatum's "To What Ends for Theology-Oriented Economic Policy Making" will be utilized.

In Sedlacek's chapter on Descartes, he draws a through-line between post-enlightenment beliefs in scientific, rationalist systems of knowledge and the religious systems of belief preceding them.¹⁶ Christian scripture, much like Economics, surveys the surrounding world and seeks to build a descriptive picture of what occurs within it and what forces drive it. For Christian scripture, this could be something like "the primary driving forces of the world are the forces of God." Once that descriptive picture is established, a number of prescriptive implications are determined. In Christian scripture, this could be something like "the normative basis for action is alignment with God's will".

Similarly, Economics also attempts to create a system of knowledge capable of providing a descriptive picture of the world around us. Here, many different economic forces move forward to drive daily occurrences. Economics is often called to positions of prescriptive authority by external or internal pressures.¹⁷ Sedláček posits that this view

¹⁴ Tatum, Robert. "To What Ends for Theology-Oriented Economic Policymaking," *Journal of Economics, Theology and Religion* 1, no. 1 (2021), 75.

¹⁵ Schwarz, Hans. 2000. *Eschatology*. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 26.

¹⁶ Sedláček, Tomas. 2011. *Economics of Good and Evil: The Quest for Economic Meaning from Gilgamesh to Wall Street*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹⁷ Tatum, Robert. "Homo Economicus as Fallen Man: The Need for Theological Economic", *Journal of Markets & Morality* 20, no. 1 (2017), 127.

of the world, as a subheading of a broader scientific system, carries much the same function as the religious systems, such as Christianity. “Scientific and economic models play a similar role as myths when one system (or myth) replaces or destroys another. This is what occurred when theological myth was replaced by scientific myth.”¹⁸ Playing the same role, Economics must also seek to answer the same fundamental questions. Since some of the core questions of religious belief are the eschatological questions, Economics as its successor must have some answers here. Both the ends of the human story and the ends of the economic story should be considered as topics for this approach.

If Economics ignores eschatology or is unwilling to include its questions in its inquiry, it faces several key risks. Positive misalignment may occur if descriptive differences exist between eschatological and non-eschatological aspects of a system of thought. That is to say, if our beliefs about what the end of things looks like, whether based on evidence or *a priori* assumption, is not accounted for within our modeling there may be contradiction between our description of the world when speaking about Economics and speaking about the world. Normative misalignment may occur if moral differences exist between eschatological and non-eschatological aspects of a system. This risk is similar to the above, but instead of dissonance between how we describe the world at different times it is dissonance between what actions we prescribe and what actions we really ought to take given the circumstance. Lastly, as addressed by Schwarz and Kaufman, if eschatological thought is not considered a serious avenue of inquiry it will not be addressed with seriousness and will be an area of inquiry reserved for “extremists.”

Given all of this, there are three options for how eschatological questions can be confronted with economic thinking. First is the option that it is not confronted at all. Considering that Economics is often concerned with matters of long-run importance and the goals of humanity broadly, this is unlikely. Some areas of Economics will fall under this first category with little risk, as many matters concerning Micro Economics or Behavioral Economics don’t concern themselves with such long-run questions. Second, it is contained in Economics, but only implicitly. This is perhaps the most common occurrence in Economics. Long-run descriptions rarely consider the ultimate ends carefully, leading to eschatological questions being implicitly addressed by the projections of models that don’t intend to answer them. This second category is most susceptible to misalignment risk, and illustrates the importance of an eschatological approach. Lastly, Economics can make explicit its eschatological position and state plainly what it believes about the ends of humanity and Economics itself.

3. Growth Eschatology

Neoclassical Visions

¹⁸ Sedláček, Tomas. 2011. *Economics of Good and Evil: The Quest for Economic Meaning from Gilgamesh to Wall Street*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 177.

To illustrate what the explicit approach to eschatological Economics can look like, an eschatological aspect of growth modeling will be briefly explored. An area greatly concerned with the long run, economic growth is a rich topic through which to begin this line of inquiry.

Many introductory Economics courses begin with the following graph:

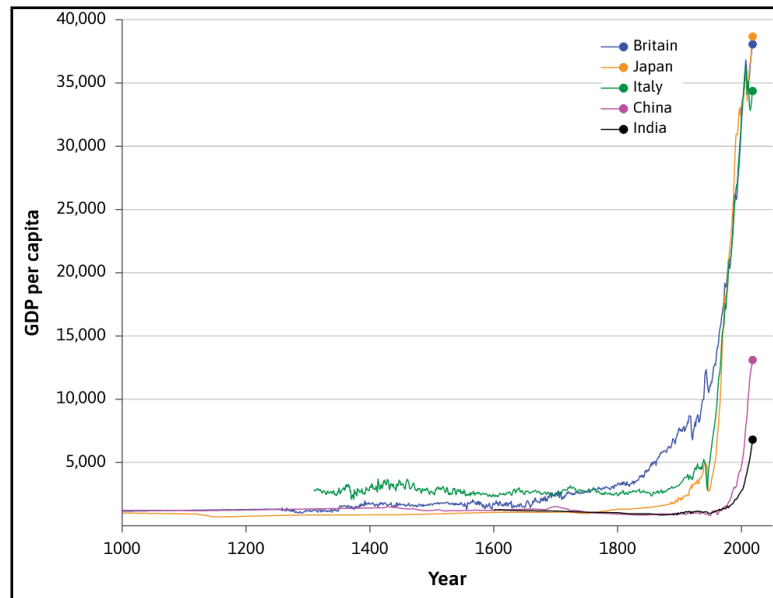


Figure 1. 'Maddison style estimates of the evolution of the world economy. A new 2020 update'.¹⁹

Then a story is told. For most of human history we lived at subsistence level, the bare minimum needed to survive. People had about the same material wealth as their parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, etc. Then something remarkable started to happen; incomes started to increase. It was the growth revolution. Suddenly, people lived significantly better lives than their parents, who lived better than their parents, and so on and so on.

This story provides the central question of much of Economics: how do we continue along this path of growth? Mainstream Economic answers can be found in the work of Robert Solow and Paul Romer. Solow's model suggests that capital accumulation played a large role in initial increases in standards of living, however in the long run increases in the quantity of capital can't push past inevitable stagnation in output.²⁰ This is referred to as a steady state, an amount of economic output that will persist permanently. Romer's model, which adapts Solow's work to account for

¹⁹ Bolt, Jutta and Zanden, Jan Luiten van. 2020. "Maddison style estimates of the evolution of the world economy. A new 2020 update". Maddison Project Database, version 2020. cited in Bowles, S., Carlin, W. and Stevens, M. 2017. 'The capitalist revolution'. Unit 1 in The CORE team, *The Economy*. Available at: <https://www.core-econ.org>. [Accessed on 4/3/2023]

²⁰ Solow, Robert. 1956. "A contribution to the theory of economic growth". *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 70(1), 65–94.

increasing growth, suggests that endogenizing technological progress can account for increasing growth.²¹ Through this, growth can extend forever from further technological advancement.

Sedláček, along with Robert Nelson and Robert Samuelson, point to this belief in growth as one of the strongest convictions of economists.²² “Many economists believe in progress in a religious way, as something that is significantly improving the basic human condition for the better.”²³ (Nelson xix) With an eschatological eye, the story of economic growth answers the foundational questions. There is certainly no heaven or resurrection; however, the sacrifices and suffering endured in this life create great benefits to successive generations as they experience an increasingly fulfilling and materially satisfied life. Economic growth won’t bring about utopia, but it will temper the world with increasingly greater comfort and wealth. The vices that must be tolerated – be it greed, self-interest, or stinginess – are justified through their contribution to this process. Growth is a redemptive force, one that provides hope for the future and meaning for the struggles of the past.

Recently, however, the purportedly unending growth has been losing steam in many countries along the production frontier.²⁴ Dietrich Vollrath and Robert Gordon suggest that the impacts of technological change were overstated, and the real growth path may look more like Solow’s model than Romer’s.²⁵ That is to say, capital and technological accumulation may contribute to growth for a time, but ultimately the economy will hit a steady state. However, economic growth as depicted above has implicitly taken on an eschatological character. Since the growth story is used as a broad goal for humanity and source of hope for the future world, many economists still stand by their belief in the prospect of continuous unending growth. This causes a positive misalignment between what is being depicted in growth models and what is happening in the world. Further, this belief can result in policy prescriptions that may be misaligned with what ought to be done.

A New Story

In order to make explicit the eschatological elements of the growth story, and attempt to realign the model with eschatological belief, the forward-facing works of John Maynard Keynes and John Stuart Mill will be used to expand on the ends of the growth

²¹ Romer, Paul. (1990). “Endogenous technological change”. *Journal of Political Economy*, 98(5), S71–S102.

²² Sedláček, Tomas. 2011. *Economics of Good and Evil: The Quest for Economic Meaning from Gilgamesh to Wall Street*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 234-235

²³ Nelson, Robert. 2001. *Economics as Religion*. xxiv.

²⁴ Tatum, Rober. (2020) “Move Beyond the One-hit Wonder of Economic Growth and Use the Whole Hymnal”. *Faith & Economics*, 76.

²⁵ Vollrath, Dietrich. *Fully Grown: Why a Stagnant Economy is a Sign of Success* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020) ; Gordon, Robert J. 2016. *The Rise and Fall of American Growth*. The Princeton Economic History of the Western World. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

model. Both thinkers believe in the importance of the growth in economic output that has occurred thus far. However, both believe there will come a time in which the aeon defined by economic growth will come to an end. This transformational period would be marked by a radical departure from the values of the growth period and would require a substantial socio-cultural shift.

Keynes lays out his position in his essay "The Economic Possibilities of Our Grandchildren." Writing during the Great Depression, he sought to offer a point of hope against a backdrop of widespread struggle and poverty.²⁶ Keynes predicted that despite the ongoing disruption, the rapid economic progress characterizing the late 19th and early 20th century would continue into the future. Over the next 100 years he predicted that economic output would be somewhere eight times higher, and that the "economic problem" would be solved.²⁷

For Keynes human needs are either absolute -- the necessities of survival, or relative -- only needed to feel superior to others.²⁸ The absolute needs constituted the "economic problem", which humanity had lived with since its inception. "[W]e find that the economic problem, the struggle for subsistence, always has been hitherto the primary, most pressing problem of the human race."²⁹ Since Keynes posited that absolute needs do not shift higher as income rises he believed that with a high enough level of general income they could be satisfied. While Keynes felt optimistic about the possibilities of the elimination of absolute need, he felt that the habits and manners of the era of growth (and all eras further before that) were so deeply ingrained within us that they would be difficult to escape.

Keynes views great moral transformation as necessary for solving the "economic problem" to recoup its benefits. Using appropriately biblical language, he suggests that the "old Adam" within us must be managed for us to move towards a leisurely heaven.³⁰

We shall be able to rid ourselves of many of the pseudo-moral principles which have hag-ridden us for two hundred years... I see us free, therefore, to return to some of the most sure and certain principles of religion and traditional virtue—that avarice is a vice, that the exaction of usury is a misdemeanour, and the love of money is detestable, that those walk most truly in the paths of virtue and sane wisdom who take least thought for the morrow. We shall once more value ends above means and prefer the good to the useful. We shall honour those who can teach us how to pluck the hour and the day virtuously and well, the delightful people who are capable of taking direct enjoyment in things, the lilies of the field who toil not, neither do they spin.³¹

Mill lays out a position complimentary to Keynes' in the essay "On the steady state." He predicts that due to diminishing returns on the inputs of production, eventually economic output will reach a steady state.³² While this may point towards Solow, and in

²⁶ Keynes, John M. *Essays in Persuasion*, New York: W.W.Norton & Co., 1963, pp. 360.

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²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.* 360.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

turn prompt a reference to Romer and the promises of technology, we must recall Vollrath and Gordon. Vollrath argues that slow growth is one of the achievements of a developed economy, as it signals it is close to its productive limits. Gordon argues that the technological innovation propelling growth in the 19th century were not replicable events, and successive advancements will have increasingly diminishing returns. Their more modern research suggests that these forces seem to be insufficient to overcome stagnation. This is in line with the driving claim of Mill's piece: "[T]he economical progress of society, in the sense in which those terms are commonly understood; [is] the progress of capital, of population, and of the productive arts. But in contemplating any progressive movement, [it is] not in its nature unlimited."³³ Mill saw the stationary state as an inevitable end to the era of growth.

Many of Mill's contemporaries viewed the stationary state as unpleasant and discouraging.³⁴ He predicted instead that the transition to the steady state would be a period of great transformation and possibility. Like Keynes, Mill was "not charmed with the ideal of life held out by those who think that the normal state of human beings is that of struggling to get on; that the trampling, crushing, elbowing, and treading on each other's heels, which form the existing type of social life, are the most desirable lot of humankind, or anything but the disagreeable symptoms of one of the phases of industrial progress."³⁵

Taken together, Mill and Keynes sketch out the boundaries of a stretch of time in which the epoch of economic growth is dying, but has not yet been replaced. This is growth's eschatological moment. While Keynes does not join with Mill to predict the coming onset of a stationary state, his prediction of the solution of the "economic problem" demarcates the beginning of growth's eschatological moment. It is at this point that transformation becomes possible and a new period not defined by its growth or expansion becomes visible. Mill demarcates the end of growth's eschatological moment. Here, regardless of the will of the time, the onset of the steady state necessitates transformation.

The failure of Keynes' predictions on working hours and leisure have to some discredited his prediction. However, Keynes' and Mill's commentary on the difficulties of this transition should temper our expectation of its ease. For the people whose whole life has been experienced through this mindset and for whom growth is a promised savior, transformation is a difficult and lengthy process. Not only that, but without recognition of the coming end of growth, transformation cannot be initiated in the first place. In the time between the two points of demarcation, humanity must notice that it is situated at the end of one economic history and find what is next. Otherwise we will continue to believe and live as if we are still working towards the wrong ends.

³² Mill, John Stuart. 1909. "Of the Stationary State." Book IV, Chapter VI in *Principles of Political Economy: With Some of Their Applications to Social Philosophy*, edited with an introduction by W. J. Ashley. London: Longmans, Green, and Co.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

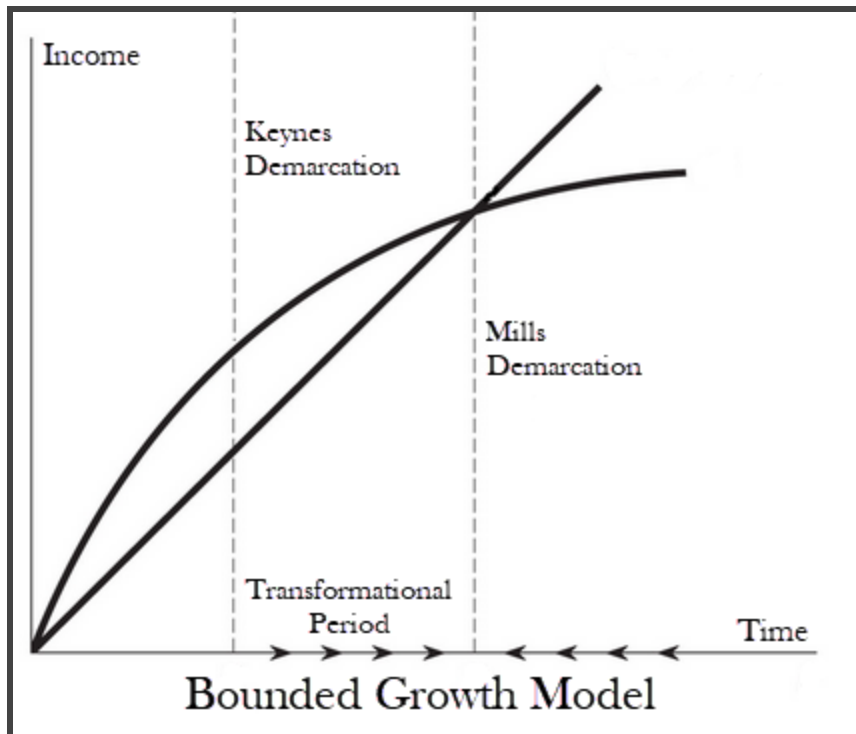


Fig. 2 "Bounded Growth Model."

3. Implications

Stories Matter

The growth story told within the confines of Economics does not intend to answer questions of such a broad concern as the eschatological questions laid out in this paper. If this is the case, why is it important to attempt to recraft the narrative of growth? It is important because Economists are not the only group who draw from this narrative, and the stories told within the field ripple outward. It is only incidentally that Economics ends up answering fundamental questions.

In the context of a world of growth, the lessons of the neoclassical story serve a purpose. Even if one doesn't know the narrative, the lessons it gives (such as self interest and stinginess) confirm their use as they are lived by. Alignment with those values is in turn recognized as the growth they contribute to bestow greater material wealth and well-being. This is why the narrative is so popular and why it is told at the beginning of introductory economics classes in high school and college, in think-tank pieces and op-eds, and by politicians and policymakers. It is a useful economic myth to explain and teach how to live in this world of growth, and its implicit moral lessons have useful ends.

However, this system only works smoothly when growth is the end being worked towards. When economic growth is no longer the end, new efforts become entangled and constrained within the myth and its values. Attempting to achieve different goals through the same manners in which growth was achieved is not productive. Attempting to reorient while telling the same stories creates misalignment and contradiction, since the way narrative turns around and affects behavior is ignored. The old has been so useful it is difficult to dispose of, but if progress is to be made the old must be disposed of nonetheless.

This is where the demarcations taken from Keynes and Mill add to the original story. The transitional period provides rough guidelines to where this breakdown begins to occur. It is at this time that old ends must be discarded and replaced with new ones, not because the old didn't serve their purpose but because they no longer serve as useful orientation. The importance of carefully considered ends should be a key takeaway of this paper. Not only do ends give us something to work toward but they turn around and influence behavior and manner in the present. In order to avoid misalignment, it is of the utmost importance that ends not simply be accepted because they are the ones we have. There must be a capability of reconsidering ends, lest the manners adopted out of temporary usefulness be treated as immutable. Making explicit the ends Economics is working toward helps us to consider all of these things.

The previous discussion of growth is just an example of how eschatological thinking can influence economic analysis. The way our beliefs about the end influence us in the present was informed by comparison of the economic narrative of growth to Christian eschatology. With a longstanding tradition of thinking about ends, drawing parallels to this system of inquiry can have vital insights both thinkers of religious belief and secular thinkers, even if they disagree with priors. A line of study focused on exploring the places where eschatological theology benefits economics analysis could prove fruitful. This could both by application to different areas of economics analysis or by incorporating the insights of different theological systems. Climate Economics seems like a worthy candidate, with apocalyptic narrative dominating discussion. With a longstanding tradition of thinking about ends, incorporating eschatological inquiry with economics could provide vital insights both for religious and secular thinkers. As our existing narratives lose their power, as our ways of living suffer from misalignment with our beliefs, it is more important now than ever to think about our ends.