

Bodies of Christ in Seas of Change

The Relationship between Ecclesiology, Politics and Practice

in the Conditioning of Twentieth Century

Roman Catholic Responses to Violence

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Matthew John Paul Tan', written in a cursive style.

Thesis Abstract

This thesis examines how Christian interpretation is shaped by, and also shapes, the political contexts within which the Church is situated. The ecclesial identification of, and response to, sites of political violence serves as this thesis' primary point of reference. It argues that ecclesiology, the imaging of the Church as the Body of Christ, constitutes the central node that shapes the Church's reading of the political signs of the times generated by other social bodies. Because the central investigation necessarily implicates both theology and social theory, this thesis begins by identifying frameworks of sociopolitical analysis that properly correlate the two fields. It will critique approaches shaped by the assumptions of Modern social science, whose obsession with autonomous and strategic self-maximization, together with what is only scientifically verifiable, lead to a deliberate a priori exclusion of "irrational" religion. It will also critique seemingly "postmodern" analyses that betray lingering Modern influences, and argue for a more thoroughgoing postmodernism in which individuals, communities, materiality and transcendence operate harmoniously with one another. It will then employ Graham Ward's cultural hermeneutics as the framework that not only exhibits this thoroughgoing postmodernism, but also engages all aspects of this thesis' inquiry.

Through the lens of Ward's cultural hermeneutics, this thesis will show how ecclesiology emerges from practical engagements between the Church as a social configuration with other social configurations. It will explain the implication of corporeal practices and the imagination in the formation of such configurations, or social imaginaries. It will then demonstrate how the recruitment of bodies into communal practices in turn either weaken or strengthen one imaginary *vis a vis* another. However, in the course of these shifts in corporeal configurations around the Church, the thesis will also show how ecclesiologies themselves will slowly lose their persuasive power. This creates with the Church a need for communal reconfiguration to facilitate a reading of the contemporary signs of the times.

The next four chapters outline how political change grounded in overlapping corporeal and communal practices conditioned three twentieth century Roman Catholic ecclesiological archetypes:

the "Perfect Society", "Mystical Body" and "Nuptial Communion". This analysis will take place by reference to four key historical episodes: the European liberal and industrial revolutions, the age of the dictators in Germany and Italy, post-war Latin America and late-Soviet Poland. In each episode, this thesis will show how the image of the Body of Christ became conditioned by a specific combination of practices operating within political, intellectual and ecclesial sites of power. It will also outline how that image in turn conditioned the practices that engaged the sites of political violence, and show how and why each image, and the practices that sprung from it, eventually desiccated.

The thesis concludes with a critical reflection, via a set of thematic constants, on the implications of the historical data for ecclesiology and the Church's evangelical mission in light of its contemporary context. Focal points include the need for ecclesial vigilance in light of the imaging of the Body of Christ by reference to non-Christian contexts, attention to the recruitment of bodies as evangelical practices, the ubiquity of deference to authority and the stubborn allure of defining the political realm by reference to statecraft. It will then look to contemporary processes of "desecularisation" and the increasing recognition of the salience of ritual and show how desire and liturgy can act as avenues for the emergence of new forms of ecclesial politics, where credible claims of the Gospel can be advanced without being beholden to the distortions that proceed from the assumptions inherent in Modern cultural forms.

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Introduction

Framing the Question

This thesis examines Christian interpretation in light of political contexts. Fundamentally, it is concerned with the way in which the latter shapes the former, and with the manner in which resulting Christian interpretations feed back into political transformations. In elaborating on this process, the first point of embarkation would be the apparent tension that exists within the Church's mission to both extend Christ's "light of revelation to the gentiles",¹ and "read the signs of the times".² The Second Vatican Council noted that the Church, while claiming its place as the "guide...on the journey towards eternal beatitude",³ is simultaneously journeying as an "exile on earth"⁴. Given this apparent contradiction, many questions arise pertaining to the Church's competence to judge the world while fulfilling its task of "reading the signs of the times" that circulate within the world.

Nowhere is this questioning more intense than in the political realm, the reading of which forms the central focal point of this thesis. Because of the great investment of social capital into the political realm as the privileged site of social change and well being, its integrity is guarded jealously against any unwelcome intrusion. In a post-9/11 context, the *persona non grata* of choice is what many term

¹ Luke 2:32

² Matthew 16:3

³ Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium* (1964), 21

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.

This document will hereinafter be cited as "*LG*".

⁴ *Ibid.*, 49

“religion”, in particular the Christian religion and its communicator, the Church. A particular line of questioning casts doubt over the Church’s ability to be more competent than other political players in judging sociopolitical processes, however theologically charged that judgment might be, considering that the Church is just as embedded in those same sociopolitical processes as all other political players. If the Church is indeed embedded in these political processes, and if these processes no longer look to Christian sources for legitimation, then the Church would be engaged battles for influence with all other sociopolitical forms. While revelation by its very nature transcends the world, the contemporary Church as the site of revelation cannot be conceived outside the aforementioned battles, but must be thought of as *emerging* out of them.⁵ The fact that the Church is in the world, however, gives rise to questions concerning whether any Christian theological judgment would merely reflect the influences of the context within which the Church is situated. This in turn leads to doubt concerning the uniqueness of the Church’s contributions, and the ability of the Church to change inequitable sociopolitical developments, the most prominent of these being the ubiquity of violence. At its inception, the concern of this project was not so much the well-worn debate about whether violence or peace necessarily emerge from religious sources, but how religious actors formulate responses to violence when it occurs. In its current form, the issue of responses to violence still figures highly. This however is secondary to the consideration of just how the Church arrives at such responses, and why those responses differ in different places and times.

This thesis takes its cue from the observations by Stanley Fish, who doubts the ready accessibility of evidence to establish the veracity of any claim or conclusion. This point is important because responses to violence come after receiving the evidence of a violent situation. However, says Fish, such evidence does not exist independently, but rather emerges from interpretations, which are borne out by an immersion into a socially generated web of “assumptions...that produce the field of inquiry in the context of which...something can appear as evidence”.⁶ Perceiving evidence of violence, as

⁵ Terry Veling, *Living in the Margins: Intentional Communities and the Art of Interpretation* (New York: Crossroad, 1996), 30.

⁶ Stanley Fish, "God Talk, Part 2," *The New York Times* (2009)

well as responding to it, requires first an immersion in interpretive strategies borne out by regimes of knowledge that are socially constituted.⁷ With Fish, this thesis argues that analyzing the Church's responses to violence proceeds on an understanding that the Church, though it is the prefigurement of the heavenly Jerusalem, is nonetheless a socially constituted, situated and conditioned regime of knowledge. Christians as members of this configuration will find themselves immersed in and fully engaged with other social configurations. The thesis will argue that the immersion of the Church and its members in these social and cultural configurations inevitably shape the contours of Christian perceptions of social phenomena, and thus the shape of the Church's "reading of the signs of the times".

As the chapters below would demonstrate, this understanding of the Church's radical immersion in the world does open up the risk of reducing Christian interpretation to mere reflections of its political surroundings. This is problematic because as the Body of Christ, the Church is called to resist conforming to the world. In its transformation *by* the world, the Church is also supposed to extend the Spirit's transformation *of* the world.⁸ This thesis asserts that ecclesiology constitutes the node where both processes intersect. Ecclesiology not only makes Christian interpretation possible in the first place, it also shapes the Church's ability to leave its own unique mark on surrounding sociopolitical forms. In elaborating on the importance of ecclesiology, this thesis will make a corporeal turn. It will, with Graham Ward, conceive of the Church's surroundings not merely as a shapeless energies but as a series of interlocking corporeal configurations, implicating a traffic of

<http://fish.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/05/17/god-talk-part-2/>.

See another incisive commentary by Fish concerning evidence in ———, "Atheism and Evidence," *The New York Times* (2007)

<http://fish.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/06/17/atheism-and-evidence/>.

⁷ Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class: The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (NY: Harvard University Press, 1980), 14. See also Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald Marshall, Second Revised ed. (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 276-84.

⁸ Romans 12:2

living, breathing physical bodies, occupying concrete social spaces and mapping themselves onto other social bodies. This thesis will also argue that the extent to which the Church can even understand, let alone judge and transform, these social configurations is dependent on the degree to which the Church understands its own configuration as the Body of Christ. In other words, how does this collection of bodies called Christians, whilst being trafficked within this and other collections of bodies, nonetheless constitute another distinct ecclesial body called Christ? The answer to this question is what shapes Christian interpretation of its political environment, identifies particular political developments as violent ones and sets the contours of Christian political responses. This representation of the ecclesial body called ecclesiology thus becomes the primary reference point of the Church's interpretations of its political surroundings and the central generator of the Church's political actions.⁹

However, naming the centrality of ecclesiology in the Church's reading of the political signs of the times does not adequately delineate the contours of this thesis' analysis. As Terry Veling reminds us, every act and experience is an act of interpretation.¹⁰ Given the Church's is socially configured and immersed in the traffic of other social configurations, its corporate identity cannot be considered a category that the Church simply accesses independent of its social engagements. In other words, this thesis cannot ignore the fact that in coming to an understanding of the Church's identity as a vehicle *for* interpretation, the Church is also engaging an act *of* interpretation, a historical product circumscribed by the horizons set by its own tradition.¹¹

There is an added layer of complexity when one considers the fact that the Church's being embedded in the world requires consideration of the dimension of practice. "Reading the signs of the times" is

⁹ John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 380.

¹⁰ Veling, *Living in the Margins*, 15.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 27-28.

synonymous with a “Christian *Kulturkritik*” in a vein similar to the project of the Frankfurt School.¹² As such, the Church’s interpretations cannot be an abstract theory that is separate from its practical engagements with the world. This thesis therefore, with Charles Davis, cannot consider the Church’s reflections of its own identity without consideration of its concrete political practices.¹³

One cannot ignore questions pertaining to the processes by which the Church’s corporate identity is generated, the identity or positions of certain parties to others within that social body that generates that identity, and their collective positioning with respect to other non-ecclesial social configurations when that corporate identity is generated. Because of the profound overlap that exists between the Church’s corporate identity, its immersion in the ebbs and flows of political tides and its concomitant practical interlocking, this thesis will answer the question:

What is the relationship between ecclesiology, politics and practice in the conditioning of twentieth century Roman Catholic responses to violence?

Theology, Ecclesiology and Social Theory

Answering the above question involves providing a social analysis in a theological key. However, one must be mindful of Graham Ward’s observation that theology *qua* theology lacks its own social analysis. The tools that can be considered the exclusive property of theology are not necessarily in themselves tools for social analysis. Theology needs to draw “upon all [social] discourses to

¹² Graham Ward, “Radical Orthodoxy and/as Cultural Politics,” in *Radical Orthodoxy? A Catholic Enquiry*, ed. Laurence Paul Hemming (Burlington: Ashgate, 2000), 104.

¹³ Charles Davis, *Theology and Political Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 17. At the same time, however, James K A Smith argues further that there must be a collapse of the Modern dichotomy between theory and practice, such that the task of theorizing ecclesiology is not a distraction from the Church’s more important practical tasks, but becomes *itself* a valid practice in its own right. See James K. A. Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy: Mapping a Post-Secular Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 232.

substantiate its own *corpus* and to bespeak that which has been and is being revealed”.¹⁴ As such, answering the question theologically requires simultaneously traversing into the realm of social theory. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily require theology to uncritically meet the standards set by “benign” and “neutral” secular sciences. Ward notes that not all the social sciences will complement a theological analysis and critique, since a good number of these allegedly scientific projects are antithetical to theology, proceeding on the assumption of rejecting religion as the foundation for any credible criticism.¹⁵

Engaging in an analysis that traverses the social sciences whilst keeping faithful to the essentially theological character of its central inquiry, requires this thesis to dedicate chapter two to a review of the broad methods of inquiry pertaining to religious actors. It will look first to modern Behaviouralism, which constitutes the social scientific analytical orthodoxy. It will expose not just its *a priori* disregard of anything associated with religion as scientific anathema, but also its assumptions concerning an atomized and strategic self-maximisation as the foundation for social analysis and its penchant for the segmentation of human experiences and rejection of the salience of meaning. These traits skew any holistic analysis of the drivers of religious actors, such as the Church. Despite the apparent promise of the academically trendy school of Social Constructivism, this thesis will look at how Scott Thomas’ identification of an “unbearable lightness”¹⁶ exposes constructivism’s refusal to engage with the religious dimension of religious actors. This is a refusal that betrays a continuation of some of the modern assumptions that Constructivism sought to overcome. In canvassing analytical methods that seek to fully engage actors that extol participation with the divine on its own terms, this chapter will conclude that Radical Orthodoxy, in particular the cultural hermeneutics of Graham Ward, provides the most promising avenue to further this inquiry.

¹⁴ Graham Ward, *Cities of God* (London: Routledge, 2000), 117.

¹⁵ ———, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1-2.

¹⁶ Scott M. Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations: The Struggle for the Soul of the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 93.

Having identified the method of analysis, chapter three will explore the contours of the inquiry through the lens of cultural hermeneutics. It will explore how the task of reading the signs of the times is intimately intertwined with political practices, and implicates Christians in what Ward calls “the politics of belief” and the creation of economies of credence.¹⁷ In outlining such a politics, this chapter will also explore the implication of bodies in the production of knowledge claims, which in turn influence the perception of political problems and the formulation of political responses. It will demonstrate that Christian interpretation is bound up in and conditioned by the interlocking of Christian bodies with non-Christian ones, forming a restless sea of ever changing communal configurations. Because of the multiplicity of possible communal configurations, and the fluidity of borders between them, the stability of any regime of knowledge requires the maintenance of communal cohesion. Ecclesiology thus becomes the theological task of maintaining an explicitly Christian community, and thus a Christian corpus of knowledge, within this sea. This occurs by generating a stable image of the ecclesial body. This thesis will argue that the image being generated then shapes the political responses of the ecclesial body *vis a vis* other bodies.

The above understanding of ecclesiology implicates Foucauldian power relations in the production of knowledge and credence. This necessitates an exploration of hierarchies and privilege within communities, as well as the mechanics whereby the Church acts as a site of power that is conditioned by, and also conditions, secular sites of power. This chapter will look at the knowledge generated by these communal formations in three sites of particularly acute generative power, namely the political, intellectual and the ecclesial. This chapter will conclude by making explicit something that Ward’s project currently seems to imply. This pertains to how the ecclesial image, in the face of changes in the secular configurations on which it is mapped, eventually desiccates and loses its persuasive power to maintain a particular configuration of corporeal practices. This constant shift in the sea of

¹⁷ Ward, *Cities of God*, 212.

corporeal configurations thus raises the need for the Church to “recontextualise” itself, via the generation of new ecclesiologies.

The Bodies of Christ in History

Chapters four through to seven will develop on the theoretical reflections above by demonstrating how these cultural mechanics played out in the history of twentieth century Roman Catholic ecclesiology. These historical dramas would encompass three broad ecclesiological archetypes, which conceive of the Body of Christ as the “Perfect Society”, the “Mystical Body” and as part of a “Nuptial Communion”. The analysis of the historical, intellectual, and political dynamics that conditioned these ecclesiologies would be divided into four historical episodes, each of which approximates a distinct convergence of political, intellectual, social and ecclesial developments. The chapters do not presume to be an exhaustive list of converging historical, political and theological drivers. Nevertheless, these chapters hope to present enough historical data to indicate a consistent pattern, whereby Catholic responses to violence were profoundly shaped by the Church’s ecclesiology, and ecclesiology was the function of the Church’s situatedness amongst a unique set of contextual drivers.

Chapter four will look at how the Church’s largely defensive posture against the rapid consolidation of the liberal nation state, the ascendancy of modern mass communications as the new site of power, and the dissemination and entrenchment of caesaropapist currents conditioned the essentially modern conception of the Church as the “Perfect Society”. This became the crucible for the formation of Modern Catholic Social Teaching as the primary response to the violence brought about by the harsh inequities of the Industrial Revolution and the comprehensive destruction of total war. It will explore how this “Perfect Society” ecclesiology, which presumed an ecclesial omniscience in temporal matters, shaped the Church’s responses to this violence through its assertion of an institutional and hierarchical order. This order situated the Church at the top of this hierarchy, playing a supervisory role in both the spiritual and political affairs of all of the newly consolidated countries in Europe.

Chapter five will explore what is arguably the defining period of the twentieth century, a period bookended by two World Wars. The chapter will focus on the period situated between them, with particular attention to the ascendancy of the totalitarian states in both Italy and Germany as the historical foil for ecclesiological development. This chapter will analyse how the pervasive reach of the totalitarian body undermined the integrity of all other social bodies, including the Church, and conditioned a situation of ecclesial captivity. This chapter will look at the pivotal role of Jacques Maritain in shaping the ecclesiology of the Mystical Body, which became the mainstay of much of twentieth century ecclesiological thought. What this chapter seeks to bring to attention is not so much the length to which his influence endured, but Maritain's curious mixture of fierce critique of Modernity's exclusion of the Church from sociopolitical life, and his acceptance of Modernity's insistence of the autonomy of the temporal from spiritual interference in setting the boundaries of Christian political action. This thesis will show how Maritain's conception of the Mystical Body as a twentieth century Christendom formed the backbone of Pius XI's ecclesiology. It will show how Pius' conception of an ecclesial response to the violence of the totalitarian state, the "Peace of Christ", was strongly influenced by Maritain's insistence on the autonomy of the temporal through a program centred on an exclusively interior, spiritual formation through the vehicle of *Catholic Action*.

Chapter six analyses the continuation of Maritain's ecclesiological influence, but in the context of the Latin American incorporation into a nascent post-war global capitalist order. It will explore the intensification, and even sanctification of the autonomy of the temporal as part of the unfolding of grace in history. It will explore how this perceived ubiquity of grace within temporality extended to an uncritical acceptance by theologians of the role of the secular sciences in subordinating the ecclesial body to the larger body of the nation state. It will show how these currents emerged from a unique combination of political, intellectual and ecclesial communal praxes from both without and within the Latin American context and were converged through the work of Gustavo Gutierrez. The chapter will explore how Gutierrez's *A Theology of Liberation* formed the blueprint from which the "Church of the Poor" was configured, deemed as one of the most politically charged ecclesiologies, though one that was severely limited by its privileging of a modern notion of freedom and statecraft.

Chapter seven looks at the final pivotal drama of the twentieth century, the end of the Cold War. More specifically, it will look at the political engagements between the Polish Church and another form of totalitarianism, Polish Communism, as the last major ecclesiological turning point. The chapter will look at the central role, not of the social sciences, but of a peculiar form of Polish nationalism tied to an old Polish folk piety as the bedrock for a new ecclesiology. This ecclesiology, for a brief time, configured the bodies of Christians in a manner that decisively rejected the competency and legitimacy of modern statecraft. The chapter will identify the sites whereby this foundation was built upon by the French personalism of Emmanuel Mounier. It will then outline the genealogy by which Mounier's personalism would converge with the phenomenology of Max Scheler and the Nuptial Mysticism of St. John of the Cross, and how this convergence manifests in Karol Wojtyla. This chapter will argue how, far from being an intellectual sideshow, the convergence of all these strands in the person of Wojtyla would prove key in identifying the covert violence of the instrumentalisation of the person as well as the overt violence of the Communist state. It will show how this convergence proved key also in conditioning an ecclesiology of "Nuptial Communion" as the site of resistance to that violence. This chapter will show how this ecclesiology was activated by what George Weigel calls the "Resistance Church". It will show how this ecclesial program was marked by an unabashed political confrontation with the covert and overt violence of the totalitarian state, which showed marked differences from both "Peace of Christ" and "the Church of the Poor". This thesis will show how the Resistance Church resisted the violence of the Communist state primarily through the configuring of the Body of Christ as a parallel *polis*.

Recurrent Themes & Evangelisation

With the historical evidence laid out, chapter seven concludes the thesis by identifying key themes that run across each of the four historical episodes, which would provide material for reflection on the positioning of the Body of Christ *vis a vis* secular bodies when carrying out its evangelical mission. It will first reiterate the situatedness of the ecclesial body amongst non-ecclesial alternatives, which condition both the Church's identity and political projections. Nevertheless, the Church's being embedded within non-Christian communal configurations does not detract from the

Church's mission of critique and perfection of those configurations. Second, this chapter will demonstrate how negotiating the tension borne by being configured by the context it seeks to transform, necessitates the generation of the Church's own corporate image as the Body of Christ. At the same time, the Church cannot be complacent in its adherence for particular modes of engagement with the world as a Church. The eventual desiccation of ecclesial images, which would have been outlined at the conclusion of each of the preceding four chapters, necessitates a constant vigilance by the Church with respect to its positioning within its political, social and cultural contexts, even as it tries to perfect them. Thirdly, it will show how ecclesial engagements with its political contexts constitute engagements between competing corporeal configurations that contain within them specific regimes of knowledge. Therefore, the Church cannot merely focus on establishing the credibility of the Gospel in the *minds* of Christians while neglecting the salience of the configuring of their *bodies*, since those bodily configurations play an important role in underpinning the credibility of the Gospel's claims.

Fourthly, it will demonstrate how an important corollary to this awareness of the traffic of bodies between one corporeal configuration and another would be awareness to the often unconscious submission to authority when carrying out acts of interpretation. If Stanley Fish is correct, any understanding of any data requires first a pre-rational immersion into webs of assumptions and interpretive strategies. If such webs are constituted communally, then it follows that any perception of any political challenge or the formulation of responses requires first a submission to the authorities of the communities that generate those webs of assumptions. As such, the unavoidable conditioning of Christian interpretation by non-Christian influences means a submission to multiple authorities at any one time, both ecclesial and non-ecclesial. Therefore, the Christian task as a deliberate attempt to perfect all things in Christ requires also a conscious submission to those in authority within the Body of Christ.

Fifthly, it will seek to expose the dangers that come with the stubborn allure of statecraft as a privileged site of sociopolitical transformation, an allure to which the Church had succumbed in

seeking to carry out its evangelical mission in all the episodes above. It will show how, as a web of technologies built around a logic of fundamental violence, reliance on the state form is antithetical to the mission of the Church as the body of the Prince of Peace. It will also show how, even when control of the levers of state is avoided, the Church can risk extending the cultural logic of the state through the constitution of the ecclesial body as a modern bureaucratic entity, running along the logic of Weberian instrumental reason. So configuring the Church could handicap its transformative capacity by subordinating transformation towards future horizons to the necessity of managing the present.¹⁸

The final section of this concluding chapter will identify a small sample of the new sites of power to which the Church should cast its attention. It will look at how both the consolidation of consumer culture and what Peter Berger calls the processes of “desecularisation” in large parts of the world, represent two important moments that bring the salience of desire to the analytical foreground. This recovered secular appreciation of affectivity may in some respects represent an opportunity for the repositioning of theology as a task grounded in corporeal practices and traffic. Nevertheless, this section will also identify how this recovery of affectivity cannot be uncritically integrated into the theological task, given the risk of confusing the competitive Freudian desire which finds only a quasi-rest in the embrace of consumption, with the self-giving Christian desire that finds its full rest in the embrace of God. It will then conclude by investigating how another project of recovery, that of ritual studies, can pave the way to look at liturgy as a powerful site for what Daniel Bell calls a “therapy of desire”. Ultimately, this thesis will seek to show the complexity in the thoroughly material dynamics that shape the grammars that in turn condition the Church’s political engagements, whilst at the same time demonstrating how, because of the workings of grace within these material avenues, one need not doubt any distinctly theological competence in bringing all materiality into a Christic orbit.

¹⁸ Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 24.

Social Theory and Transcendence:

Antagonisms and Correlations

Introduction

The previous chapter mentioned the need for theology to traverse non-theological disciplines in order to theologically critique political arrangements. This is complicated by the fact that, as also mentioned in the previous chapter, such disciplines often set themselves against theological considerations. Thus, even in a context whereby analysis of religious actors is required, commentary is often characterised by an apparent lack of traction between political and religious analyses. “Discussion” between these discourses often ends up becoming a series of monologues which bypass, rather than engage, each other. The key task of this chapter thus becomes one of establishing traction between political and theological discourses.

This chapter begins by briefly canvassing two broad schools of analysis, Behaviourialism and Social Constructivism. While recognising the capacities of the latter in exposing the constraints of the former’s logic of autonomy, this chapter will show how aspects of this “postmodern” approach replicate a distinctly Modern logic. This inhibits the ability of Social Constructivism to incorporate the numinous aspects of religious actors into research frameworks. Arguing for a more thorough postmodernism allows consideration of another variable, that of transcendent order, into research frameworks. However, even where such attempts have been made, in most cases unnoticed vestiges of Modernity impair any thoroughgoing engagement with the numinous aspect that analysis into the logic of religious actors demands. In order to overcome this problem, this chapter will propose Radical Orthodoxy as a fruitful analytical entry point into the subject of the numinous which at the same time rejects any entanglement in the Cartesian web.

Modern Behaviouralism

When searching for answers to the questions raised by the resurgence of religion, analysts often initially turn to the conventional approaches of Behaviouralism,¹⁹ which centre on issues of management and institution building. However, an overwhelming volume of literature has cast a shadow of doubt on the reliability of this prevailing orthodoxy. A common starting point in this literature concerns the flaws of post-Enlightenment Modernity, from which the current orthodoxy stems.²⁰ More specifically, this literature is highly critical of the tendency inherent in Behaviouralist methodologies to underpin analytical logic on the primacy of rational interest-maximisation. The criticism against this premise is coupled with the powerful critiques posed by postmodern and critical theorists against the conceptual backdrop that makes the concept of rational interest maximisation possible: an extra-contextual, value-neutral insight into an objectively real world that trumps all others. The problematic nature this crucial underpinning of much of contemporary theorising becomes clearer if one considers the writings of Alasdair MacIntyre. Doubting the Kantian notion of “rationality” as “autonomous... [with a] history... [that] can be written without much reference to the history of anything else”,²¹ MacIntyre considered it

an illusion to suppose that there is some neutral standing ground, some locus for rationality as such, which can afford rational resources sufficient for enquiry independent of all traditions. Those who have maintained otherwise...have simply been in error²²

¹⁹ The author takes his cue from William Tow, "Apocalypse Forever? International Relations Implications of 11 September," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 49(3) (2003): 317-22.

²⁰ Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 54-63.

²¹ Kelvin Knight, *The MacIntyre Reader* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 106.

²² Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 367.

Of course the question then arises: If a “view from nowhere” does not exist in its own right, where then does “rationality” exist? MacIntyre stresses that “rationality” is a term that must be embedded in some prior dynamic, since it is that dynamic that gives the word meaning.

To be a rational individual is to participate in such a form of social life and to conform, so far as is possible, to those standards. It is because and insofar as the *polis* is an arena of systematic activity of just this kind that the *polis* is the locus of rationality.²³

An actor must know *who* it is before it knows *what* it wants, but such an identity must necessarily be underpinned by some living social and cultural tradition. This is shaped by any given combination of particularist philosophies, cultures, religions and mythologies, and is able to transmit the knowledge inherited from one generation to the next.²⁴ John Rawls, having initially defended his concept of the “original position” which considers all situations “not only from all social but also from all temporal points of view”,²⁵ would later favour a narrative account that acknowledged the embeddedness of his “original position”. In Rawls’ words,

[w]hat justifies a conception of justice is not its being true to an order antecedent and given to us, but its congruence with our deeper understanding of ourselves and our aspirations, and our realisation that, given our history and traditions embedded in our public life, it is the most reasonable doctrine for us.²⁶

²³ Knight, *The Macintyre Reader*, 116.

²⁴ Margaret R. Somers, "The Narrative Constitution of Identity: A Relational and Network Approach," *Theory and Society* 23 (1994): 606, 18.

²⁵ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 587.

²⁶ ———, "Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory," *Journal of Philosophy* 77(9) (1980): 518-19.

With this section Rawls, like MacIntyre, opens a new avenue of inquiry for religious actors with the claim that for rationality to be understood in its fullest sense, it must be understood as *a* rationality embedded in *a* prior theme.

The question that arises is whether modern Behaviouralism can engage these prior dynamics. With the insistence that only scientifically tested phenomena is knowable, the tendency to let the methodology determine the subject results in a rationalistic rejection of the metaphysical as irrational, unprovable opinion.²⁷ This rejection is indeed strange, given that modernity positing itself as politically neutral is itself a political act. This is seen through its adoption of an opinionated political position as the very foundation political discourses, then defining on its own terms the proper subjects of inquiry, in a manner that is far from apolitical.²⁸ To *exclude* the relevance of prior themes thus results in *imposing* a theme in its place, and assuming its own superiority in terms of intellectual sophistication.²⁹

Louis Herman provides a further insight into the machinations of conventional social scientific analysis and its limitations.³⁰ The problematic nature of the methodological orthodoxy becomes manifest in the compartmentalisation of the once organic and interlinked aspects of human

²⁷ Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics* (Chicago: 1952), 4.

²⁸ Robert W. Cox, "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory," in *Neorealism and Its Critics*, ed. Robert O. Keohane (NY: Columbia University Press, 1986), 209, Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, "The Political Authority of Secularism in International Relations," *European Journal of International Relations* 10(2) (2004): 239, 45, M. Neufeld, *The Restructuring of International Relations Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

²⁹ Robert N. Bellah, "Between Religion and Social Science," in *Beyond Belief: Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditionalist World*, ed. Robert N. Bellah (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 237, Jacques Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of 'Religion' at the Limits of Reason Alone," in *Religion*, ed. Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1998), 14.

³⁰ Louis G. Herman, "Beyond Postmodernism: Restoring the Primal Quest for Meaning to Political Inquiry," *Human Studies* 20 (1997).

experience followed by the reification of those compartments into self-sufficient concepts, bounded with congealed conceptual membranes. These problems are compounded by the analytical orthodoxy's tendency to reduce any relationship such concepts may have to one another in terms of mutual opposition, and prescribing a hierarchical treatment which counts as "good" the seemingly measurable, objective and rational aspects of humanity as experienced in the temporal sphere, and treats as anathema the subjective, immeasurable, and thus irrelevant esoteric experiences of the supernatural.³¹ To engage in hermeneutical analysis into religious actors, whilst denying religious underpinnings any kind of cognitive validity, as well as disengaging that religious underpinning from other aspects of the actor's total experience, despite its centrality to the inquiry, will eventually become a self-defeating exercise.

A more fundamental problem is Behaviouralism's failure to appreciate the possibility of religious discourses actually seeking to transcend essentially materialistic political and economic concerns. Whilst such concerns may be the first point of contact with religious discourses, Behaviouralism fails to appreciate such contact as only a prelude to rearrange such issues in supernatural grounding.³² In so doing Behaviouralism fails to tackle a variable that has been central to Western thinking in the wake of the disasters of the twentieth century, namely the issue of meaning,³³ whether of the isolated events of life, or even that of life itself.³⁴ The Modern avoidance of seriously engaging the need for meaning leaves this need either unaddressed by the prescriptions of the scientistic processes inherent

³¹ Ibid.: 78-80.

³² Kenneth Burridge, *New Heaven, New Earth: A Study of Millenarian Activities* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1969), 108.

³³ Fred Dallmayr, "Beyond Monologue: For a Comparative Political Theory," *Perspectives on Politics* 2(2) (2004): 251, Manfred Henningsen, "The Collapse and Retrieval of Meaning," *The Review of Politics* 62(4) (2000): 810-12, Raghuveer Singh, "Causality, Meaning and Purpose in Politics," *The Review of Politics* 47(3) (1985): 391-94.

³⁴ Michael A. Casey, *Meaninglessness: The Solutions of Nietzsche, Freud and Rorty* (North Melbourne: Freedom Publishing, 2001), 1, Roxanne L. Euben, "Premodern, Anitmodern or Postmodern? Islamic and Western Critiques of Modernity," *The Review of Politics* 59(3) (1997): 430.

in Behaviouralism, or dealt with by simply denying its legitimacy.³⁵ Both solutions fly in the face of much historical data whereby actors have implemented socio-political programs with this very need in mind.³⁶

Postmodern Constructivism?

The search for meaning has led to the articulation of Constructivism as a way of widening the boundaries orthodox political inquiry, so as to seriously engage the prior dynamic mentioned above. Constructivism has made inroads in transcending the context-free rationality underpinning the prevailing orthodoxy, and bringing meaning back the forefront of their research agenda.³⁷ This is achieved by contending that meaning is constitutive of a socially constructed, underpinning identity,³⁸ which in turn informs interests and prescribes actions.³⁹ The Constructivist insistence on identity has paved the way to restore analytical credibility to the dimensions of the human condition deemed “irrelevant” by the prevailing analytical orthodoxy, not the least of which are cultural and religious variables. As such, it is often assumed that with such a substantial conceptual widening, Constructivism would be able to undertake analysis into the dynamics that underpin contemporary identities. Upon closer scrutiny, however, one can legitimately question whether constructivism can actually provide an adequate understanding of the religious variable in its entirety, which includes

³⁵ Yosef Lapid, "Culture's Ship: Returns and Departures in International Relations Theory," in *The Return of Culture and Identity in Ir Theory*, ed. Yosef Lapid and Friedrich Kratochwil (NY: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996), 9.

³⁶ Eric Voegelin, *History of Political Ideas Volume I: Hellenism, Rome and Early Christianity* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 225.

³⁷ Christian Reus-Smit, "Constructivism," in *Theories of International Relations*, ed. Scott Burchill, et al. (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 217.

³⁸ Robert N. Bellah, *Beyond Belief: Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditional World* (NY: Harper and Row, 1970), Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Oxford: Polity, 1991), 35.

³⁹ Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organisation* 6(2) (1992): 398.

not merely the systems of meaning, but also the “inexplicable”, numinous object for which the search for meaning is meant to engender new respect.⁴⁰

Complications emerge once Scott Thomas’ recent contributions on Constructivism are taken into account. Whilst acknowledging the positive contributions of this approach, Thomas criticised Constructivism in its current state as having an “almost unbearable lightness”.⁴¹ Thomas, like Christian Reus-Smit, agrees that Constructivism recognises the behaviour of actors as the result of the marriage of social interaction with widely accepted norms and practices.⁴² However, Thomas criticises the failure of Constructivism to adequately inquire into the origins of such norms and practices, or the particular means and reasons whereby they become internalised by particular political actors. Constructivists thus emphasise the salience of social constructions, but then gloss over the actual content of those constructions, or the reasons behind such constructions.

The cause for such reticence may lie in the current manifestations of postmodern theory which form the foundations of Constructivism. With the zeal to provide a more pluralistic political space, current postmodern approaches are flawed in their insistence that everything is, as Richard Rorty puts it, “a product of time and chance”.⁴³ This claim has often been translated into an ethical stance of suspicion of any definition of “meaning” being anything beyond a fragmentary and transient variable.⁴⁴ The association of totalising projects with tyranny often yields a strong opposition to conceptualisations of the “whole” of human experience that, at least for religious actors, incorporates both the temporal and numinous. Insofar as this opposition persists, similarities emerge between Modernity and

⁴⁰ Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 33.

⁴¹ Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 93.

⁴² Christian Reus-Smit, “The Idea of History and History with Ideas,” in *Historical Sociology of International Relations*, ed. Stephen Hobden and John M. Hobson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 131.

⁴³ Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), xv.

⁴⁴ Glenn Hughes, *Transcendence and History* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003), 14.

postmodernity in the latter's giving priority to the various isolated parts of a person's existence rather than existence as a whole.⁴⁵ Current postmodern approaches thus often manifest themselves in a superficial visitation of the divine sphere, only to conceptually fold that sphere back onto some exclusively temporal dynamic. This can be exemplified in the centring of the experiences of religious actors, and their underpinning metaphysics, around the notion of "identity", or the Foulcauldian tendency to treat metaphysical claims as cynical exercises in strategic power projection.⁴⁶ This results in what Fred Dallmayr observed as a tendency in postmodernism "to celebrate a purely speculative otherness while stubbornly shying away from any contact or engagement with a concrete 'other'".⁴⁷

Constructivism would thus appear to be a method of analysis that lacks the incisiveness to quarry the depths of religious meaning, and synthesise these variables into a cohesive framework. In the absence of any underpinning account behind the formation of any identity, religious or otherwise, the conceptual focus is placed squarely back onto the agency of the actor. Jonathan Fox and Shmuel Sandler assert that whilst both parents of Constructivism, critical theory and postmodernism, acknowledge the salience of even transcendent ideas, they are still "in man's mind and under his control". This tendency feeds into constructivism and makes decisive not the cognitive factors, but rather the actor as an autonomous rational agent.⁴⁸ This in turn implies the formation and adoption of various identities to be little more than strategic choices with the aim of fulfilling self-centred desires, despite accounts by Constructivists that such identity constructs are rarely adopted as the

⁴⁵ Herman, "Beyond Postmodernism," 81.

⁴⁶ Richard Bernstein, "The Rage against Reason," *Philosophy and Literature* 10 (1986): 206.

⁴⁷ Fred Dallmayr, "Tradition, Modernity and Confucianism," *Human Studies* 16 (1993): 203.

⁴⁸ Jonathan Fox and Shmuel Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 30.

result of a purely rational exercise. Crucially, this also leaves culture and religion back at the margins of relevance.⁴⁹

Thus, the vestiges of the Modern differentiation and dichotomisation of human experience in an attempt to find a reducible human behavioural distillate remain embedded in Constructivism. This renders the constructivist assertion that “identities are the basis of interests” a distortion. The questions that must then be addressed are: How does one overcome this analytical problem, and how can a method of analysis give due consideration to the sphere in which culture and religion, so central in gaining an understanding of religious actors, reside?

The Quest for Transcendence

If MacIntyre is correct, one can put forward a strong argument that it is possible for political actors to have goals that go beyond mere fulfilment of self-serving interests. It is possible to argue that political actors do not merely aim to acquire a stable launch pad to enable the confident fulfilment of interests, but also a sense of locatedness within some theme that precedes that identity launch pad. It is possible to further argue that rather than a disparate collection of fragments of meaning this theme has to be a totalising concept which gives cohesion to separate and unrelated events, even to the point where an actor can acquire comprehension of “the ultimate truths pertaining to the whys and wherefores of human existence and history”.⁵⁰ This of course necessitates the source of meaning to be an ultimate and exhaustive one. To talk of meaning then, one must talk of the “quest for and conception of the symbolic order...and of the quest for participation in such an order”.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Sujata Chakrabarti Pasic, "Culturing International Relations Theory: A Call for Extension," in *The Return of Culture and Identity in Ir Theory*, ed. Yosef Lapid and Friedrich Kratochwil (NY: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996), 86-8.

⁵⁰ Hughes, *Transcendence and History*, 19.

⁵¹ S.N. Eisenstadt, ed., *Max Weber: On Charisma and Institution-Building* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), xii.

Including order as a variable can provide promising inroads in understanding the religious logic of religious actors. However, what becomes problematic here is the great temptation to refer to order that is exhaustively material or temporal. This was the conclusion drawn by Emile Durkheim when he declared that the religious life is an eminently social one.⁵² This tendency to fold the seemingly transcendent aspects of religion back into purely temporal experiences, and make the former contingent on the latter, is also borne out in more recent works such as Robert Pape's *Dying to Win*. In speaking of the social logic of suicide bombings Pape apparently reduces the significance of the martyrology associated with suicide terrorism to that of community approval. This is encapsulated by his assertion that "only a community can make a martyr".⁵³ Such arguments beg the question as to whether social embeddedness itself constitutes a self-sufficient goal for the search for meaning. Indeed, the much deeper question concerns whether an exhaustive source of meaning can be found in the temporal sphere alone. Given, as was said earlier, the consideration of socio-political issues as subordinate to more primary supernatural frames of reference, can one determine the object of the order in which they participate to be purely terrestrial and anthropocentric?

Jacques Maritain suggested that whilst it is true that religious order guides one's steps on this earth, such order nonetheless had as its ultimate object "things far in excess of the requirements of any nature that ever was or ever could be created".⁵⁴ Other philosophers have similarly pointed the direction that our analysis must take, for in Wittgenstein's words "the solution of the riddle of life in space and time lies outside of space and time".⁵⁵ However, current manifestations of social science cannot take this transcendent divine object seriously, given that their very foundations ignore this divine object before study into it even begins. If the key lies in meaning embedded in order, and if analysing that order necessitates transcending the temporal sphere, what frameworks can enable the

⁵² Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (NY: Free Press, 1995).

⁵³ Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (NY: Random House, 2005), 82.

⁵⁴ Jacques Maritain, *Religion and Culture: Essays in Order 1* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1931), 9.

⁵⁵ Cited in Robert Wuthnow, *Meaning and Moral Order: Explorations in Cultural Analysis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 40.

analyst to at once engage both the actions of religious actors, and transcendental dynamics that animate such action?

On Weber

Max Weber provides a possible inroad. Indeed, Weberian ideas are a step in the right direction, given Weber's recognition of the salience of both meaning and of an extra-temporal sphere which provides that meaning.⁵⁶ However, in analysing the relationship between the religious and political sphere, Weberian frameworks evince problems, as suggested most incisively by Roxanne Euben. Her reading of Weber suggests that he regards involvement in the spiritual life as part of a set of inherently incompatible strands: a "this-worldly" strand where religious life necessitates contempt for the temporal sphere, which cancels out participation in the other, "other-worldly" strand where the spiritual life so inextricably entwined with the temporal that the latter eclipses the former.⁵⁷ One may find such Weberian understandings unable to encompass the entirety of spiritual experience, as well as incompatible with the subjective understandings of a great variety of religious actors and their subjective conceptualisation of the two spheres. In other words, so long as reliance on Weberian conceptions that see the spiritual and the temporal worlds as the mutually exclusive "sacred" and "profane" persists, the analyst may remain unable to hermeneutically understand, for example, the Carmelite Monastic tradition, which prescribes withdrawal from the temporal sphere, but only as a means to engage it yet again, but in an ostensibly richer way.

On Berger and Luckmann

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's *The Social Construction of Reality* at first glance provides a more promising avenue to explore this phenomenon. According to Berger and Luckmann, the world as experienced by any actor is not an objective "real" world as such, but the result of a process of social projections which later coalesce into a reified world that stands outside the subjectivity of the individual and imposes itself on the individual to the point that the latter must adjust his or her

⁵⁶ Malcolm B. Hamilton, *The Sociology of Religion* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 137, Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1985).

⁵⁷ Roxanne Euben, "Premodern, Antimodern or Postmodern? Islamic and Western Critiques of Modernity," *The Review of Politics* 59(3) (1997): 432, Hamilton, *The Sociology of Religion*, 143-45.

activity the former.⁵⁸ Whilst this seems almost identical to constructivist models, what sets Berger and Luckmann apart is the notion that this process occurs whilst being nestled in concentric frames of increasingly comprehensive meaning, ultimacy of which rests in what they call the “symbolic universe”.

Promising as Berger and Luckmann’s model might be, however, it is not without its problems. The most pressing is the circularity of the process of world creation so central to the model, which leaves silent the issue on how exactly religious underpinnings infuses meaning into and maintain the social world. Neither do they provide any insight as to the source of these religious insights into the social world apart from the social world itself. While Berger’s “symbolic universe” is referred to as transcendent, it is only to the extent that it transcends “everyday reality”, rather than complete temporal reality. What is more, *Social Construction* describes symbolic universes as merely a “matrix of all *socially* objectivated and subjectively real meanings”, thereby sourcing all ultimate meaning of temporal experience back onto the temporal sphere.⁵⁹ This point is not insignificant, for one cannot logically derive a framework that is supposed to provide cohesion exclusively from a social world that is characterized by a lack of a framework.

Because Berger asserts that religion stems from participation in the life of the social temporality world, there might arise the Durkheimian impression of religion as merely a symbolic method of participation in the events of this temporal world and no other.⁶⁰ Indeed, Berger himself contends that this is not the case, for

⁵⁸ Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Penguin, 1967).

⁵⁹ Ibid., 113-14. Emphasis added.

⁶⁰ *Cultural Analysis: The Work of Peter L. Berger, Mary Douglas, Michel Foucault and Jurgen Habermas*, ed. Robert Wuthnow, et al. (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), 10.

to say that religion is a human projection does not logically preclude the possibility that the projected meanings may have an ultimate status independent of man.⁶¹

Such an assertion of the transcendent as a non-contingent variable sets him apart from many other constructivists, who examine these projected meanings as but a residual and contingent element of predominantly temporal concerns. However, as to the exact relationship between his constructed “reality” and this enigmatic variable which “ultimate status independent of man”, Berger does not provides a clear answer, save that it is a human enterprise to deify certain objects of temporal experience.⁶²

On Voegelin and Radical Orthodoxy

At this point, it should be evident that hermeneutical understanding of religious actors is dependant on not just a radical expansion of conceptual horizons to encompass the temporal and spiritual spheres, but also a radical harmonisation of those two spheres into a coherent framework. In this regard, another possible step in the right direction is exemplified by Eric Voegelin, who asserted that

[e]very society is organised for survival in the world and, at the same time, for participation in the order of being that has its origin in world-transcendent divine Being; it has to cope with the problems of its pragmatic existence and, at the same time, it is concerned with the truth of its order.⁶³

This Voegelinian conception of history is key to our understanding of the religious component of religious peacemaking, for it puts that transcendent component into the very foundations of the research agenda. It is unlike the constructivist conception of socio-political action, where the search

⁶¹ Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Doubleday, 1969), 180.

⁶² ———, *The Social Reality of Religion* (Suffolk: Penguin Books, 1973), 34.

⁶³ Eric Voegelin, *Order and History Vol. II: The World of the Polis* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 68.

for meaning is treated as but an element of the quest for the rational fulfilment of interests, an approach which has proven inadequate for reasons stated above. Voegelinian conception of politics provides space for the serious engagement with the transcendent, since he acknowledges that it has been the historical source of the creation and maintenance of these webs of meaning to actions taken in the temporal sphere, but in a way that is unlike Weberian frameworks, for the two spheres are not seen as mutually exclusive but symbiotic. In other words, Voegelin equates all socio-political action as being simultaneously participating in both temporal and numinous spheres, in a sort of “in-between” space where the temporal and numinous overlap. Thus, in order to comprehensively understand temporal action, Voegelinian models demand engagement with coinciding transcendental dynamics. The incorporation of Voegelin’s framework at the foundations of social scientific research also overcomes the circularity of Bergerian frameworks canvassed above, by understanding his social construction as set against a backdrop of a simultaneous participation in the divine arena. However, it would be premature to regard Voegelinian foundations as the end to this search. Despite the great conceptual leap that Voegelin allows, his models evince one major shortfall. Whilst Voegelin emphasises openness to transcendent experience in *general*, he rejects *particular* encapsulations of the transcendent experience.

Historians studying Voegelin point to his caution against the codification of transcendent experience into doctrine, which only impeded accessing the *essence* of the transcendent experience which is a “predogmatic reality of knowledge”.⁶⁴ Whilst acknowledging the practical purposes of doctrine, it was the over-reliance on doctrine rather than experience, Voegelin argued, that contributed to the slide into the doctrinaire ideologies of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, whose cost to humanity seemed to outweigh the benefits. In seeking this pre-dogmatic reality of knowledge, however, critics argue that Voegelin essentially leaves the description of content of transcendent order as a “mystery” or “divine flux”.⁶⁵ Because it is a mystery, “thou shalt not rest in conclusion[s of the mystery] lest thou fall into certitude, the unforgivable sin against openness”.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ ———, *Anamnesis* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978), 191.

⁶⁵ Michael P. Federici, *Eric Voegelin: The Restoration of Order* (Wilmington: ISI Books, 2002), 169.

This opposition to certitude is mirrored in some strands of postmodern theology, such as the works of John Caputo. Whilst critical of post-Enlightenment rationality, Caputo echoes the anti-dogmatism of Voegelin, rejecting the propriety of taking seriously the particular articulations of transcendence in theology. Specificity in articulation of the divine, argued Caputo, is always tainted by arrogance and violence and is thus antithetical to the freedom that experience of transcendence demands.⁶⁷ The effect of Voegelin's and Caputo's line of argument is like that of constructivism mentioned before, either a refusal or reluctance to quarry the actual content of particular expressions of the transcendent experience. The net result of this kind of reluctance would be to once again, albeit unintentionally, render the transcendent as disengaged once again. This point was hinted at by Gerhart Niemeyer. The reason behind the rejection of the content of doctrine is not so much the doctrine in and of itself, but rather the fact that "Voegelin has approached a great spiritual reality from a standpoint extraneous to it". Putting Niemeyer's point into even sharper focus, Harold Weatherby and Bruce Douglass argue that this reluctance to quarry arises from Voegelin's complete reliance on philosophical discipline to analyse an essentially theological reality.⁶⁸

James Smith's thoughts on Caputo's idea of "religion without religion" provide a more fundamental critique of Voegelinian conceptions of transcendent order. While the motivations for providing a counter to the worst forms of fundamentalism are correct, the premises from which Caputo and Voegelin base their rejection of particular articulations of the transcendent are essentially replications of the Modernity that they seek to overcome. If Smith is correct, both Caputo and Voegelin actually accept the Cartesian framework surrounding the issue of epistemological certainty, that is, accepting the dichotomy of either being in a position of omniscience or complete ignorance in relation to a

⁶⁶ Ibid., 172.

⁶⁷ John D. Caputo, "What Do I Love When I Love My God? Deconstruction and Radical Orthodoxy," in *Questioning God*, ed. John D. Caputo, Michael Scanlon, and Mark Dooley (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 307.

⁶⁸ Federici, *Eric Voegelin*, 170.

subject.⁶⁹ While to deal with this issue of the philosophy of language would be beyond the scope of this thesis,⁷⁰ it can be asserted that to comprehensively transcend the Modernity of the methodological orthodoxy would mean also to reject the Cartesian logic of determination, equating knowledge with omniscience, and take seriously a logic of incarnation, where one can not know everything on a subject, but at least know the parts of the subject that that has been revealed to the inquirer.⁷¹

This thesis seeks to provide a response to Mark Juergensmeyer's call to adopt a "cultural approach" that "reconstruct[s]...world views from within"⁷² and in so doing have a better "appreciation for religion itself" to find a cure for religious violence.⁷³ Methodologically, however, it would be futile to fully explore such these sources, however open they are to the transcendent ground of which theology is an expression, so long as they do not seriously engage the specific articulations of theology as a concrete expression of the transcendent. This state of affairs will persist so long as the topic of bispheic action is engaged from standpoints external to the project of theologising. At the same time, undertaking a hermeneutical approach that is coupled with a deep suspicion of particularity risks asserting an indeterminacy which makes any engagement with the concrete content of religious sources impossible.

⁶⁹ Catherine Pickstock, "Liturgy, Art and Politics," *Modern Theology* 16(2) (2000): 63, James K.A. Smith, *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism? Taking Derrida, Lyotard and Foucault to Church*, ed. James K.A. Smith, The Church and Postmodern Culture (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 118.

⁷⁰ A much more comprehensive take on this issue can be found in James K. A. Smith, *Speech and Theology: Language and the Logic of Incarnation* (London: Routledge, 2002).

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 13.

⁷³ Ibid., 249.

Scott Thomas' nod to the Radical Orthodoxy tradition serves as a way forward at this juncture. Radical Orthodoxy's ontology is consistent with that of Voegelin, in so far as meaning in temporality exists insofar as temporality is suspended from the transcendent and the immaterial.⁷⁴ However, because Radical Orthodoxy proceeds from a rejection of the Cartesian equation of knowledge with omniscience, unlike Voegelin and Caputo, this theological tendency is able to locate in the very particular and finite expressions of "doctrine" that experience of the transcendent.⁷⁵

The experience of transcendence no longer needs to be defined as a mysterious "divine flux" in an attempt to somehow maintain an indeterminate transcendence that is at the same time universally immanent. Indeed, as Pickstock reminds us, a *metaxic* mode of participation necessitates the universal to be accessible via cleaving to "specific, time-bound [and] traditional" particularity. For Radical Orthodoxy, this cleavage to particularity is the very thing that enables "participation in the true universal which is transcendent and inaccessible". "In disdain of particularity", says Pickstock, "one actually loses the universal irrevocably".⁷⁶ The advantage of Radical Orthodoxy over Voegelinian conceptualisation thus lies in its serious engagement with the particular, in this case theology, as expressions of the transcendent. The content of theology becomes a concrete locus of analysis into the logic of the religious actors from which such theology springs forth.

Conclusion

This chapter explored some foundational conceptual issues concerning attempts to find correlates between theology and social theory. It has proceeded on a twofold claim that in order to hermeneutically understand the cultural and political negotiations between religious actors and their contexts, one first had to engage the religious variable in its fullness. This led to the second claim that in order to fully engage in such analysis, one had to engage transcendence. For a social scientist

⁷⁴ Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy*, 75.

⁷⁵ Clayton Crockett, *A Theology of the Sublime* (London: Routledge, 2001), 35.

⁷⁶ Pickstock, "Liturgy, Art and Politics," 175.

to proceeding from those two claims, conceptual hurdles are inevitable. In Behaviouralist approaches, the hurdles stem from an autonomous rationality that from the start shuts out the religious variable. Constructivism's fragmentation of the entirety of human experience, and neglecting to provide cohesion through an exploration into the meaning of those experiences, meant that the transcendence could not be just slotted into the analytical process without some conceptual widening. However, so long as there was resistance to acknowledging that meaning had to be part of a comprehensive narrative, there inevitably would emerge the tendency of shying away from the numinous object of religious activity, and like its conventional counterparts, allowed the re-emergence of the spectre of a disembodied "rationality". Ensuring that such a spectre would remain buried meant that to speak of meaning, one had to speak of order. But unlike earlier writers who took all order to be exhaustively rooted in temporality, the author has argued instead for a religious order that incorporates and synthesises both the temporal realm in which socio-political activity takes place, and the transcendent realm from which meaning is injected into those actions.

Coming to a comprehensive synthesis, however, requires casting off the vestiges of the Cartesian logic still inherent in current postmodern manifestations. These include the rejection of the argument that openness to the transcendent must be coupled by a persistent suspicion of articulations of transcendence. It has been argued that the thoroughgoing postmodern project of Radical Orthodoxy can provide a key analytical entrance into this subject. The chapter that follows will outline one aspect of this project, Graham Ward's cultural hermeneutics, which forms the lens by which the data concerning the engagement of the Church with its political contexts would be refracted.

Bodies of Christ: Ecclesiology and Cultural Hermeneutics

Introduction

Chapter two sought to carve out a space where social science could engage the political capital inherent in claims of transcendence, as well as its particular manifestations. It also sought to do so without being beholden to the reductionism of modern social science. Having established this, the current chapter seeks to outline the relationship between ethical claims grounded in these particular formulations of transcendence, and broader sociopolitical dynamics. Whilst this relationship is often acknowledged, few have actually outlined the mechanics of that relationship other than in crassly strategic terms. So while many quite rightly see theology as being responsive to larger sociopolitical dynamics, they largely leave unanswered the question as to why cases persist where ethical claims do not mirror purely strategic conveniences.

Answering this question is the main thrust of this chapter, which says that such ethical claims are inescapably rooted not in strategic agendas, but in the traffic of symbols constitutive of cultural formation. It will take as its primary reference point Graham Ward's project of "cultural hermeneutics", and will draw heavily from his *Cities of God*,⁷⁷ *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*⁷⁸ and to a lesser extent, his *Christ and Culture*.⁷⁹ Ward's understanding of the generation of knowledges, perceptions and responses within webs of communal practices or "social imaginaries" is the lynchpin of this thesis. This section will show how the process from concrete practical engagements to the articulation of ethics within the Church cannot help but be mediated

⁷⁷ Ward, *Cities of God*.

⁷⁸ ———, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*.

⁷⁹ Graham Ward, *Christ and Culture* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 2005).

theologically, or more specifically, ecclesiologicaly. It will argue that discerning an ecclesial response to a violent situation must juxtapose concrete engagements with an ecclesial imaginary. This chapter would explain how the meeting of these sets of *praxes* becomes responsible for the generation of new theologically charged imaginaries, and how the generation of these new imaginaries produces in turn new ethics and new practices in peacemaking.

However, these imaginaries are not democratically formed. In the process of outlining the above relationships, this chapter would uncover the necessary privileges and power relations inherent in cultural hermeneutics. It will explore how the creation and maintenance of social imaginaries takes place amongst other webs of practices that sustain other imaginaries, and how this context constitutes two kinds of politics. It will outline how communities are caught up in an external politics between themselves and competing “social imaginaries”. It will also uncover the internal politics encompassing tensions within concrete engagements by different members of the same community residing in different locales at different times. It will identify key institutions within the community and explore how such structures regulate the internal and external politics mentioned above. This section will also explain the important role the *articulating* of imaginaries has in the production of ecclesial ethics. It will also explore how the internal politics inherent in the communality of the process of interpretation, together with the external politics inherent in the maintenance of the interpretive community, provide an odd mix of dividends in peacemaking. On the one hand, the dynamics mentioned above provide the firm bases for communal mobilisation. On the other hand, those same bases would eventually prove inadequate in comprehensively resolving the conflict scenario at hand, whether in terms of resolving new external challenges or in terms of resolving internal tensions. Nevertheless, this section will explore how such inadequacy provides the basis for the transformation of both theologically charged peace ethics and peacemaking practices.

A Postmodern Surveying of the Political Landscape

The Politics of Imaginaries

When looking at the development of Catholic social ethics, or indeed at the Church's political involvement, there is a tendency to equate "political" with "inter-state". Thus, the Church's political engagements, and the developments in social doctrine, are often framed in terms of responses to political processes that gravitate around the activities of nation-states. Indeed, the Church's diplomatic activities that gravitate around the Vatican state can be said to further exacerbate this tendency. In order to get a more accurate picture of what is involved in the interplay between politics, ecclesiology and practice in the development of the Church's peace ethics and praxis, one is required to go beyond what can be framed merely in the one-dimensional terms of interstate political processes.

Graham Ward's focal point in conceptualising politics does not lie in finding out who controls the institutions of the modern state. Rather, his engagement with the question of political change or maintenance centres on questioning the natural status of state-centric politics in the first place. He is not alone in this. Hendrik Spruyt cogently argued that current institutional arrangements that underpin interstate political relations result more from a process of granting of political privilege than proven merit.⁸⁰ If one seriously engages with Spruyt's argument, one could uncover the first layer of political complexity, for Spruyt's argument concerning privilege paves the way to consider the possibility of the existence of other modes of relations that lack such privilege. This augments the work of social constructivists and feminists, who are keen to point out that behind the veneer of a privileged Westphalian diplomacy lie webs of practices whose lack of privilege does not deprive them of their political nature. A related aspect of this added layer of complexity is that not only do these modes of relations *exist*, they also *legitimate* these modes of political existence. Viewed this way, one can undermine at one level the natural status of the Westphalian international system by

⁸⁰ Hendrik Spruyt, *The Sovereign State and Its Competitors* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 158-79.

positing the powerful argument that the institutions of Westphalian politics are not a *natural* but merely a *dominant* institutional assemblage.

Talking about privilege is only the first step. Understanding the complexity of political processes that take place in the development of Catholic social ethics also requires understanding the nature of all institutional life-forms, their relationship to one another, and what takes place during times of political change. Following the initial questioning of the natural status of state-centric politics, Ward's next step starts with taking up Benedict Anderson's point that, privileged or otherwise, what gives all social practices and relations their political power is their ability to capture and mobilise a shared communal imagination.⁸¹ Given the intimacy between the communal imagination and the formation of social institutions,⁸² the use of "social imaginaries" to designate all social arrangements should be unsurprising. Rather than reifying state institutions as inevitable self-evident givens, Ward's conceptualisations would assist one in regarding them as sites commanding the communal imagination, or "social imaginaries" with a dominance gained by privilege rather than demonstrated efficacy. As shall be demonstrated below, reconceptualising the political map as a complex of privileged and marginalised imaginaries would assist one in answering some of the questions raised at the beginning of this paragraph, and ultimately the central thesis question. This method of framing both questions the universal validity of Westphalian political arrangements, and opens avenues to consider the contributions of marginalised imaginaries both in the development of Church doctrine and in ecclesial shifts away from the status quo.

Postmodern Subjectivity

Reconceptualising the political map also creates the need to reconsider the issue of the kinds of subjects that inhabit this landscape. More specifically, one must reconsider modern assumptions concerning the autonomy, self-sufficiency and stability of the human subject, or more specifically the stability of what the human subject knows and wants. While Spruyt's analysis provides a potent

⁸¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 2006).

⁸² William T. Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination: Discovering the Liturgy as a Political Act in an Age of Global Consumerism* (NY: T & T Clark, 2004), 1.

starting point for the purposes of this thesis, it still betrays the assumption of an autonomous, wholly rational human subject in full control of the levers of the political institutions s/he has created.

However, this assumption runs against Foucault's highly influential shift in emphasis from the "theory of the knowing subject" to the subject borne of "discursive practice"⁸³. In other words, if Spruyt does indeed presume an autonomous subject to be the protagonist of his account, he ignores a growing literature that suggests that the human subject is as much a victim of the institutions s/he creates as s/he is their master. This is because contrary to the presumption of a Cartesian ego-subject, Ward's "subjects are unstable...[with no] immediate consciousness of itself" and which that such subject are always "in process", constantly affected by the "time and spacing within which any subject position is oriented"⁸⁴. The subject arises, not from mere cognitive assent to universally accessible propositions, but from its immersion into a pool of signs and symbols operating within a particular social imaginary that in turn lays claims on that subject. These claims are then regarded by the subject as his or her very own. This raises the question: how does the subject come to be or come to know anything so as to engage the world around him/her? To answer this, one must consider how the social imaginaries that surround the subject are formed and maintained.

Praxis and Standpoints

Once the way is open to look at the political status quo as an assemblage of 'social imaginaries' competing for dominance, and to look at how subjects are constituted by their situation within these configurations, one must explore how social imaginaries are formed and transformed. This provides an avenue to consider the Church's political involvements as legitimate, since the Church constitutes its own social imaginary and bears the potential of challenging others.

⁸³ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1970), xiv.

⁸⁴ Ward, *Cities of God*, 17.

Considering the Church as a social imaginary is important for engaging the Church's social doctrine for a number of reasons. The most important reason is that, whether one admits it or not, an assumption operating within many readers of social doctrine is a voluntaristic one whereby the Church merely decides to add another volume to its social tradition by arbitrarily enunciating a particular social doctrine. Even when one looks at social doctrine as responses to historical events, this assumption may still be in operation, even if it is not at the forefront of a reader's consciousness. Such readings of Catholic Social Teaching, even when framed in terms of response to events, often ignore the kind of subjectivity raised above. Put another way, conventional readings of the development of Catholic Social Teaching often view the Church as an entity that stands detached, over and above a particular historical event. The Church then interprets that event, and subsequently provides a response. To borrow the terminology of contemporary Catholic Social Teaching, the Church "sees" and then "judges" a historical event. This approach is laden with modern, Cartesian assumptions, which shall be explored in greater detail below. For now, it suffices to say that a postmodern reading of subjectivity would reveal the church to be far from detached from its context. Consequently the development of its social ethics would be far from simple and unilinear.

Terry Velting reminds us that any historical agent, including the Church, is "absorbed and immersed in the world, never over against it as a subject to an object".⁸⁵ Immersion in the world is the ground for the possibility of *being*, which means that one knows not by mere cognition, but rather by interacting with various material and social textures. Thus, to consider the development of the Church's social doctrine, one must actually go beyond the "see-judge-act" framework commonly used in the application of Catholic Social Teaching, and consider how the acquisition of the knowledge necessary to make a judgement is intimately bound up in the formation and maintenance of social imaginaries. Thus to look at the theory of Catholic Social Teaching, one must consider how the Church itself as a social imaginary is formed and maintained.

⁸⁵ Velting, *Living in the Margins*, 30.

To undertake this task, one must consider first the textured interactions of the Church. To look at these interactions, one must take seriously powerful critical and postmodern arguments that ideas are caught up in an intimate “theory-practice relationship”. In a similar way, Radical Orthodoxy calls into question the legitimacy of the modern reduction of theory and practice into a mutually exclusive dichotomy. Radical Orthodoxy is similar to critical theory in that it insists that only the existence of a distinct practice can explicate the implications and possibilities of theory.⁸⁶ At the same time, theories are what instruct, infuse meaning into and ultimately bear the possibilities for transforming those practices.⁸⁷ The credibility of ideas and their dynamic potential could only be realised by their being concretised in some kind of *praxis*.⁸⁸

Attention to the relationship between theory and practice is important for this chapter’s consideration of the Church. “Religious” categories, whether it be “doctrine” or notions of “church”, become socio-politically significant because even ideals rooted in transcendence such as those of Christianity are not exempt from the need for social embodiment. The mere fact of transcendence’s surpassing the social does not exempt its having to work within the social.⁸⁹ Christianity cannot remain mental categories that deign to judge practices whilst being themselves cut off from a distinct mode of practice. Therefore, the Church and its social doctrine which engender the web of practices that constitute its social imaginary must themselves be imbricated in a core of material practices. This core of practices constitutes a specific locus from which what counts for reality is viewed and critiqued, and from which an alternative reality to the social imaginary is generated.⁹⁰ The ‘Christian

⁸⁶ Louis Althusser, *For Marx* (London: Cox and Wyman, 1969), 172, Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, trans. Neville Plaice, vol. 1 (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), 268, Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 380.

⁸⁷ James KA Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy: Mapping a Post-Secular Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 232, Althusser, *For Marx*, 166.

⁸⁸ Davis, *Theology and Political Society*, 17.

⁸⁹ Ward, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*, 15.

⁹⁰ Sandra Harding, *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1991).

imagination' is a core of practices that in turn form a distinct imaginary, comprising what feminists call a 'standpoint'.

The practical nature of Christian imaginaries is accentuated further when Ward speaks of the Church's task of 'read[ing] the signs of the times'.⁹¹ Such a reading does not merely comprise textual analysis, since what is to be 'read' are experiences of social phenomena. At the same time, social phenomena resemble texts because their meanings are not readily accessible.⁹² Social phenomena can only be "read" through a process of discernment of practical engagements. Further, discernment is not a mere cognitive reflection on engagement with social phenomena in isolation. The process of discernment involves the coupling of concrete engagement with social phenomena with a simultaneous engagement with the lens of an interpretive tradition.⁹³ Interpretive communities play an indispensable role here, since interpretation always takes place within the context of being "members of historical, cultural or symbolic communities"⁹⁴. More precisely, it is the shared practices of these communities that give such lenses their significance and form. Indeed, the lenses that gauge the meaning of social phenomena are after all no more than extensions of the community that creates them.⁹⁵

The Christian mandate to discern must involve juxtaposing the "sign" (the social phenomenon) against what Ward calls the "grammar of the Christian faith".⁹⁶ Because discernment is grounded in *praxis*, this Christian grammatical lens has to be itself rooted in practices. Christian discernment is

⁹¹ Matthew 16:3

⁹² Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class*, 307-8.

⁹³ Ward, "Radical Orthodoxy and/as Cultural Politics," 103.

⁹⁴ Veling, *Living in the Margins*, 34-5.

⁹⁵ Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class*, 14-16.

⁹⁶ Ward, "Radical Orthodoxy and/as Cultural Politics," 103.

therefore imbricated in performances of communal formation, cultural engagement as well as reflection. The site of this Christian grammar is at the same time the site of practices that constitute the Christian standpoint from which the political status quo is critiqued and transformed.

Bodies and Social Imaginaries

If lenses are achieved only in communal *praxes*, what then are the sites on which the data perceived by these lenses is received and transmitted? William Cavanaugh's work on torture is key in providing the answer. For Cavanaugh, the significance of torture lies in its ability to reproduce of the imaginary of the state, which is then manifested on the physical body of the torture victim. At the same time, this manifestation on the body also manifests a strike at other imaginaries as well.⁹⁷ Extrapolating from Cavanaugh's exploration and looking at the relationship between ecclesial and non-ecclesial imaginaries as something rooted in material engagements, requires consideration of a concrete site from which these social engagements can take some tactility. One must then conclude that the body of the member of the imaginary is the exact site on which a particular imaginary inscribes itself and challenges others⁹⁸. Whilst a modern political map would focus on the Cartesian mind, a postmodern mapping would make the body the new site of power, precisely because it is the new "base for communicative activity".⁹⁹ The process of the formation of imaginaries is always paralleled by the lashing of their knowledge claims onto a subject's body.

There is an economy attached to the formation of the self and the acquisition of knowledge, for the self is understood by its relation to other bodies within that imaginary. As Lynn Nelson observed, knowledge cannot occur in solitary confinement, but must be validated as knowledge by its meeting with a shared corporeal response by others within a community.¹⁰⁰ The production of credible

⁹⁷ William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, Challenges in Contemporary Theology (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1998), 57.

⁹⁸ Jean Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (London: Sage Publications, 1993), 101-24.

⁹⁹ Jose Gil, *Metamorphoses of the Body* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 107.

¹⁰⁰ Lynn Hankinson Nelson, *Who Knows: From Quine to a Feminist Epistemology* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 290.

categories of knowledge in one person must therefore be said to derive from the body of another.¹⁰¹ This “transcorporeality” of knowledge, as Ward puts it, means that the data of the one's self actually subsists in the body of another. Conversely, this also means that the body is no mere passive recipient of symbols. It is also a transmitter. The symbols that are inscribed on the body also make that body the vehicle for the transmission of those symbols to other bodies.¹⁰² Therefore, the body as a semiotic transmitter and receiver becomes a vital node in the formation of the self, and contact of such transmitter-bodies with one's own receiver-body becomes the process by which the formation of the subject is effected.

In the transmission of knowledge claims, however, the body is not left intact by its involvement in the formation of the imaginary or its subsequent immersion into that imaginary. Foucault provides the most graphic account for the body in this process of recruitment, whereby the body is “mark[ed]...train[ed and]...tortur[ed]” into an instrument that “emits signs”.¹⁰³ But more than that, Smith reminds us that such rigorous reformation of the body does not just turn it into an emitter of signs that still enjoy some distance from the authorities whose interest lies in their emission. According to Foucault's account of the Panopticon, “reinforcing the...gaze” of the guard occurs because those being guarded become so subject to the architectures of power that they themselves *become* their own guards.¹⁰⁴ The formation of knowledge categories then is synonymous with making the subject's body coextensive with that imaginary.¹⁰⁵ In the same way that responding to the Gospel involves “putting on Christ”¹⁰⁶ and mimicking Christ to the point of becoming *alter-*

¹⁰¹ Ward, *Christ and Culture*, 95-6.

¹⁰² Moira Gatens, *Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power and Corporeality* (London: Routledge, 1996), 70.

¹⁰³ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (NY: Vintage Books, 1979), 25.

¹⁰⁴ Daniel M. Bell Jr, *Liberation Theology after the End of History: The Refusal to Cease Suffering* (London: Routledge, 2001), 26.

¹⁰⁵ Smith, *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism*, 92.

¹⁰⁶ Romans 13:14

Christos,¹⁰⁷ acceptance of the imaginary's knowledge is to accept not just mere recruitment into the practices of the imaginary, but also of a corporeal transformation into the very image of the imaginary into which the subject will be immersed. Subject and imaginary will, just as Christ hoped for with respect to his disciples and God, "all be one".¹⁰⁸ All individuals inevitably become 'walking and talking fragments of a given society...embody[ing]...the essential core of the institutions and significations of their society'.¹⁰⁹ In short, each member by his or her ordering of corporeal life around a set of practices becomes a fragment of an imaginary.

The body's role as both a discursive receiver and transmitter for a number of imaginaries, and the constant process of formation and reformation of that body which occurs as part of the emergence of those imaginaries, means that the subject that emerges from this process would be a fissured one. This fissuring of the subject is significant for several reasons. First, if the self is formed in corporeal relationship to others, it follows that the individual's body, by virtue of its being formed only when immersed in corporeal social relations, would also be a site of convergence for a plethora of other imaginaries.¹¹⁰ In every movement then, an individual's body is not communicating just one imaginary, but is demonstrating a simultaneous straddling of multiple imaginaries.

The Ecclesial Standpoint

The formation of the subject is implicated in the subject's involvement in the formation of multiple imaginaries, as well as in a constant process of movement within these imaginaries. In a similar way, the formation of a distinctly *Christian* subject makes the formation of a *Christian* imaginary a central

¹⁰⁷ Smith, *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism*, 106.

¹⁰⁸ John 17:22

¹⁰⁹ Cornelius Castoriadis, "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary," in *The Castoriadis Reader*, ed. David Ames Curtis (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 332.

¹¹⁰ Ward, *Christ and Culture*, 53.

concern. Thus, before one can turn to the development of the Church's social doctrine, it is necessary to first outline the contours of the formation and maintenance of this ecclesial imaginary.

Christian and Non-Christian Standpoints

In light of the political landscape as an assemblage of social imaginaries, and the subject's formation being rooted in the body's radical immersion in this assemblage, the first complexity to emerge in trying to get a more accurate picture of the development of the Church's social ethics concerns the relationship between the imaginary of the Church and its non-ecclesial counterparts. An old adage says that good fences make good neighbours, but are the borders between ecclesial and non-ecclesial imaginaries so easily identified and maintained to keep all imaginaries distinct and apart? This question assumes a Christianity that, in Johan-Baptist Metz's words "was pre-existent to culture and history...a culturally naked Christianity [that] does not exist".¹¹¹ This is why Veling regards the Christian tradition not as a "timeless essence or seamless core", but rather as a tradition that is "immersed deeply in the play of many traditions".¹¹² He reminds us that the Christian tradition would involve the cooption of many non-Christian traditions that are communicated from a variety of historical, political, theological and philosophical sources.¹¹³ Veling's conflation of "tradition" and "praxis" suggests that, in light of the "theory-practice relationship" mentioned above, such traditions must be enfolded in a particular set of physical practices. These "traditions" are constituted in the corporeal relations within an imaginary. In light of the analysis on the body both in the formation of imaginaries, and as a base for communicative activity, the body would be a convergence point for a number of ecclesial as well as non-ecclesial imaginaries. This would mean in that for the Christian subject radically immersed in a sea of imaginaries, both Christian and non-Christian imaginaries would coagulate round that Christian body at the same time.

¹¹¹ Johann-Baptist Metz, "The 'One World': The Challenge to Western Christianity," in *Radical Pluralism and Truth*, ed. Werner G. Jeanrond and Jennifer L. Rike (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 205.

¹¹² Veling, *Living in the Margins*, 16-17.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 16.

This convergence of both Christian and non-Christian imaginaries round the subject's body necessarily effects the way one would know and understand things in a "Christian manner". A subject must first understand before it can engage or interpret anything. Similarly, the Church's members must be able to understand what it is engaging before they can interpret and respond through its social ethics. However, as a result of being immersed "in the world", understanding cannot arise exclusively from the resources of one's own tradition. Ward reminds us that when one thinks s/he is communicating from the Christian tradition, s/he is already mired in non-Christian "metaphysical...and ethnographical assumptions all caught up within...strategies of discourse which you simply took as 'truth'".¹¹⁴ Veling argues that this immersion in a sea of interplaying traditions immerses a subject also in a series of "fore-structures" that act as "the horizon of meaning through which understanding becomes possible".¹¹⁵ Because these fore-structures are communicated through bodies, it is important to regard these fore-structures as corporeally enacted social imaginaries. In other words, a subject's understanding of its own imaginary would always be formed in some way by the other imaginaries that form its contemporary context. As such, one imaginary "always gets rearticulated within another".¹¹⁶

The Church as a historical subject would be no different and would not be exempt from this tendency to have its own imaginary framed in terms of others. Thus it becomes important in the analysis of the development of Catholic Social Teaching to consider the imaginaries that form the fore-structures for the articulation of the ecclesial imaginary. As mentioned in the introduction, three kinds of contextual fore-structures will be scrutinised in this thesis. These include the political imaginary, in which ideologies congeal into institutions in the political landscape outside the ecclesial imaginary. There is the intellectual imaginary, in which ideas develop that either become crucial in the

¹¹⁴ Graham Ward, *Theology and Contemporary Critical Theory*, Studies in Literature and Religion (NY: St. Martin's Press, 2000), x.

¹¹⁵ Veling, *Living in the Margins*, 31.

¹¹⁶ Ward, *Theology and Contemporary Critical Theory*, 4.

formation of the political or ecclesial imaginary. Finally, there is the ecclesial imaginary, which act as the foreground for the developments in theology, and more specifically Catholic Social Teaching.

The Body of Christ as Bodies of Christ

The first complexity outlined above concerned the relationship between the Church and non-Christian imaginaries. A second complexity arises concerning the Church itself. This complication arises as a logical extension of the complexity arising from the intermixture between Christian and non-Christian imaginaries, and becomes even more acute in light of the above analysis of the body as the focal point for these imaginaries. Recall that the Church is caught up in interactions with multiple imaginaries, so much so that the boundaries between the ecclesial and non-ecclesial imaginary are not as clear as modern analysis would make them. At the same time, recall that the Church is, as Paul puts it, “made of many parts”,¹¹⁷ and thus is not a unitary monolith. Rather, it constitutes a plethora of corporeal subjects, each of which is scattered throughout a diversity of particular spatial locations within the sea of imaginaries, each with its own complex and unique mixture of traditions that frame interpretations within that particular context. As demonstrated above, the body of each individual member of the Church is a meeting point and transmitter of a multitude of imaginaries. Thus, it would be impossible to deem the Church a unitary corpus, since Seyla Benhabib reminds us that any notion of cultural ‘delineable wholes’ amounts to little more than an artificial, inherently modern imposition.¹¹⁸ Given the multiplicity of material engagements across a wide temporal canvass, and the multiplicity of communities that face those engagements, the knowledge that Catholic Social Teaching represents cannot emanate from a single imaginary that is hermetically sealed from others. Rather, the Church constitutes a complex of multiple, simultaneously co-existing imaginaries.

This raises the rather perplexing question as to whether the Church as a standpoint is all of these imaginaries at the same time. If so, how do they relate to each other, and how is one to make sense of

¹¹⁷ 1 Corinthians 12:12-14

¹¹⁸ Seyla Benhabib, *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 5.

any particular articulation of the Church as a “body of Christ”? Engaging the issue of the multiplicity of imaginaries that subsist within the imaginary of the Church must begin with an acceptance of the fact that myriad practices are constitutive of the Church’s imaginary, and that any practice has potential in enacting a social imaginary. But do these imaginaries sit alongside one another and all operate simultaneously?

Answering this question requires a return to the fissured subject, and considering Julia Kristeva’s argument for a “destabilised subject” that “constantly searches for stabilisation”.¹¹⁹ What has not been covered thus far was the desire for that fissured subject to achieve what Kristeva calls “stabilisation”. In the context of a fissured subject, this stabilisation is constitutive of acquiring a sense of cohesion via the establishment of a hierarchy of imaginaries. Communities rank webs of practices according to credibility, with credibility being judged against a “model of the *perfect* working relationship”.¹²⁰ Pickstock similarly argued that while myriad practices of cultural production is constitutive of human action, privilege is given to practices that point to an “ideal aspect” of human life. All cultural forms inevitably privilege those actions in which the human subject is deemed to be most fully itself. A hierarchy of actions must therefore exist in a community that privileges those actions that deign to point to that “ideal aspect”, since it is that “ideal aspect” that enables any form of reasoning, articulation and action.¹²¹

However, speaking of a community’s ideal aspect, as Seyla Benhabib is keen to point out, necessarily involves contestation between members of a community, and domination by some

¹¹⁹ Julia Kristeva, *In the Beginning Was Love: Psychoanalysis and Faith* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 19.

¹²⁰ Ward, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*, 122.

¹²¹ Pickstock, "Liturgy, Art and Politics," 160.

members of that community and the marginalisation of others.¹²² This observation is important for considering the production of standpoints and social imaginaries, since it actually paves the way to consider the instability of all imaginaries. This is so because standpoints are not readily obvious, static or self-sufficient. Standpoints are always caught up in a dynamic process of emerging and re-emerging by constantly being activated and reactivated. In feminist terms, standpoints must always be ‘achieved’.¹²³ More importantly for the purposes of this thesis, this observation concerning the instability of imaginaries highlights the capacity for change in such imaginaries and subsequent ethical articulations.

Ecclesiology: the Church’s Imaginary

Necessary Articulation of the Imaginary

While one may tentatively give a negative answer to the question of whether all imaginaries operate at once, this answer must be qualified. This has to be so in light of Veling’s point mentioned earlier that one’s understanding of one’s location within the Christian imaginary is always going to be framed within the context of other, non-Christian imaginaries. A plethora of secular discourses will be working on any individual Christian when trying to come to a Christian understanding of the self. As a result, secular discourses would inevitably *condition* any Christian perceptions of the self. This point may suggest a proposed resolution on the long standing debate concerning the *degree* to which theological categories are conditioned by historical factors, with hard historicists like Hans Kung, Edward Schillebeeckx and Lieven Boeve in favour of perceiving theology’s strong dependence on the conditioning of its historical environment,¹²⁴ and those who, like Hans Urs van Balthasar and Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI, acknowledge a relationship between theology and history

¹²² Benhabib, *Claims of Culture*, 5, Gayle Letherby, *Feminist Research in Theory and Practice* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2003), 23-8.

¹²³ Nancy Hartstock, *The Feminist Standpoint Revisited and Other Essays* (Boulder: Westview, 1998), 110.

¹²⁴ See for instance Hans Kung, *Christianity: Essence, History and Future* (New York: Continuum, 1996), Edward Schillebeeckx, Huub Oosterhuis, and Piet Hoogeveen, *God Is New Each Moment* (New York: Continuum, 2005), 29-33, Lieven Boeve, *Interrupting Tradition: An Essay on Christian Faith in a Postmodern Context* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

whilst resisting any arguments for a strong dependence of the former by the latter.¹²⁵ This thesis does not intend to enter this debate. Rather it seeks to focus on just *how* theological categories are politically conditioned.

The conditioning of Christian perceptions by non-Christian counterparts would always be effected corporeally, with secular imaginaries mapping themselves on the bodies of individual Christians. This mapping occurs through corporeal engagements and interlocking with the bodies of others, thereby making the Christian straddle multiple imaginaries simultaneously. However, because bodies cannot stay still, this straddling is not centripetal. The body does not remain a stagnant hub around which the various social imaginaries revolve like spokes of a wheel, equidistant from the subject and only participated in at the choosing of the subject. Indeed, the imaginaries' location within ever changing sets of corporeal relationships, and the subject's location within those relationships, suggests that the subject is actually in a state of constant corporeal mobility within a sea of imaginaries. The body then is implicated in a process of attractions and repulsions between one imaginary and another. This constant mobility within multiple imaginaries means that at any one point, there is a lack of absolute certainty of the grounding of the belief concerning the self. Recourse to the mind to transcend the contingencies of space and time, via the vehicle of universally credible propositions, would according to this epistemology be an illusion. However, one's ability to exist is dependent precisely on such stability of the bases of belief. Therefore, in the flux from one corporeal

¹²⁵ See for instance Hans Urs von Balthasar, "The Fathers, the Scholastics and Ourselves," *Communio: International Catholic Review*, no. 24 (1997): 349, 52. John Paul II's critique of a fully historically conditioned theology is at its sharpest in his critique of the methodology of Liberation Theology, which sought to frame theology almost exclusively in historical terms, more specifically in terms of then ascendant Marxist penchant for structural transformation (among the popular historical manifestations of political ideology), and casting aside the unique message of salvation offered by Christ. See his Address to the Third General Assembly of *CELAM*, cited in John Paul II, *Puebla: A Pilgrimage of Faith* (Boston: St Paul Editions, 1979), 100-10. See also Joseph Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology: Building Stones for a Fundamental Theology* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1987), 85-100. See especially Ratzinger's coverage on Faith and History in 153-92. A summary of Ratzinger's position on the points of convergence and divergence between theology and the presumptions of the Modern and post-modern conditions can be found in Tracey Rowland, *Ratzinger's Faith: The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 44-47.

relation to another, the self is at every point of one's life called to believe something as an adequate grounding for all forms of knowledge and notions of the self¹²⁶. In the search for a stable basis of reality, the Christian would be in a state of constant mobility between one corporeal relation to another, in other words being either repulsed from one imaginary and being drawn to another. This means that even when a Christian is trying to interpret in a Christian manner, s/he may not necessarily stay within the Christian imaginary. The need for corporeal shifts within the sea of imaginaries means that the shape and make up of any imaginary is subject to change all the time. This would mean a constant meeting of multiple individuals, each bearing multiple imaginaries that collide with one another. This in turn inevitably means that each and every imaginary at every moment comes under challenge at multiple points from multiple sources.

Given the constant corporeal movement between these different imaginaries, no one community is able to effectively police the borders of the social imaginary as the seemingly random entries and exits intensify, and thus no single imaginary would remain stable.¹²⁷ The inevitable result from this lack of comprehensive policing of imaginary borders then is the constant threat of dissipation of the imaginary. As the Christian imaginary is not exempt from physical enactment, dissipation is also a possibility from which it is not exempt.

These constant corporeal rearrangements and the resultant dilution of the imaginary thus generate a demand for current social imaginaries to be reconfigured.¹²⁸ At the same time, however, what also occurs is that the imaginary becomes involved in a process of opening up avenues of possibilities to facilitate further expansion of a social imaginary's horizons. This negotiation of communal barriers facilitates the task of finding new ways to handle the onslaught brought about by neighbouring

¹²⁶ Ward, *Cities of God*, 74.

¹²⁷ ———, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*, 82.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 135.

imaginaries, as well as find more meaningful ways of engaging such imaginaries and relating to them.

However, it is the standpoint that enables meaningful interpretation and political engagement in the first place, and standpoints are tied to the interpretive communities that generate those standpoints. Generating the social bases necessary for facilitating cooperation requires the production of a shared space to bridge divisions based on generational, kinship and situational differences.¹²⁹ Thus, it is unsurprising that Lorraine Code would argue that any political reflection must focus on strengthening that community.¹³⁰ But how is the community strengthened? According to Charles Taylor, the central task in communal buttressing lies in reflection on the identity of the challenged public. It is the primary means to ‘make sense’ of a community’s experience of challenge would be the creation of an ‘illusion’ of a society within which such members may be situated.

Strengthening community then overlaps with the task of generating ‘fictions’ of what a political community is and is meant to do.¹³¹ These “fictions” are integral to the firing of the imagination, and the imagination is important because it is indispensable to the process of manifesting one’s own social imaginary, as well as providing resources to critique other imaginaries.¹³² Whilst it is true that it is the practices that generate meanings, Althusser’s “theory-practice relationship” also suggests that these meanings also subsist in the production of an imagined public that provides a locus for the community’s own practices. The importance of the imagination thus lies in its capacity to generate a community and locate it.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 119.

¹³⁰ Lorraine Code, *What Can She Know? Feminist Theory and the Construction of Knowledge* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 307.

¹³¹ Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 16-20.

¹³² Ward, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*, 132, 43.

Another reason for the importance of firing the imagination is that it does not merely bring a sense of community in the present, but also projects itself beyond the present to a future horizon. Ricoeur points out that the imagination not only locates the subject in the present, but also has a “projective function that is part of the very dynamics of acting”.¹³³ The imagination is a powerful engine precisely because of its capacity to form a public that did not previously exist, and then turn that public’s attention towards a future horizon. It is precisely this dual capacity of the imagination that makes Ward remark that the “imagination empowers us to act”.¹³⁴ But the fact that a public is a community that is imagined does not mean that the community can automatically emerge via the merely cognitive exercises of a multitude of scattered individuals. That scattered individuals can have in their minds anything approximating to a unified image of a public at all requires the *articulation* of that imagination.

This point regarding articulation picks up from Habermas’ argument that the “criterion of publicness...is communication”.¹³⁵ While practices of concrete engagement play a key role in engaging the imagination of the community, the community’s coming into being occurs discursively as well as practically. For any kind of impression of belonging to a community to emerge in the individual as well as public imagination, any images of that public must be, according to Ricoeur, “spoken before they are seen”.¹³⁶ The task of facilitating the production of a shared sociopolitical space in the public imagination requires one to consider the necessity of communication to bridge the various fissures that occur across space, generations, and indeed within the subjects themselves.

¹³³ Paul Ricoeur, "Imagination in Discourse and Action," in *From Text to Action*, ed. Kathleen Blamey and John Thompson (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 177.

¹³⁴ Ward, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*, 136.

¹³⁵ Jurgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), 238.

¹³⁶ Ricoeur, "Imagination in Discourse and Action," 171.

To consider the task of communication *of* the public *to* the public, attention must be given to the necessity for representation. Ward argues via Taylor that the construction of the community as a social imaginary necessitates rhetoric and representation, in a word, articulation. For Taylor, rhetorical representations refer to “images, stories [and] legends” as important ingredients in helping communities “imagine their social existence” and provide a “common understanding which makes possible common practices”.¹³⁷ Taylor establishes an important link between articulated rhetoric and the imagination, in that the former plays a vital role in stimulating the latter.¹³⁸ For Taylor, articulation required by rhetoric provides the means for members in any social grouping to “make sense” of their experience. Rhetoric helps a community make sense of its experiences primarily through the creation of an “illusion” of a social reality within which such members may be situated.¹³⁹ The social reality that gets imagined in this case is an individual’s sense that s/he and any number of other individuals, whether near or far, known or unknown, nonetheless are united in their sense of belonging to a particular community.

At this point, one may think that it is the articulation of Catholic Social Teaching that forms the community and generates action. In response, Taylor’s mention of stories should be of especial interest. The above section may give the impression that the immediate result from concrete practices is the articulation of a set of ethical principles pertaining to that particular concrete practice. Whilst it is true, as is argued above, that the ethics of religious actors are formed by their practices, suggesting an uninterrupted relationship between the two masks the fact that the enunciation of ethical principles alone are unable to form a community and mobilize it. Something else needs to take place in the process that comes prior to the articulation of ethics. The need to “make sense” of experience necessitates a perception of a social reality that precedes ethics, a social reality that consists in narrative. Stanley Hauerwas reminds us that not just any rhetoric engenders the formation of a viable

¹³⁷ Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 16.

¹³⁸ Ward, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*, 128.

¹³⁹ Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 16.

community or *polis*. Indeed, not even rhetoric thick with ethical pronouncements would suffice in this regard. Hauerwas takes pains to remind his audience that “the most basic task of any polity is to offer its people a sense of participation in an adventure”. As such, even before rhetoric produces a corpus of ethical principles, the viability of that rhetoric is dependent on its ability to form a community that is “organised so as to provide for the authentic retelling of ...stories”.¹⁴⁰ For Hauerwas, the tie between ethical principles to narratives lies in the fact that ethics cannot be seen as

The ‘essence’ of stories, as if they might be abstracted from the story and still convey the same meaning. Rather our principles are but shorthand reminders [whose]...moral significance is contained in stories¹⁴¹

To reiterate, a key component of a community’s making sense of and effectively engaging the world is dependent on coming to an effective understanding of the community itself and the imaginary within which it dwells. The ability of a Christian imaginary to provide an ethical critique of other imaginaries must first be preceded by the ability to produce and reproduce a cohesive and convincing narrative. Secondly, it depends on the ability of the community to provide a coherent account of its position within that narrative and flowing from that, the self-understanding of the community that produces that imaginary. If we understand the Christian task of “reading the signs of the times” as a task of situating the Christian community, the *ecclesia*, within the Christian narrative, then the Church’s politics then are

first and foremost an *ecclesiology*, and only an account of other human societies to the extent that the Church defines itself, in its practice, as in continuity and discontinuity with these [other] societies.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Stanley Hauerwas, "A Story-Formed Community: Reflections on Watership Down," in *The Hauerwas Reader*, ed. John Berkman and Michael Cartwright (Durham: Duke University Press, 1981), 172-4.

¹⁴¹ ———, "Vision, Stories and Character," in *The Hauerwas Reader*, ed. John Berkman and Michael Cartwright (Durham: Duke University Press, 1973), 166.

Thus, Catholic Social Teaching as a political response cannot be extricated from considerations of *ecclesiology*, the self-understanding of the Church's identity and mission. Ecclesiology then functions first as the central node of the Christian narrative, in stimulating the imagination. Secondly, in generating via rhetoric the image of the church, and consequently its relation to the secular world, even before theological ethics or even before theology commonly understood, it is ecclesiology that stimulates the imagination in a way that either reinforces the status quo, or challenges and destabilises it. As we shall see demonstrated in later chapters, it is in ecclesiology that we see the Ricoeurian metaphors, which in turn possess the dynamism to evolve. Also, it is from this development that emanates from the locus of ecclesiology that we see the development of the literal data, namely, the social ethics embodied in Catholic Social Teaching.

Power and Privilege in the Body of Christ

In outlining Catholic Social Teaching as an embodied tradition caught up in the production and reproduction of a Christian social imaginary, the public as represented in ecclesiology, there is an added element to this cartography that has not yet been considered. This concerns the agents and processes responsible in bringing their respective clusters of imaginaries to the forefront of the community's consciousness. Images of stability within a sea of fissured subjects, and of stabilisation consisting of the establishment of hierarchies of imaginaries, can only occur because someone, somewhere, somehow is able to access those hierarchies in a way that others cannot. There is thus a *politics* of cultural production. Put another way, the production of knowledge that makes possible in turn the production of the communal imaginary and its ethics, is constituted within a framework of power relations, and is dependent on particular sections of the community enjoying privileges that other members do not.¹⁴³

¹⁴² Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 380.

¹⁴³ Smith, *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism*, 86-95.

The first site where power relations become apparent is the site of interpretive authority within any given community. Ward reminds us that one must be cautious about a fully atomistic approach to interpretation, bearing in mind that “there are benchmarks whereby the standard or quality of the interpretation can be measured so that this interpretation...is ‘thicker’...than that”.¹⁴⁴ Allowing an atomistic approach to interpretation would by necessity undermine the very collaboration necessary for a shared imagination to occur, and thus would ultimately undermine the need to ensure the stability to allow any kind of interpretation to begin with. Because the imagination is at the same time dependent on the existence of an interpretive community to share the same “illusion”, countering interpretative anarchy relies upon the intervention of interpretive authorities to police and articulate the image of the public.

In a social milieu characterised by projects dedicated to eliminating perceived oppression resulting from power relations, this claim would not be without detractors. They are exemplified by one contributor to the afterward of Derrida’s *Limited Inc*, who wrote of “repressive” outcomes arising from a reliance on an interpretive “police and a tribunal ready to intervene each time a rule is invoked in a case involving signatures, events, or contexts”.¹⁴⁵ Derrida’s response is highly instructive. He countered that “repressive” was not a word “drawn from [his] text”.¹⁴⁶ Focusing on the presumption of the repressive nature of policing itself, Derrida asserted his intention was

Not primarily to determine the law, the tribunal or the police as political powers *repressive in themselves*...[He] would hesitate before associating the police, directly and necessarily...with a determinate politics, and in particular with a repressive politics¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Ward, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*, 70.

¹⁴⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 131.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 132.

Going further, Derrida even spoke of the *necessity* of an interpretive police for an effective generation of new social imaginaries and thus an effective strengthening of the imaginary in its relationship to others, an act of what Derrida calls the “recontextualization” of the community.¹⁴⁸

There is a temptation to think that the power of “recontextualization” resides in a single person or institution pulling the levers of power strategically. This would assume once again the interpreter as an omniscient actor situated outside the process of cultural production, and this impression replicates the modern mindset to which this thesis is trying to provide a corrective. Given the complex relationship between and within imaginaries, as well as the subjects formed therein, it would become apparent that the interpretive authority within each imaginary would similarly reside somewhere in a relationship between imaginaries, incorporating multiple agents. However, bearing in mind that such imaginaries exist hierarchically within communities, it means that interpretive authority consists in having some clusters of imaginaries being given priority over others. In the context of knowledge grounded in corporeal relations, it means that some cluster of imaginaries that are congealing around a particular set of corporeal relations is being given priority in a way that others are not.

How this is given priority becomes clear when one considers that cluster’s relationship to what Ward calls the “grammars of interpretive practice”¹⁴⁹. These grammars are not completely cognitive, bearing in mind that these grammars are still produced within a communal context. In order for these grammars to operate within the whole interpretive community, they must first be communicated to the rest of the community. Therefore, there must exist channels of communication, sustained by

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 146.

¹⁴⁹ Ward, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*, 70.

practices that invest those sites with enough communal capital to be regarded as what Derrida calls the “criteria...of pedagogy”.¹⁵⁰

In short, the hierarchy of imaginaries is established in order of the distance between that cluster of imaginaries congealed in a set of corporeal relations, and those practices that sustain those pedagogical sites. The greater the interlinkages between these clusters of practices, the more dominant that cluster of imaginaries becomes in the hierarchy of imaginaries, and thus the greater its capacity to shape the contours of the imaginary. As the chapters below demonstrate, while there are consistent elements that make up these practices, there are nuances whose contours are hard to predict.

Embodying the Standpoint

The Necessity of Externalisation

Once the power relations outlined above generate the Christian standpoint, its participants undergo a transformation in the way they think about the world. However, Talal Asad reminds us that the longevity of such attitudes is assured via the cocooning of attitudes in practices that act on the body.¹⁵¹ Annemarie de Waal Malefijt similarly asserted that the belief and action are so closely connected that one cannot fully understand the former in the absence of the latter.¹⁵² For this reason, there is a need to explicate first the externalisation of knowledge reflected in attitudes, and then the necessary involvement of a multiplicity of interlinking bodily exchanges in the reinforcement of such knowledge.

¹⁵⁰ Derrida, *Limited Inc*, 146.

¹⁵¹ Talad Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 131-2.

¹⁵² Annemarie de Waal Malefijt, *Religion and Culture: An Introduction to Anthropology of Religion* (Macmillan: London, 1968), 11.

Externalising knowledge is necessary because at one level, “theory” is doomed to disintegration if it remains a purely cognitive category. There are several reasons for this. Chief among these is succinctly provided by Peter Berger: people forget purely cognitive categories¹⁵³. They forget because the stuff of discursive practices, and with that the traffic of signs and symbols that constitute the data of/for the subject, is constantly changing.¹⁵⁴ Stabilising that data then, requires stabilising the standpoint via their being constantly “achieved”. At another level, practices are essential in providing the content of knowledge or changes thereof in the first place. All knowledge claims “cannot be clear until the practices that correspond to each...have been specified”.¹⁵⁵ In other words, the content of attitudinal changes must be established via webs of practices.

Also, the enfleshing of the social imaginary into practices is essential for the purposes of legitimisation of the idea, or making that idea believable. One needs more than an idea, but also a belief in its reliability. One needs Pierre Bordieu’s *habitus* or a “community of dispositions”¹⁵⁶ that “acts within...as the organising principle of their actions”,¹⁵⁷ and in turn make one predisposed to gravitate towards seeing things in a particular way and regarding that as a “possible” or “credible” way of seeing reality. However, this disposition that acts within the person must subsist within what Bourdieu calls a “field”. In other words, the *habitus* must exist within a “social universe”¹⁵⁸ or “structure of social positions socially marked by the social properties of [the social universe’s] occupants, through which they manifest themselves”.¹⁵⁹ This statement is highly significant, for it

¹⁵³ Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion*, 48.

¹⁵⁴ Ward, *Theology and Contemporary Critical Theory*, 149.

¹⁵⁵ Stanley Hauerwas, “Courage Exemplified,” in *The Hauerwas Reader*, ed. John Berkman and Michael Cartwright (London: Duke University Press, 2001), 297.

¹⁵⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 35.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁵⁸ ———, *The Field of Cultural Production* (Cambridge: Polity, 1993), 162.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 71.

highlights important prerequisites for the operation of this *habitus* – bodies operating in a particular social configuration *vis a vis* other bodies in a concrete social space. The communal positioning of these interlinking bodies are what determine the “space of social possibles” that make one predisposed to believe in one thing rather than another.

The issue of legitimising the social imaginary, and thus entrenching its persuasive power, becomes even more imperative in a postmodern environment where universally accessible, cognitive criteria are no longer available or trusted. Because the legitimation and persuasiveness of articulations of a social imaginary can no longer come from recourse to a set of universally valid criteria to be adjudicated cognitively, arguably the most potent legitimating alternative can arise from the ability of that imaginary to be enfolded or “lived out” into practices.¹⁶⁰ This would explain why Cornelius Castoriadis postured that “projective schemata and processes have precedence over introjective ones”.¹⁶¹ Philosophers, anthropologists and sociologists of the most ardent secular variety have linked the need for alternative knowledge to be imbricated in webs of practices,¹⁶² and theological insights as alternative knowledge forms are not exempt from this.¹⁶³

Also, these practices are necessary to help point to future utopias that challenge the status quo. If standpoints are content with merely interpreting of the status quo, they only reinforce the status quo.

¹⁶⁰ William T. Cavanaugh, "Stan the Man: A Thoroughly Biased Account of a Completely Unobjective Person," in *The Hauerwas Reader*, ed. John Berkman and Michael Cartwright (London: Duke University Press, 2001), 20, Smith, *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism*, 66.

¹⁶¹ Castoriadis, "Radical Imagination," 330.

¹⁶² Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 419-20, Malefijt, *Religion and Culture: An Introduction to Anthropology of Religion*, 11.

¹⁶³ Ward, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*, 15.

“Counter positions” must be generated.¹⁶⁴ Hartstock contends that a standpoint’s credibility in providing descriptive accounts is closely interlinked with its being geared towards providing “conditions of possibility for creating alternatives” towards a particular horizon.¹⁶⁵ Ward’s point about “standpoints furnish[ing] not only positions-from but positions-to”¹⁶⁶ follows Horkheimer’s argument about the significance of practices to interpret and engage the present time, as well as to provide the conditions for projecting future utopian possibilities that transform the present “into the *right kind of society*”.¹⁶⁷

However, consideration of Bourdieuan “fields” raises a qualifier to the production of utopic possibilities. Recall that utopian possibilities will remain unreachable so long as they remain merely cognitive. Their credibility is dependent on their being enfolded in practices that point to that utopian moment. However, utopian futures cannot represent a complete rupture with present practical possibilities. As such, the credibility of future utopias depends on their ability to subsist within the practices that sustain present realities.¹⁶⁸ A simplistic example of future projection of possibilities can be found in the genre of science fiction, most notably the *Star Wars* movies, where nearly all portrayals of futuristic life-forms and technologies represent extrapolations of the era that made the films. For example, Jabba the Hutt and C3PO have humanoid features. What this example indicates is that the production of future possibilities must take place with some reference back to the practices that constitute the present standpoint and imaginary.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁴ Althusser, *For Marx*, 171, n7, Grace Jantzen, *Becoming Divine: Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Religion* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 217.

¹⁶⁵ Hartstock, *Feminist Standpoint Revisited*, 236.

¹⁶⁶ Ward, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*, 88.

¹⁶⁷ Max Horkheimer, *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: Continuum, 1972), 215-8.

¹⁶⁸ Ward, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*, 146-8.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 80.

Externalisation and Destabilisation of Imaginaries

The practices that generate this Christian utopic horizon have an indispensable communal aspect, and the communal nature of political practices also means that such practices generate corresponding webs of corporeal relations. Similarly, in order for the Church's social ethics to amount to a transformative project, it must bring about what Althusser calls a "revolution in social relations".¹⁷⁰ This revolution arises because of the transcorporeality of knowledge canvassed above, and because everyone is constantly externalising more than one standpoint or social imaginary in their everyday lives. There will an inevitable meeting of differing social imaginaries. However, the generation of new corporeal relations means that shifts occur in the sites of exchange between these imaginaries.

For Ward, each site of exchange will be a site of confrontation for the inhabitant of the social imaginary. Such confrontations arise because every exchange that the individual engages in inevitably destabilises the image of oneself, community and the world. This happens precisely because of the fact that each individual is a point of convergence for multiple social imaginaries.¹⁷¹ Straddling multiple imaginaries means that there is constant corporeal mobility between imaginaries and thus between standpoints. If the Church's imaginary gets externalised, it will inevitably come into contact with other imaginaries. This contact, combined with the frequent movement across their borders, would make the imaginaries it comes into contact with come under strain, since the non-ecclesial imaginaries, through the very process of social mediation would be forced to abandon their "pristine...meaning for the shared meanings provided by [wider] society".¹⁷² The ecclesial imaginary can be a transformative project because the contact between imaginaries engenders a reciprocal exchange of practices through the borders of the respective imaginaries. In such exchanges, the

¹⁷⁰ Althusser, *For Marx*, 175-6.

¹⁷¹ Ward, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*, 134.

¹⁷² Castoriadis, "Radical Imagination," 330.

integrity of each imaginary is inevitably undermined as each established mode of interrelationality comes under challenge.¹⁷³

If the ecclesial imaginary does indeed challenge non-ecclesial counterparts, it must go beyond a purely cognitive exercise. The fact that the body of the member of the imaginary is both a site of convergence and challenge, would mean that the challenge consists of processes that occur on that member's body. One must revisit Ward's point that multiple imaginaries can be manifested in a single person, and couple it with his other point that members are also living fragments of the imaginary to which they belong. If these were true, the need for cohesion and the concomitant process of privilege and marginalisation of imaginaries that takes place communally must be replicated within the individual, so that a hierarchical relation of imaginaries is established within the individual.¹⁷⁴ In the processes of transcorporeal exchange, members of all imaginaries will eventually engage a situation whereby that hierarchy of imaginaries is unable to provide a sufficient basis to comprehensively engage the phenomenon at hand. The durability of that hierarchy that resided within the member that enabled engagement with the phenomenon in the first place would cease to function. New practical engagements are thus demanded of the member, but this demand for a more satisfactory engagement with the phenomenon is always coupled with a demand for a corporeal rearrangement to take place. When such rearrangements take place, the dominant imaginary loses its privileged position in the member's hierarchy of imaginaries and ultimately standpoints. Thus, the substance of an ecclesial challenge to non-ecclesial imaginaries comes in the form of rearranging that hierarchy of standpoints, so that a previously marginalised standpoint generates more persuasive power on the member than the one that previously enjoyed a position of privilege, and more people come to "make sense of their existence in the same way."¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Ward, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*, 170.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 129.

Because repositioning standpoints is tied to the reconfiguration of social relations, the meeting of social imaginaries is necessarily paralleled by the recruitment of new members into the imaginary. Such recruitment does not merely take place in the minds of members, manifest in the arguments that defend the merits of the newly privileged imaginary. The recruitment is also corporeal, manifesting on the body of the member as s/he engages in the practices that forge new social relations, and at the same time manifest and legitimise new imaginaries. These practices gradually bring these marginalised standpoints into the member's immediate orbit of meaning and push the once privileged standpoints into the margins of relevance. The multiplication of such processes results in not a mere *discursive* rearrangement but a *corporeal* one as well, as the body of a member becomes rearranged *vis a vis* those of others in the interpretive community. The effects of such rearrangements can be a withdrawal of the member from the orbit of one social imaginary, if not a complete removal from that imaginary and subsequent insertion into another. At the same time however, such corporeal rearrangements can also pull the practices of the marginal imaginaries back into the orbit of those of the primary. It is these corporeal rearrangements that constitute Althusser's "revolution in social relations", which in turn bring about the weakening of the imaginary outlined above.

Desiccation of the Standpoint

However, it would be naïve to assume that an articulated Christian imaginary would decisively overcome all the challenges posed by the meeting of multiple imaginaries. Indeed, Ward reminds us that the inevitable meeting of both ecclesial and secular imaginaries, *all* imaginaries would come under challenge,¹⁷⁶ which means that the challenges posed to the secular imaginary could just as easily apply to the ecclesial. This in turn limits the continued effectiveness of the imaginary in sustaining the *praxes* that in turn sustain Christian social ethics. This section would outline the internal as well as external pressures that inevitably limit the comprehensiveness of the ecclesial standpoint.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 170.

Internal Challenges

It was asserted in earlier paragraphs that the formation and mobilization of a public is predicated on a web of shared meanings embodied in sets of cooperative practices. But recall that the Church constitutes a collage of interlocking imaginaries, and the cooperative nature of the ecclesial (or any) community masks the power relations and resultant competition between these imaginaries.¹⁷⁷ The intervention by the “interpretive police” and the subsequent act of articulation would ensure a privileging of certain imaginaries at the expense of others. However, marginalised imaginaries do not become silenced, for they might persist in an “inchoate” way in the articulated imaginary,¹⁷⁸ and thus continue to challenge the prevailing hierarchy of imaginaries.

What intensifies such tensions is the aforementioned framing of utopic moments in terms of present possibilities.¹⁷⁹ The potentialities of the marginal imaginaries can be embedded within frameworks of dominance, but this also means that the very means of galvanising a community towards an emancipatory horizon very often is also the source of division within the community itself. Such division can arise from dissatisfaction by sectors of the community who through their practical engagements regard the articulated imaginary as either not having reached that utopic horizon, or even as a rearticulation of the dominant imaginary. This is because Ricoeur reminds us that while rearticulations do indeed point to utopic moments, there would be tendencies within the community that would seek to maintain the status quo.¹⁸⁰ These dynamics will push sections of the ecclesial imaginary away from that dominant imaginary and into another, more marginal one. This in turn raises the challenge of dissipation mentioned above, although it could at the same time sow the seeds of the building of tradition should these clusters become one of the privileged clusters of imaginaries mentioned above.

¹⁷⁷ Benhabib, *Claims of Culture*, 5, Letherby, *Feminist Research in Theory and Practice*, 23-8.

¹⁷⁸ Ward, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*, 148.

¹⁷⁹ Marsha Aileen Hewitt, "Critical Theory," in *Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, ed. Peter Scott and William T. Cavanaugh (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 461.

¹⁸⁰ Ricoeur, "Imagination in Discourse and Action," 182.

External Pressures

These internal tensions parallel much greater pressures exerted on the articulated imaginary that emanate from sources external to that imaginary. On the one hand, even without pressure from the ecclesial imaginaries, the constant interaction between secular imaginaries means that the sea of imaginaries already is in a constant state of flux. On the other hand, even if the ecclesial imaginary does succeed in placing pressure on the secular imaginary, the need for the two to be socially mediated as discussed above, creates pressures for the abandonment of the ecclesial interpretation's "pristine meaning" for "shared meanings" between non-ecclesial imaginaries. In other words, the efficacy of the articulation of the ecclesial imaginary becomes paradoxically dependent on that very articulation coming under strain the moment it is externalised and socially mediated.

Both of these pressures, when placed in the context of corporeal membership in multiple communities with porous borders, means that members of all imaginaries, ecclesial or non-ecclesial, are constantly being rearranged corporeally into new patterns of relations within and without the ecclesial imaginary. This creates new patterns and nodes of relations. For Michel de Certeau, the ever changing traffic of configurations always creates gaps between

what authorities articulate and what is *understood* by them, between the communication they allow and the legitimacy they presuppose¹⁸¹

In other words, there is a challenge to the believability of the knowledge claims of the articulated ecclesial imaginary. This occurs because in these corporeal rearrangements, the context within which the original imaginary was articulated, and with that the network of knowledge claims that made that articulation credible, erodes. The Bourdieuan field that made the articulated imaginary credible to its members would slowly disappear, which in turn undermines the *habitus* that makes a particular ethical claim believable.

¹⁸¹ Michel de Certeau, *Culture in the Plural* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 15.

To tie this back to our case study, it means that in the flux of the context within which interpretation and articulation takes place,¹⁸² the articulated Christian imaginary would dissipate once that imaginary becomes mediated with other imaginaries. Christian ethics would in turn become less and less able to maintain its original foothold of the communal imagination, precisely because the nodes of relations that made it credible are slowly being eroded. Eventually, the accumulation of challenges posed by such corporeal rearrangements would bring the articulated imaginary to a point of crisis. Accustomed methods of engagement generated by that articulated imaginary to make sense of the world would no longer fulfill that function, and a gap in meaning is created. This meaning deficit would trigger a search for new frameworks with which new interpretations with more persuasive and mobilising power could be found and generated to better engage the new epoch that the new corporeal arrangement represents.¹⁸³

However, the need for transformation of the original ecclesial imaginary does not automatically render the challenged imaginary redundant. If the consideration of the new emerging out of the old is correct, then the resources for the transformation of the imaginary lie in the exact site of its challenge. The possibilities that guide these responses would arise from within the boundaries already set by the challenged imaginary itself. While the context that sustained the old social imaginary crumbles, that old imaginary still acts as the site for the generation of new images and myths which coalesce into new imaginaries,¹⁸⁴ and thus new ethical formulations that align with the new corporeal arrangements.

¹⁸² Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context," in *Margins of Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 320.

¹⁸³ Ward, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*, 148.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 128.

Conclusion

If Ward is correct, then the articulation of ecclesiology as the engine for the production an ecclesial imaginary, the generation of practices that embody that imaginary, and the challenge to that articulation by the interaction of that social imaginary with others within and without the community, would be a constant cyclical process. Ecclesial responses to violence would likewise undergo this process. As the case studies below hopes to demonstrate, ecclesial engagements would become the foil for the ecclesial community to articulate its own imaginary as a step towards finding a solution for that political challenge. However, by the time this imaginary is articulated, the practices generated by that articulation would not be sufficient to adequately face emerging challenges. This is precisely because of their contact with social imaginaries that themselves undergo constant transformation, which in turn would generate challenges the articulated imaginary did not anticipate. The result would be a need for further reflection, and rearticulation of that ecclesial imaginary. In this respect, theology is in a constant dialogue with social phenomena, and not insulated from them.

The Perfect Society and the Age of Revolution

Introduction

The historically contingent nature of revelation makes exploring the historical context within which ecclesiology develops a highly important task.¹⁸⁵ This is a history encompassing that of political thought, as well as the practices of handling the traffic of bodies between the imaginaries that engender that thought. Because the politics of the church proceeds from its ecclesiology, and because ecclesiology is conditioned by the Church's interaction with secular imaginaries, this historical investigation must focus on the relationship between the ecclesial imaginary and these secular imaginaries. In particular, attention must be given to the ecclesial relationship with the most dominant imaginary in contemporary politics, the modern nation state.

The ecclesial and state imaginaries thus form the two poles around which this thesis revolves, and the twentieth century forms this primary period of concern. This chapter will outline how the boundaries of that kind of engagement within that time-frame were set. It will explore the historical drivers for the formation of ecclesial institutions that engaged the issue of state consolidation and its accompanying revolutions. It will show how these engagements framed the Church's conception of peace founded on order, and shaped the "Perfect Society" ecclesiology that focussed on maintaining the integrity of a hierarchical institutional order. This chapter will also show how these elements framed the Church's corporatist oriented engagement with the emerging "social question".

When examining the Church's responses to the dominant state imaginary, one must note how the Church was marked by the very processes against which it was defending itself. In other words, in

¹⁸⁵ Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy*, 87.

trying to respond to the ascendancy of the modern imaginary of the state, the Church enacted *itself* as another modern imaginary. For this reason, one must explore the historical context that led to the formation of the modern ecclesial imaginary, which must start with the slow dissolution of medieval Christendom.

The Rise of the Modern State

Practices of De-Feudation

An attempt to make sense of this dissolution of Christendom must start at the 1500s, where the often cosy relationship between Church and sovereign began to irreversibly unravel. An old Church practice of patronage had contributed to the entanglement between the Church and those that wielded temporal power, and also contributed greatly to the tensions that would eventually erupt in revolution. Since the sixth century, the church received grants of land from wealthy laity, which was reciprocated through the granting by the Church of special rights over the religious occupants of the land, often in the form of a right of appointment of senior clerics or a right of the grantor to demand personal allegiance from the appointees, or from the Church at large.¹⁸⁶ Such a practice became standard Church practice by the mid 1700s,¹⁸⁷ and provided the Church with much land and wealth. However, this growing network of entanglements between the Church and wealthy aristocrats soon began to backfire as the Middle Ages gave way to the early modern period.

The small wealthy lords soon evolved into massive regal dynasties, becoming more powerful and more competitive with other aristocrats for territory. At the same time, they became more assertive in their demands for greater rights over Church personnel and rights over greater tracts of territory. In time, the Church was implicated in the granting of patronal rights over entire countries in both Europe and Latin America. At the same time, the practice of allowing sovereigns to demand often

¹⁸⁶ Russell Hittinger, "Introduction to Modern Catholicism," in *The Teachings of Modern Roman Catholicism: On Law, Politics & Human Nature*, ed. John Witte Jr and Frank S. Alexander (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 4.

¹⁸⁷ E. E. Y. Hales, *Revolution and Papacy* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1960), 17.

unconditional loyalties from the clerics generated a mindset whereby members of the Church often saw their loyalties to the sovereign override those to the universal Church.¹⁸⁸ This slowly undermined the previously privileged position of the Church within the social hierarchy of Christendom. The Church gradually found itself under more pressure to be an instrument for the aggrandisement of the sovereigns, while the growing scope of patronages fed the impression that the Church was recognising the independent authority of these sovereigns, even the authority of the sovereigns over the Church itself.¹⁸⁹ The system had also created serious divisions within the Church, as factions formed along dynastic or national lines. Despite this, the Church did not actively seek to extricate itself from this fragmenting system of patronage. Indeed, despite the problems mentioned above, this system proved quite durable for several centuries.

Intellectual Arguments for Separation

Entangling the Church with landowners ironically contributed to the process of disentangling the sovereign from ecclesiastical oversight. Still, the *appearance* of a compact between Church and state provided the fodder for intellectual developments that would hasten the process of the eventual separation between Church and State. For instance, Martin Luther, while speaking of the need for autonomy in spiritual affairs, also wrote extensively on the need for the maximisation of the sovereign's temporal power *vis a vis* the Church to assure that spiritual autonomy.¹⁹⁰ In *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, Luther spoke of the need for temporal power to

be left free to perform its office in the whole body of Christendom without restriction and without respect to persons whether it affects pope, bishops, priests, monks, nuns or anyone else¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Hittinger, "Introduction to Modern Catholicism," 5-6.

¹⁹⁰ Daniel Philpott, "The Religious Roots of Modern International Relations," *World Politics* 52 (2000).

¹⁹¹ Martin Luther, *Three Treatises* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 15.

This was not merely a “Protestant” development. The Catholic jurist and political theorist Jean Bodin cited religious loyalty as an asset, so long as such loyalty “tends to the preservation of commonwealths...secures the authority of kings and governors...[and] the obedience of subjects”.¹⁹² According to William Cavanaugh, Bodin thought that loyalty to religious authority should no longer remain on an equal footing with that to the sovereign. A peaceful social arrangement necessitates the former being subordinated to the latter.¹⁹³ In the upheaval of the Reformation and the Wars of Religion that followed, these embryonic thoughts on the separation of sovereign power from the Church, and the accompanying monopolisation of temporal power in the sovereign proved immensely durable in the European intellectual imaginary. As the power of civil authorities increased with the rapid advances in weaponry in the 1600s, the notion of the sovereign as supreme civil authority became the dominant theme in European political thought. The idea of the *separation* of Church and State eventually evolved into an idea of outright *subordination* of the Church by the State. Less than a century after both Bodin and Luther, in 1651, Thomas Hobbes championed the virtues of subordinating the practices of the Church to the supreme authority of the sovereign, since “there must needs follow faction and civil war in the commonwealth, between Church and State”. For Hobbes, peace was to be found in the all encompassing embrace of the sovereign. More forcefully still, Rousseau described the “clergy’s social compact” as “so obviously baneful” because it impaired the kind of social unity that can only be assured by the sovereign.¹⁹⁴

Thought on the maximisation of sovereign power was paralleled, and later augmented, by the rising popularity of liberalism. Writing in the context of an intensifying denominational pluralism in post-

¹⁹² Jean Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell), 141.

¹⁹³ William T. Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination: Discovering the Liturgy as a Political Act in an Age of Global Consumerism* (NY: T & T Clark, 2004), 35.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 38-9. Cavanaugh’s point here is part of a much larger debate concerning the veracity of the theory of the “Wars of Religion” and the role of the state in ameliorating the effects of same. Testing the merits of this point is far beyond the scope of this essay. What the author is trying to do in deploying this work is that, whether one agrees with the theory or not, in the end, the situation that resulted was the elevation of the state as *the* focal point for the commanding of a person’s loyalties, whether or not such loyalties were consensual.

Reformation Europe, thinkers had become concerned with the scope of temporal authority over socio-political life, as well as the identity of the office bearers. In particular, there was concern over the use of coercive authority in the care of souls. Such concerns and their apparent resolution found their expression in John Locke. The primary threat, said Locke, lay in absolute sovereign power being used arbitrarily.¹⁹⁵ Because each has property in their own person by virtue of the natural law, such arbitrary rule over that person amounted to slavery. The primary bulwark against arbitrary rule was the limiting of the ways in which the sovereign can govern by recourse to positive law.¹⁹⁶

In the course of limiting sovereign power, Locke proved instrumental in dividing power among separate spheres. The wielding of coercive temporal power would be the exclusive realm of the sovereign in the political sphere, but that sovereign will be denied any jurisdiction in the care of souls. This was the domain of the Church in a religious sphere, but because the issue of faith was a purely “inward” disposition,¹⁹⁷ the sphere within which faith operated, and the Church that ruled it, had to be private and subject to individual consent. In other words, it was a sphere that could not presume to adopt any outward institutional forms, or aspire to the same kind of protections of temporal sovereignty as the political sovereign.¹⁹⁸ Thinkers in the tradition of Locke inherited the Enlightenment’s sense of the triumph of rationality and technical prowess. Liberals believed that, through reason, humanity was able to make great technical, social and cultural progress that could continue, if freed from the constraints of superstition and ignorance imposed by the Church. Progress thus became dependent not on the medieval notion of a common life centred on worship, but on the protection of individual’s freedom to pursue whatever end an individual’s reasoning could devise. Along with the Reformation’s insistence on the Spirit guiding the individual’s soul rather than an

¹⁹⁵ John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett, Second ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 169.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 112-13.

¹⁹⁷ Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Sovereignty: God, State and Self* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 128.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

institutional Church, liberal thought also further destabilised the Church's privileged social position by denying the Church any public institutional durability.

As the 1700s progressed, these two strands of thought eventually converged in spectacular fashion. The two schools were not as antithetical as they seem at first sight to be. Indeed, liberal notions such as the social contract theories of Locke and Hobbes, and in particular Rousseau's championing of the "general will" as the final, absolute and all encompassing will of the body politic,¹⁹⁹ made liberalism instrumental in paving the way to enshrine individual liberty alongside the monopolisation of political power in the sovereign. Providing only one object of political loyalty, they argued, was what enabled the sovereign to maintain a space of political openness free from external constraint, enabled free exchange and protected individual rights. Most importantly, it secured the general will of the *polis* through the mechanisms of self-determination and majoritarian governance. The state, not the Church, would become the ultimate governor of a people.²⁰⁰ The protection of liberty, therefore, became concomitant with the establishment of state rule independent of Church supervision. From the late 1700s, this convergence of liberty, self-determination and statehood manifested itself in a powerful new political force that would become the Church's new contemporary rival: liberal nationalism.

Print & Nation

The appeal of liberal nationalism, its role in ending the territorial underpinnings of medieval Christendom, and in consolidating the modern state, could not be understood outside the laying of the modern field via the revolution in communications technology in the 1500s, which is best demonstrated by the practice of mass-print. Benedict Anderson argues persuasively that the undermining of Christendom via the Protestant reformation could not be understood solely by reference to the appeal of religious liberty. The decisive factor lay in the *communication* of those ideas by a new medium, the printing press, to a new entity, a mass reading public. Already a profitable commercial practice in the 1400s, the printing press played a central role in disseminating

¹⁹⁹ Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1978), 61-62.

²⁰⁰ Elstain, *Sovereignty*, 132-33.

ideas to anyone that could read in Europe. The increasing availability of cheaper, more accessible print media contributed to the growth of a large reading public. At the same time, the ideal of a spiritual life free from the constraints imposed by others inherent in the Reformation and the availability of print media underpinned the creation of a new institution, the secular university free from ecclesiastical control.²⁰¹ This new university formed communities of predominantly bourgeois intellectuals and accelerated the spread of many of the ideals of the Reformation, as well as the secular humanism inherent in the Enlightenment. What is more, the creation of the secular university, together with the printing house, provided for the first time an important meeting point between intellectual imaginaries and the wider public. This development would further accelerate the spread of ideas among the emerging, and growing, reading public.²⁰²

The generation of the early-modern reading public forcefully demonstrated Habermas' argument that the "criterion of publicness is...communication".²⁰³ Indeed, the creation of the reading public, augmented by both the printing press and the new secular university, facilitated the rapid dissemination of ideas over a larger percentage of the population in a shorter span of time. This in turn facilitated the creation of modern political communities. The emergence of the reading public undermined the polity called Christendom because it undermined the Church's internal lines of communication.²⁰⁴ Vernacular print media successfully set up alternative communicative networks to the Church's Latin and script-based counterparts. The generation of these new print-based communications in turn generated an imagined space for the building of a community other than that of Christendom. The practice of print standardised the language of its readership, adapting them to "mechanically reproduced print languages capable of dissemination".²⁰⁵ The practices also played a

²⁰¹ Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Idea of the University: A Reexamination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

²⁰² Ward, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*, 34.

²⁰³ Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 238.

²⁰⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 39.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 44.

huge role in the standardisation of the ideas being trafficked. This dual standardisation underpinned the generation of awareness among that readership of what Anderson called clusters of “visible invisibility”. This was an awareness among large clusters of readers of a shared connection between hundreds or even thousands of other readers even when such readers had neither met nor known each other.²⁰⁶

The creation of a new early-modern public via the standardisation of print media became exploited by ruling elites, using their already vast administrative resources to harness print media as an educative instrument, and the ascendancy of liberalism which had encapsulated the aspirations of many regardless of class. These two forces merged to forge newer, larger political communities based on imagined commonalities - the nation - and wrench them from the supervision of the Church. The emergence of the newspaper as the standard form of communication in the 1700s increased the scope of the nation building project exponentially.

Nation & Revolution

The ideal of liberty captured in Locke, the widespread availability of mass produced print media, the connection between intellectuals and the public via the secular university and the forging of the nation converged in a forceful, revolutionary consolidation of the modern nation state in the late 1700s. The state became for many the vehicle for the creation and preservation of individual liberty,²⁰⁷ and the successful creation of the American republic in 1776 provided the impetus to install in Europe, in the place of aristocratic imperialism, a regime that protected the rights of man as framed in liberalism. In 1789, the French Revolution ended centuries of aristocratic rule, putting in its place a republic ostensibly founded on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 44, 77.

²⁰⁷ For an more detailed contemporary explanation of the link between nationalism and liberalism, see Will Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 39-48, 203-20.

The overthrow of the aristocracy in France was significant for two reasons. First, it occurred in what was considered by many to be the oldest partner in the alliance between the Church and sovereign, the “eldest daughter of the Church”.²⁰⁸ Second, whilst the revolution in France was like its American counterpart in that it was driven by liberal ideals, the American Revolution was Lockean, in that it sought to provide neatly separated non-interfering compartments for the religious and political spheres, with one not interfering with another. However, the French edition was the first Rousseauian revolution, in that it was the first liberal revolution to seek to obliterate any “partial societies in the state”, most notably the Church. Indeed, the French Revolution sought the absorption of the Church into the State.²⁰⁹ Traditional ecclesiastical lands were seized, and measures were taken to abolish diocesan structures.²¹⁰ The installation of the French Republic was followed by the passing of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy that sought to turn the Church into an extension of the French state.²¹¹ What seemed to the Church to be an insult became more acute when Napoleon Bonaparte brought the revolution to the Papal States in Italy, capturing and exiling Pope Pius VI in 1799.

The injury to the Church inflicted in France soon spread to other parts of Europe. From 1830, liberals spearheaded rebellions against aristocratic regimes in Belgium, Holland, Portugal, Spain, Germany, Hungary, Romania and Poland. The success of many of these revolutions led to the overturn of old feudal forms of governance, and with that the Church’s temporal institutions rooted in patronage. As in France, the revolutions were followed by the subordination of the Church to the departments of the new revolutionary government. The Church in each country, legally if not in practice, broke away

²⁰⁸ Joe Holland, *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: The Popes Confront the Industrial Age 1740-1958* (New York: Paulist Press, 2003), 35-36.

²⁰⁹ Elshtain, *Sovereignty*, 132.

²¹⁰ Owen Chadwick, *The Popes and European Revolution* (Oxford Clarendon Press, 1981), 578.

²¹¹ Holland, *Modern Catholic Social Teaching*, 37. One should note that in light of the practice of patronage mentioned above, the imposition of *laicite* was not a complete reversal of the hierarchical order between Church and state, but rather a completion of the slow process of subjugation of the Church by the state. See Hittinger, “Introduction to Modern Catholicism,” 6.

from the universal Church,²¹² and the life within each “national” Church was made to disintegrate, as religious were forced out of their monasteries and even made to pursue new careers.²¹³ The most significant of these rebellions occurred in Italy when a largely liberal movement advocating the unification of an Italian nation, militarily seized the papal states in 1870. More than any rebellion, the seizure of the Papal states represented the most graphic demonstration to the Church that the old aristocratic world order, and the Church’s privileged place in it, had come to an end.

The Rise of the Modern Church

Given the scale, scope and intensity of the dismemberment of the Christendom Church, orchestrated by the new liberal sovereigns and even among modern Catholic sovereigns,²¹⁴ that took place in Western Europe as the 1800s unfolded, the Church struggled to provide a coherent response. Ironically, the technological processes that facilitated the growth of the nation state (i.e. the increasing availability of printing presses) also assisted the Church’s response to the liberal state. However, as will be demonstrated below, the reliance on one of the key instruments of modern state-building, ironically made the Church’s defence assume contours of a modern state-building project, through the framing of independent spiritual power in terms of territorial sovereignty.²¹⁵

Joseph de Maistre

Exemplary of this modern trajectory in ecclesial responses was Joseph de Maistre, a diplomat who lived in the Duchy of Savoy at the time of the French Revolution. In 1792, the French Revolutionary Army invaded Savoy and within a few weeks subjected it to the authority of the French Republic. To many Savoyards, the invasion abruptly overturned their world. As Richard Lebrun noted, “it is not unusual [that] images and metaphors of a devastating torrent...were born under the pens of Savoyard

²¹² Chadwick, *The Popes and European Revolution*, 570.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 580.

²¹⁴ Eric O. Hanson, *The Catholic Church in World Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 31-32.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

witnesses”.²¹⁶ It was no different for de Maistre, and his writings reflect a sense of painful nostalgia for the *ancien regime*. With that nostalgia came a desire to see its restoration. The substance of the strategy for that restoration was twofold, and was best summarized by a French contemporary of de Maistre’s, Felicite Robert de Lemannais. Philosophy, said Lemannais, stood near the tomb of peoples, while religion was what guarded their cradles.²¹⁷ The first part of the strategy was a defence against what Juan Donoso Cortes called the “philosophical civilization”²¹⁸ that had brought down the old order. The ascendancy of the scientific method during the Enlightenment had instilled a sense that all things could be explained either by recourse to nature or to the human mind. The *philosophes* of the liberal revolutions similarly sought to ground all knowledge in some natural cause that could never truly be found. Ironically, so argued de Maistre, doing so only led to the creation of fictions, such as the liberal conception of the individual, which had no traction with the real world.²¹⁹

For de Maistre, giving privilege to such fictional and abstract ideas could not endure of its own accord in the real world, which was why the liberal Republics could only be established with the violent destruction of the old order in Europe. The way to restore that order thus had to start from the recognition that ideas came about from one’s interaction with others. All knowledge flows along a series of interlocking links in a historical chain leading back to an original instruction that finds its roots in the relationship between God and Adam. True progress in knowledge thus emerges not from the wholesale destruction of long-standing institutions but from their evolution and perfection. This had an impact on the notion of sovereignty. The proper site of authority thus cannot be located exclusively in the ruled, but from the political institutions that held the nation together over the

²¹⁶ Jean-Louis Darcel, "Roads of Exile: 1792-1817," in *Joseph De Maistre's Life, Thought and Influence : Selected Studies*, ed. Richard A Lebrun (Toronto: McGill-Queens University Press, 2001), 15.

²¹⁷ Felicite Robert de Lamennais, "Essai Sur L'indifference," in *Oeuvre Completes De F. De La Mennais* (Paris: P Daubree et Cailleux, 1837), 1:21.

²¹⁸ Jeffrey P. Johnson, ed., *Juan Donoso Cortes: Selected Works* (Westport: Greenwood, 2000), 63.

²¹⁹ Joseph de Maistre, *Considerations on France*, trans. Richard A Lebrun (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 49.

centuries, which in the case of Europe, was the Monarchy. At the same time, the proper generation of knowledge emerges not from the abandonment of God, but through His guidance via the religious institutions put in place. In the case of Europe, this religious institution was the Church.

As reactionary and nostalgic as de Maistre's defence may first appear to be, Elisha Greifer reminds us that in seeking to provide a proper defence of the old order, he subjected himself to the terms laid down by that order by basing his defence on the abstract reason he so deplored.²²⁰ In addition, a key point of significance of de Maistre's defence of the Church was that it was framed in almost exclusively in terms of the temporal sovereignty asserted by the new political formations he deplored. Using extended analytical tracts, de Maistre rejected the notion of sovereignty rooted in a social contract with the populace, as the leaders of the liberal revolutions asserted. Instead, sovereignty always has a divine origin, manifested in lasting and sacred institutions.²²¹ De Maistre used this as his foundation for positing monarchies as that institution ordained by God, bearing absolute temporal power that is restrained only by the "spiritual" and "non-political" power of the pope, which sits atop de Maistre's hierarchy.²²² As a very important corollary to this, de Maistre rejected outright the idea of a "national Church", advocating that having the Nicene ideal of a "holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church" required the centralisation of ecclesiastical control by the Pope.²²³ The notion of the papacy capping an aristocratic hierarchy of sovereign authority became the key theme in de Maistre's *du Pape* of 1819. It articulated the aspirations of "a new generation that became convinced that the state cannot co-govern with the Church".²²⁴ Yet at the same time, it would also influence the strategies of growing movement of Catholics that sought the reassertion of the

²²⁰ Elisha Greifer, "Joseph De Maistre and the Reaction against the Eighteenth Century," *The American Political Science Review* 55(3) (1961): 593.

²²¹ *Ibid.*: 594.

²²² *Ibid.*: 597.

²²³ Hittinger, "Introduction to Modern Catholicism," 7.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

Church as a polity, in the face of the disintegration of that polity by the liberal revolutions. This current would go down in history as the Ultramontanist movement.

Ultramontanism and the Modern Church-Nation

The Centralisation of Papal Authority

With the tearing down of the feudal aristocratic order by the liberal revolutions, the Ultramontanist current emerged not just from the clerical elites, but also from large swathes of Catholic laity, who formed a vast network of associations that had the primary aim of defending the institutions and prerogatives of the Church that were under attack by the liberal revolutions. With the revolutions becoming more and more chaotic, there was a hankering for the reassertion of the Church's stamp of authority in temporal affairs. The movement was multifaceted. As exemplified by Hugo Lemennais and the journal *L'Avenir*, it had elements that sought to reconcile the Church with the ideals of liberal revolutions, such as the separation of Church and state and the emphasis on individual liberties, whilst still emphasizing the need for "Catholicism's Roman Centre".²²⁵ However, the bulk within the movement focused on institution building, and already had an established tradition to draw on in the form of the post-Reformation jurist Robert Bellarmine. Bellarmine asserted the necessity for a visibly united Church, but did so in an institutional sense along the lines set by the modern nation states they were trying to resist. Bellarmine wrote that the visibility of the Church lay not just in common sacraments, but also in "the rule of recognised pastors and especially the sole vicar of Christ on earth, the Roman Pontiff". For Bellarmine, juridical institutions with sovereign power over territorial space were what made "the Roman people", comparable to "the Kingdom of France, or the Republic of Venice".²²⁶ The thought of the sixteenth century Bellarmine on the institutional nature of the Church, and of the papacy in particular, became highly influential in nineteenth century ecclesiological thought. An early sign of this was the thought of Giovanni Perrone, among the favourite theologians of Pope Gregory XVI. Perrone argued that the study of what it meant to be Christian in the

²²⁵ Holland, *Modern Catholic Social Teaching*, 44.

²²⁶ Robert Bellarmine, Cited in Bernard P. Prusak, *The Church Unfinished: Ecclesiology through the Centuries* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2004), 248.

nineteenth century could not be conceived outside the framework of a treatment of who occupied the right seats of authority, with authority often framed in institutional and jurisdictional terms.²²⁷

Although the emphasis on centralised papal administration had been a recurring theme from the ninth century, Bellarmine's equation of ecclesial identity with institutional and territorial rule became especially influential among theologians in post-revolution Europe. In the nineteenth century, the Ultramontanist movement took up the institutional theme and provided an even greater emphasis on the papal office as the sole point of reference of a "visible, personal embodiment of a universal pastorship" at a time when virtually all visible signs of the security in the faith had disappeared.²²⁸ Asserting an ecclesial identity for the Ultramontanists collapsed into asserting a legally recognised, modern political unit.²²⁹ The pope became the ruler of a people as well as a defender of the faith. A great deal of ecclesial capital became invested the person of the Pope, in particular Pius IX. The papacy experienced a massive resurgence of prestige among both ecclesiastical elites and the Catholic rank and file.²³⁰

Technological Contributors to Ultramontanism

In considering the nurturing of the institutional current of Ultramontanism, one should note the role of the products of the modern technology that spawned the nation state. De Maistre's ideas could not have had the influence it had were it not for the wide circulation brought about by the printing press.²³¹ In the 1800s, the availability of improved printing technology and distribution, as well as the introduction of the telegraph, enabled a much more rapid flow of communications across a much wider area than at the time of Luther. Through the establishment of Catholic periodicals from orders

²²⁷ Ibid., 249.

²²⁸ Richard F. Costigan, *Rohrbacher and the Ecclesiology of Ultramontanism* (Vatican City: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1980), xx.

²²⁹ Yves Congar, *L'église: De Saint Augustin à l'époque Moderne* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1970), 381-84.

²³⁰ Chadwick, *The Popes and European Revolution*, 570.

²³¹ Costigan, *Ecclesiology of Ultramontanism*, xxiv.

with strong papal loyalties, like the Jesuit *La Civiltà Cattolica*, the ultramontane currents within the Church were able to become much more communicable to larger sections of the European Catholic laity and clericacy.²³² The network of lay associations also provided readily available sites in which de Maistre's ideas, as well as others channeled through these periodicals, could be discussed, digested and proliferated amongst the laity. This intensified in the Catholic sections of the populace the sense that their being Catholic, meant also their being part of a much larger transnational community.

At the same time, it intensified their association between their identification as Catholics with a sense of loyalty to the papacy. Devotion to the Papacy across the region was also better catered for with the arrival of modern mass transport that made pilgrimages to Rome possible for greater numbers of Catholics. The availability of these communicative technologies, and the harnessing of those technologies by those loyal to the papacy, further assisted in the centralising the currents of goodwill expressed in many sectors of the Church, making it tighter and more effective.²³³ This enabled the solidification of the Ultramontanists into a regional sodality in the 1800s.

The use of modern tools of communication as the foundation for the Church's reassertion together with the centralising of devotion to the papacy meant that as the Church sought to resist the encroachments of the modern nation state, it framed itself in terms of the modern state. This is reflected in the dominant current in Ultramontanism. This strand favoured de Maistre's positioning of the pope at the apex of any social hierarchy, but did not follow his prescription of re-establishing the alliance between the bureaucratic powers of the aristocracy and the spiritual power of the papacy. Instead, this strand of ultramontane thought saw the way forward in the establishment of the

²³² Etienne Menard, *L'ecclesiologie Hier Et Aujourd'hui* (Paris: Desclee et Brouwer, 1966), 40.

²³³ Roger Aubert, *La Pontificat De Pie IX*, ed. Augustin Fliche and Victor Martin, vol. 21, *L'histoire De L'Eglise* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1963), 276-77.

Church's own state bureaucracies to bolster populist support for the Pope and papal oversight over the rest of the Church.²³⁴

Diplomatic Contributors to Ultramontanism

The notion of the Church as state was further reinforced by an already well established practice of concluding concordats with ruling sovereigns. Since the twelfth century, the concordat acted to delineate the boundaries of responsibilities between the Church and the sovereign. This tool became vital with the rise of the nation state, and its expanding incorporation of fields of human activity into its own exclusive jurisdiction. Such developments created points of friction in areas where both Church and State would claim authority, most notably the areas of education and marriage²³⁵. But as the state increasingly asserted itself through the medium of legislation, the practice of concluding concordats became more a practice of settling juridical boundaries, and sought to protect the rights of the Church as a juridical body. The crowning glory in this vein of ecclesial action came in 1815 at the Congress of Vienna. Following the defeat of Napoleon, the Church wrangled from the triumphant powers recognition of the Church's territorial claims over the Papal States.²³⁶ The increasingly juridical style of Church life provided the underpinning for the establishment of strictly legal offices and ecclesiastical chains of command which were characteristic of a modern state. This trend of seeking recognition of the Church as a strictly legal entity would frame the Church's ecclesial identity and its responses to violence for many decades to come.

The Emergence of the “Social Question”

Structural Violence and Pastoral Challenges of Industry

The enacting of the Church as a legal entity with its own juridically recognized offices exercising temporal forms of sovereignty as an attempt to resist the encroachments of the liberal revolutions,

²³⁴ Roger Aubert, Johannes Beckmann, and Patrick J Corish, *The Church between Revolution and Restoration*, trans. Peter Becker (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 91-92.

²³⁵ Camille M. Cianfarra, *The War and the Vatican* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1944), 95.

²³⁶ Hanson, *The Catholic Church in World Politics*, 32.

formed the backdrop against which the Church was forced to turn its attention to “the social question”. The liberal revolutions had not only overturned the old aristocratic order. The bourgeois-driven revolutions had also overturned the old feudal economic order that the aristocrats favored. This removal of old feudal barriers to free trade facilitated the acceleration and proliferation of a bourgeois economic order on a national scale. This was an order characterized by large scale mechanised industrialisation, a concentration of ownership of factories by massive corporations, and an economic life characterised by mass consumption of standardised goods. Eric Hobsbawm noted that the rule by the nation state in practice was the rule by what he called “the ‘grand bourgeoisie’ of bankers, big industrialists and *sometimes* top civil servants”.²³⁷ While crude forms of commercial practice were already in place at the time the printing press, the consolidation of the nation state accelerated and consolidation of capitalism as a self-contained, profit-orientated mode of production, characterised by the arrival of the factory, the growth of the massive urban centers, and the concomitant dwindling of the country hamlet.

Technologically, small-scale manual and water-powered forms of production were giving way to faster, larger-scale mechanised modes, primarily through steam powered industrial plant. Commercially, the increased rate of return for investment in these latter forms of production ensured a steady decline in the former. Industrial production models also favoured the concentration of workers and plant into large urban complexes. With rural employment becoming increasingly scarce, many villagers were by necessity recruited into the urban industrial workforce, and teemed into large crowded cities.

The proliferation of industrialised economic configurations throughout Europe gave birth to new social formations. The capital intensive nature of the acquisition and use of these machines solidified monied entrepreneurs and wealthy aristocrats into a single social conglomerate that wielded massive

²³⁷ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution 1789-1848* (New York: New American Library, 1962), 139. Emphasis added.

economic and societal power. The mechanisation of production had also homogenized the workforce into industrial machine operators.²³⁸ However, the lives of these new workers, as Paul Misner described, proved to be the “worst of both the old agrarian and the new industrial order”. A huge underclass of working poor was created, and the life of the urban worker was almost, without exception, defined by a fourteen hour working day or longer, subsistence remunerations with next to no workplace protections, and cramped and often hazardous working and living conditions. The industrial working landscape recruited workers of all ages, so from a young age workers in the urban centres were systematically incorporated into a life characterised by mind-numbing monotony, crushing poverty and often despair (signified by high levels of alcoholism among the working poor).²³⁹

Already reeling from the institutional challenges posed by the modern state, the Church also faced pastoral challenges due to the new social formations emerging from the processes of industrialisation. The exodus from the countryside to the cities severely undermined the traditional agrarian base of European Church’s congregations. The new massive urban parishes posed new challenges to pastors. They were much bigger and less manageable than the rural parish (a fact exacerbated by a priest shortage). At the same time, the new worker congregant, forced to live in a decrepit social reality that had little scope for improvement, had new more temporally oriented afflictions imposed on him, for which the urban pastor and the Catholic urban ghetto was unable to provide solace.²⁴⁰ Resort to popular piety, and its emphasis on future heavenly bliss, could provide little comfort in the temporal here and now. The lack of material solace for the workers was exacerbated further by the stratification of Church life along class lines, which often brought the tensions between classes in the workplace into close contact with local parish life. The often systemic inability of the priest to simultaneously pastor to conflicting classes of parishioners in a coherent

²³⁸ Paul Misner, *Social Catholicism in Europe: From the Onset of Industrialisation to the First World War* (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 23-5.

²³⁹ Ibid., 29.

²⁴⁰ Holland, *Modern Catholic Social Teaching*, 111.

manner, as well as the inability of traditional spiritual resources to deal with the new temporal problems that weighed heavily on the Catholic proletariat, demanded a new response from the Church. However, in its search for that response, the Church would also face a new challenge for the hearts and minds of Catholic workers: Socialism.

The Socialist Alternative to Catholicism

In the face of these pastoral challenges there grew a hardening of the Catholic proletariat against the faith, as many became drawn to a Socialist alternative. All workers, Catholics included, who went to work in the cities faced worsening conditions characterized by crushing poverty, decrepit living conditions (if they had housing at all) and inhumane work circumstances. In seeking to consolidate papal prerogatives and facing the radical redistribution of congregations away from the countryside to the cities, the Church was ill equipped both institutionally and pastorally to tend to the novel problems of this new proletariat, beyond an insistence to look beyond one's material discomforts for a better afterlife. The pastoral vacuum left by the Church was soon filled by the ascendancy of Socialism.

The attraction to the new ideology was twofold. It provided an overarching theory of history that directly interfaced with immanent material realities, namely the conditions the workers had to live and work in. But more importantly, socialism's emphasis on the proletarian revolution as the form of resistance to the capitalist order provided a concrete program of action that envisioned a central role for the worker in decision making processes.²⁴¹ Gradually, the growth in the number of those that explicitly articulated and vigorously championed the rights of workers outpaced those within the Church.

While many Catholics were sympathetic to the temporal program of socialism, the eruption of violent socialist rebellions ensured that their pastors, at least initially, would reject it. Condemnation by

²⁴¹ Ibid., 50.

pastors and Bishops of any involvement with Socialism or its advocates created an acute tension in the Catholic workers' loyalties between the Church and the socialist movement that for the moment, seemed to understand their condition and aspirations. Many workers resolved that tension by eventually leaving the Church and joining the socialists' rebellion. Indeed, in many parts of Europe, previously Catholic workers turned against the Church, and joined in the socialists' condemnation of the institutions of the Church as lackeys for the wealthy industrialists.²⁴² Already facing the dismantling of traditional prerogatives by the liberal revolutions, the rising tide of vitriolic rhetoric and revolutionary fervor from the socialists had put the Church squarely on the defensive. As Derek Holmes notes, the impression that the Church was under attack from all sides caused those in authority in the Church to "believe that there was an absolute dichotomy between Catholicism and the contemporary world", which favoured a strategy of "a Catholic withdrawal from modern society".²⁴³

Catholicism's Response to the Social Question

Not all were content with the idea of a comprehensive ecclesial retreat and leaving the proletariat to the socialists. Having had close personal contact with the workers and their experiences of being ravaged by the industrial revolution, some pastors and Bishops attempted to analyse and address the "social question" directly.²⁴⁴ Laymen started charities to alleviate the worst effects that systemic inequality and poverty generated, along with their concomitant social ills.²⁴⁵ However, to a growing number of Catholic observers, it was becoming apparent that resort to the remedial measure of charity was insufficient as a distinctly Christian response. Greater attention was needed on the

²⁴² Misner, *Social Catholicism*, 114.

²⁴³ Derek Holmes, *The Triumph of the Holy See: A Short History of the Papacy in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Burns & Oates, 1978), 134-35.

²⁴⁴ Richard Marens, "Timing Is Everything: Historical Contingency as a Factor in the Impact of Catholic Social Teaching Upon Managerial Processes," *Journal of Business Ethics* 57 (2005): 291.

²⁴⁵ One example of this was the Society of St. Joseph, which was formed in 1836 to provide recreational alternatives to drinking for the workers. See Misner, *Social Catholicism*, 59.

emerging economic and political conditions that made the greater resort to charity necessary,²⁴⁶ which often centred on the need for the reform of the capitalist system itself.

Wilhelm von Ketteler

Spearheading this thread of Catholic thought was the parish priest of the main Church in Berlin, Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler. Being in one of the largest metropolitan parishes in one of the most rapidly industrializing nations of Europe, he was intimately acquainted not just with the institutional challenges of caring for a vast congregation, but also the social ills brought about by the industrial revolution and the appeal of socialism to his congregation. According to Paul Misner, Ketteler saw an urgent need for the Church to provide a comprehensive response to an emerging and very tangible evil.²⁴⁷

As a priest, he spoke extensively on the inequalities and its attendant miseries brought about by industrial Europe. An inaugural general assembly of German Catholics in Frankfurt gave him the opportunity to draw the attention of Catholics across the country to what he would call “the social question”. This was elaborated further in a series of sermons Ketteler was invited to give in the prominent Mainz Cathedral.

In these presentations, it is important to note the influence of ultramontanist on Ketteler. He rejected the idea that a united Germany would resolve the plight of the workers. Only the Catholic Church, he argued, had the solution to this urgent problem. In his sermons, Ketteler saw the root of the worker’s misery in liberalism. By insisting on the liberty of the individual at the expense of established social structures and traditions, liberalism created in practice “an atomised...collectivity...indifferent or antagonistic to one another”. Only the restoration of tradition, in particular the authentic tradition of

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 39.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 90-91.

Catholicism, could reverse the devastating consequences of industrial Europe.²⁴⁸ At the same time, Ketteler provided a crucial point that would prove decisive in later thought on Catholic corporatism. While Ketteler insisted on the need for the Church in resolving society's ills, he also acknowledged that the response to liberalism required the cooperation of other elements within society. On the specific issue of the worker question, he wrote that the State actually had a role to play in improving the lot of the workers by intervening when necessary. Specifying the conditions when such intervention was necessary required the State to be in cooperation with workers and their representative bodies.²⁴⁹

Ketteler's appointment as the Bishop of Mainz provided greater institutional clout to his social concern in the eyes of those within the church. He continued to press for the Church to engage the social question both in his pastoral work and in his writing, and in so doing cemented his place in the European Catholic imagination as a pioneer in the Church's early engagement with the social question.²⁵⁰ Among Catholics in the aristocracy and emerging middle class, Ketteler provided the impetus for the formation of many study groups all over Europe that sought to further refine his thought and develop responses to the challenge that socialism posed. Many of these groups' perceptions of the social question were refracted through the lens of the now ascendant Ultramontanist movement, and framed their responses within the horizon of defending the temporal and juridical privileges and prerogatives of the Church. In the case of the social question, this aspiration was largely framed in terms of showing the Church's omnicompetence. Like Ketteler,

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 92.

²⁴⁹ John Molony, *The Worker Question: A New Historical Perspective on Rerum Novarum* (North Blackburn: Collins Dove, 1991), 20.

²⁵⁰ Marvin L. Krier Mich, *Catholic Social Teaching and Movements* (Mystic, CT: Twenty Third Publications, 1998), 6-7.

many of these groups worked under the impression that the Catholic Church had “reserved the definite solution of the social question”, with the State lacking the power to solve it.²⁵¹

The Fribourg Union

Of the projects to extend Ketteler’s thought, the most prominent was that of the Fribourg Union. Founded by a group of aristocrats, and supported by Bishop Mermillod of Fribourg in Switzerland, the union functioned as an early “think tank” from 1885 to 1891. The Union – really a network of study cells - met annually to discuss early research of the social question in light of Catholic teaching, as well as draft position papers.

The Union was key in bringing to prominence the theme of corporatism in Catholic thought. Liberalism was criticised for proclaiming the “independence of the individual” but destroying “solidarity”, a condition that enabled the exploitation of workers. On the other hand, socialism was criticised not just for its atheism, but also for proposing violent revolution as the sole instrument for social change. In response, the Union took up a strand of thought from a convert to Ketteler’s views, Karl von Vogelsang, who led the Catholic Social-Political Free Union in Germany and Austria. Vogelsang, drawing on “romantic traditionalism”, saw that the best form of change lay in the gradual coordination of “organic, intermediate associations” joined in a federated network.²⁵² Such a system provided a middle way between atomising liberalism and homogenising socialism through a negotiated corporatism, that assured at once a replacement of “horizontal class divisions” with “vertical hierarchical divisions of various broad economic sectors”²⁵³, as well as “introduce self-

²⁵¹ Wilhelm von Ketteler, cited in Edward Cahill, “The Catholic Social Movement: Historical Aspects”, in *Readings in Moral Theology No. 5: Official Catholic Social Teaching*, ed. Charles E Curran and Richard McCormick (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), 5.

²⁵² Michael J. Schuck, “Early Modern Roman Catholic Social Thought, 1740-1890,” in *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: Commentaries and Interpretations*, ed. Kenneth R Himes and Lisa Sowle Cahill (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2005), 111.

²⁵³ Cited in Thomas A Shannon, “Rerum Novarum,” in *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: Commentaries and Interpretations*, ed. Kenneth R Himes and Lisa Sowle Cahill (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2005), 144.

management and reduce bureaucracy”²⁵⁴ and ensured, in his words “the full solidarity of all citizens, the congruence of economic, social and political positions [and] the clear definition of national tasks”.²⁵⁵ This idea of “corporatism” became the central tenet of the Fribourg Union’s remedy to industrial society. As will be shown, the Fribourg Union’s work on corporatism would also become the central plank in addressing the social question within the Church as a whole.

Perfect Society Ecclesiology and the Social Question

Ultramontanism & Vatican I

Whilst the Fribourg Union was the vehicle that turned the Church’s attention to the social question, it was the Ultramontanists that provided the ecclesiology by which the social question was engaged. The turning to the social question did not diminish the ecclesiological significance of the Ultramontanists. Indeed, one must note that the thought in the Fribourg Union was framed within an Ultramontanist ecclesiology. Indeed, an ecclesiological focus on the juridical protection of the offices of the Church, and especially that of the Pope, remained prominent well into the twentieth century.

With the loss of prestige suffered at the hands of liberal revolutionaries, the loss of congregations to socialists, and with the onset of a new wave of violence between proletarian workers and bourgeois industrialists and their respective supporters, many turned to the Church not just as a focal point of spiritual solace, but also as a focal point of temporal order.²⁵⁶ At the same time, the assertion of state authority made the resort to papal authority an attractive counterpoint, a point reflected in the increasing emphasis on the treatment of jurisdiction and authority in the study of theology.²⁵⁷ This desire for a restoration of order and normalization of chains of authority in what was a chaotic period

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Cited in Schuck, "Early Modern Roman Catholic Social Thought, 1740-1890," 111.

²⁵⁶ Holland, *Modern Catholic Social Teaching*, 50.

²⁵⁷ Prusak, *The Church Unfinished*, 249.

underpinned the success the Ultramontanist movement, and in the first Vatican Council of 1870, they achieved a clear victory.

The council was summoned in 1868, but difficulties in travel brought about by the wars in Europe meant that it did not convene until the same year that the Papal States were lost to the now-unified Italian State, where the reactionary attitude of the Church reached its peak. In the face of the aggrandisement of the modern state as the pinnacle of authority and of progress and the ridiculing of the Church as the preeminent obstacle to that progress, it is unsurprising that in a paragraph of the initial draft schema of the Council's Dogmatic Constitution, the Council Fathers would declare the Church to have

...all the marks of a *true society*. Christ did not leave this society undefined and without a set form...The Church is not part nor member of any other society and is not mingled in any way with any other society. It is so perfect in itself that it is distinct from all human societies and stands far above them²⁵⁸

In the face of the liberal and socialist proclamations of a *perfectible* society manifested in the modern state, the Church thus set itself apart as *perfection* itself: The Church was the “perfect society”. This claim had three foundational aspects, which drew from the primary analogue of “threefold office of Christ as prophet, king, and priest” that acquired prominence during this period. The Church, as the body of Christ, would take on Christ's tripartite role of teaching, ruling and sanctifying.²⁵⁹

Church as King

Though it was not explicit in the wording of the Conciliar formulation, the theological emphasis on authority implied that the office of prophet and priest were inextricably intertwined with that of the

²⁵⁸ Cited in Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church: A Critical Assessment of the Church in All Its Aspects* (Dublin: Gill & MacMillan, 1976), 33-34. Emphasis added.

²⁵⁹ Prusak, *The Church Unfinished*, 250, Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 34.

king. The Church's role to teach and sanctify could only be fulfilled if its legitimate authority in world affairs was protected.

This would make sense only if one understood the Council's attempt to maintain the medieval conceptualisation of the relations between the spiritual and the temporal. Unlike Modernity's insistence on the necessary independence of temporal matters from spiritual interference, the Church reaffirmed the two spheres as intimately integrated. At the same time, the spiritual ruled the temporal. The two spheres were in an instrumental relationship where the temporal sphere was oriented towards the ultimate benefit of the spiritual. For the Ultramontanists and the council fathers, the Church was the pinnacle of this integrated order. The pope, enjoying "the primacy of jurisdiction over the whole Church of God",²⁶⁰ was the overseer of all that took place under it and was the ultimate beneficiary of all socioeconomic and political activity. All temporal activity had to be oriented towards the salvation of souls and the glory of God and the Church as the earthly manifestation of the kingdom of heaven.²⁶¹ This came in the form of calls for the privileging of the Church within secular institutional life, such as the establishment of Catholicism as the official state religion. Building upon the network of lay organisations, the Church also adopted a strategy of competing with the institutions of the secular state by setting up paralleling modern structures over which the Church could assert a more direct chain of command. These paralleling structures included schools, universities, welfare institutions, hospitals, newspapers and book publishers. Even unions and professional associations and student movements would find exclusively Catholic alternatives.²⁶² In so bringing these diverse elements into a proper order under the supervision of the Church, according to the council fathers, the way was paved for temporal harmony.

²⁶⁰ *Pastor Aeternus*, cited in Prusak, *The Church Unfinished*, 256.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 250.

²⁶² Holland, *Modern Catholic Social Teaching*, 114.

Church as Prophet and Priest

Subjecting the institutional order to the Church's supervision also paved the way for the Church to dispense its teaching role. The Church, through the offices of the papacy, appropriated for itself the "supreme power of teaching" in matters of faith and morals.²⁶³ Despite the rather narrow confines of the clause itself, the attitude that informed it was an Ultramontane one that asserted ecclesiastical competence in all things. It was an attitude that regarded the Church as a teacher of a disciple, where wisdom residing in the formal hierarchy of the Church is handed down to the disciple as a passive recipient.²⁶⁴ According to the Council fathers, removing the world from the Church's supervision also removed the world from the benefit of the Church's identifying truth and error. The world, removed from its teacher, "stray[ed] from the path of true piety" and was "led away by strange doctrines, wrongfully confusing nature and grace, human science and divine faith".²⁶⁵ Not knowing the truth resulted in the corruption of human enterprises and ultimately the fragmentation of a harmonious whole "into many sects".²⁶⁶ Restoring these sects into a state of temporal harmony required the Church to not just supervise the world. Because the Church was the deposit of the definite solution of temporal matters, the Church also had authority to teach the world in the running of temporal affairs. The link between these two offices lay in the Church's sanctifying office, where Catholics are put on the path to salvation via their reception of the sacraments dispensed by those in the hierarchy.

Leo XIII as Interpretive Authority

Contextual Factors of the Papal Response to the Social Question

The hope to turn the Church's attention to the social question, the aspirations to defend the Church through the offices of the pope in the face of the liberal and socialist revolutions, and the trend

²⁶³ *Pastor Aeternus*, cited in Prusak, *The Church Unfinished*, 256.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 249-50.

²⁶⁵ Pius IX, "The Vatican Council Session III: Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith," in *Dogmatic Canons and Decrees* (Rocford: Gill and Macmillan, 1870), 216-17.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 215.

towards ecclesiastical centralization as a means to fend off these encroachments, came to converge on the person of Gioacchino Vincenzo Pecci, who would later become Pope Leo XIII. Understanding how this convergence came to be requires understanding the fields that were put in place in this period, and this requires a brief biographical exploration of Pecci. He was born from a minor noble family in 1810, in a region that was still part of the Papal States. A career cleric, he spent part of his clerical life as an administrator in these states. From 1818, he attended a college in Viterbo, run by the Jesuits, the very order that was at the vanguard of the Ultramontanist movement. As part of his advanced training, Pecci went to the *Accademia dei Nobili Ecclesiastici* in 1832, which Hittinger says is “typical for young men who sought careers in the *prelature* – a quasi lay bureaucracy governing the Papal States”.²⁶⁷ From the earliest stages of his career, Pecci was already immersed in a milieu that maintained the Church as a bureaucratic institution, which doubtlessly had a great influence on his preferred mode of operations when he became pope.

As a priest, Pecci was recruited into the diplomatic service, which while further immersing him in the world of an institutionally-minded Church, also proved instrumental in turning his mind to “the social question”. In 1843, he was made the papal nuncio to Brussels. This posting gave Pecci the opportunity to explore mines, factories and shipyards in much of central Europe.²⁶⁸ There he was able to see firsthand the ravages of the Industrial Revolution,²⁶⁹ and was driven to alleviate the sufferings it caused. Evidence of this can be found in the fact that when he was appointed the Bishop of Perugia three years later, he supported the charities that were established and started several charitable initiatives of his own, including the founding of homes for children and the elderly, a soup kitchen, and a bank that issued low interest loans to the poor.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁷ Russell Hittinger, "Pope Leo XIII (1810-1903): Commentary," in *The Teachings of Modern Roman Catholicism: On Law, Politics and Human Nature*, ed. John Witte Jr and Frank S Alexander (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 40.

²⁶⁸ James E. Ward, "Leo XIII: 'the Diplomat Pope'," *The Review of Politics* 28(1) (1966): 49.

²⁶⁹ Hittinger, "Leo XIII," 41.

²⁷⁰ Benno Kuhne, *Unser Heiliger Vater Papst Leo XIII: In Seinem Leben Und Wirken* (New York: Benzinger, 1880), 78.

However, Pecci's attempts to alleviate the sufferings of those affected by the industrial revolution had to contend with his efforts to resist the liberal Piedmont regime, which forcibly occupied Perugia in 1859, and instituted the familiar slew of laicist measures, including the seizure of ecclesiastical land holdings, suppression of orders and wrenching the authority over marriage and education away from the Church and bringing it under state jurisdiction.²⁷¹ Given his ecclesiastical career outlined above, it is not surprising that he would be sympathetic to the ultramontanist programme of restoring, at least in part, the *ancien regime*.

His preoccupation with defending the prerogatives of the Church against the Piedmont regime did not mean that the social question disappeared from Pecci's agenda. When Pecci was elected pope in 1878, he had the unique opportunity to engage it. The Fribourg Union was key in informing Pope Leo of the contours of this question. Having sat through seven rounds of intensive discussion and research, the union had accumulated a vast amount of material outlining the areas of concern, as well as proposed solutions. In 1888, the union caught the attention of the Pope, who requested reports on the Union's annual proceedings. Between then and 1891, the pope was a recipient of a steady flow of papers, dealing with issues such as "the dignity of labour...minimum wages...property ownership...opposition to economic liberalism...and a corporatist organisation of society". The Fribourg Union set the boundaries within which Leo would frame his response on the social question.²⁷²

While the Union framed the *content* of Leo's response to the social question, the papal *method* of responding was profoundly shaped by the Ultramontanists. Taking action on behalf of the workers was framed within the *telos* of the "formation of institutions favourable to Christian morality", which

²⁷¹ Hittinger, "Leo XIII," 41.

²⁷² Shannon, "Rerum Novarum," 144.

in turn was framed within the consolidation of juridical ecclesiastical governance structures.²⁷³ Under Leo, the Church's primary response to the "social question" lay in the deployment of the Church's teaching office via the papal *magisterium*. An early sign of this was in his 1881 encyclical *Diuturnum*, which dealt with the issue of the origins of civil power. In it, Leo, lamented the disintegration or abandonment of the Christian religion, which as the latter half of the encyclical indicates, Leo associated with the Pre-Reformation Catholic Church. Under "the government of the Catholic Church", where the Christian religion "penetrated into the customs and institutions of States", the commonwealth was a paragon of "stability and order".²⁷⁴ The Reformation, however, in seeking to affirm rebellion against ecclesial authority, began a process whereby "heresy" fed into the "false philosophies" which postulated a liberty to choose what temporal or spiritual authority to submit to, which in turn fuelled in the political turmoil of the 1800s.²⁷⁵ Whilst accepting certain conditions where the liberty to choose one's governor can be tolerated, Leo rejected the social contractarian theories that enshrined this liberty as a right. Civil community was a "natural community" ordained by God,²⁷⁶ as was the authority to rule that community. As partakers of God's authority, the office of rulers had to be infused with a "sacred majesty" in order to command greater "reverence and love" of the populace.²⁷⁷

This is the reason for the ruler's need for the "protection of religion", in particular the Catholic Church.²⁷⁸ Order required that the offices of state be subordinate to the institutions of the Church, in

²⁷³ Misner, *Social Catholicism*, 219-20.

²⁷⁴ Leo XIII, *Diuturnum* (1881), 3

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_29061881_diuturnum_en.html.

This document will hereinafter be cited as "*D*".

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 23

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 12

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 21

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 25

particular the office of the “Roman Pontiff”. The institutional roles of the Church were further expanded in *Immortale Dei*, promulgated in 1885. Citing Jesus’ mandate of “unrestrained authority in regard to things sacred” imparted to the Apostles, Leo reserved for the Church “the true power of making laws” and the power of “judging and punishing”.²⁷⁹ While Leo qualified the Church’s authority by reference to spheres of proper competence in which State and Church had exclusive authority, civil authority still needed moral guidance, to which “the Church of Christ is the true and sole teacher”.²⁸⁰ Proper governance thus needed the close coordination of both bodies, with the teaching authority of the Church supervising the administrative authority of the State.

In dispensing the Church’s teaching function, Leo was in a uniquely favourable position. Apart from the Ultramontanists’ channelling of social capital to the papacy as the central node of life in the Church, there was also the acceleration in advances in communications technology to rapidly disseminate papal announcements. The availability of improved printing technology and the telegraph had irreversibly changed the nature of papal pronouncements. The arrival of the newspaper had turned Europe into a continent saturated with rapid information flows, and enabled the dissemination of papal pronouncements in every European city within hours. According to Hittinger, this change in technology had the effect of turning papal pronouncements from legal decisions addressing isolated parties to teaching documents capable of reaching mass audiences hungry for information.²⁸¹ The encyclical had evolved into a pulpit from which the Church as the perfect society would preach to the ends of modern world, and would lay the foundation for the formation of what would be known as Catholic Social Teaching.

²⁷⁹ Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei* (1885), 11

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_01111885_immortale-dei_en.html.

This document will hereinafter be cited as “*ID*”.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 32

²⁸¹ Hittinger, “Leo XIII,” 43.

In Leo's mind, dealing with the social question was more than a cynical ploy in winning back the allegiance of the dwindling Catholic proletariat. It was also a question of responding to the revolutionary violence, both liberal and socialist, that was unleashed by the consolidation of the state. In Leo's mind, the internal disorder brought about by revolutionary violence and the counterviolence of the ruling elites within the new states of Europe threatened a repeat of a regional conflict, not a remote prospect given the revolutionary upheavals and the Napoleonic wars barely seventy years before. Indeed, just twenty-five years before, in 1853, the Crimean War engulfed countries from Eastern and Western Europe and the Ottoman Empire. It dramatically redefined the nature of warfare, both in the demonstration of the devastating effects of new weapons technology that dramatically increased their killing capacity, and in the rapid communication of events in the field to mass audiences on the home front via new communications technology. The widespread awareness of the devastation of the war across the continent, and the lack of decisive victories on either side, severely undercut the notion of a "good war" in the public imagination. This war, according to Trevor Royle, had defeated everybody.²⁸² Despite this, the continued post-bellum accumulation of more advanced weapons made Leo uneasy with leaving the mainly restrictive formula of the Just War doctrine unaltered as the governing paradigm on the issue of violence. This he indicated in an 1889 audience with the College of Cardinals

A vast number of soldiers and stupendous armaments may for a while prevent an enemy attacking, but they can never secure a sure and lasting peace. Moreover, armaments which are a menace are more likely to hasten than to retard a conflict; they fill the mind with disquietude for the future, and...impose such burdens upon nations that it is doubtful if war would not be more bearable²⁸³

²⁸² Trevor Royle, *Crimea: The Great Crimean War, 1854-1856* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2001).

²⁸³ Cited in Ronald G. Musto, *The Catholic Peace Tradition* (New York: Peace Books, 1986), 170

In light of the new political and technological developments that occurred in the last century, Leo was eager to find a new grounding for peace. However, Leo demonstrated the profound influence of the “Perfect Society” ecclesiology’s emphasis on maintaining order as the undergirding of peace. In the same address to the Cardinals, Leo remarked that “peace is based upon good order...for empires as well as for individuals...”²⁸⁴

Rerum Novarum and the “Beauty of Good Order”

Leo’s major attempt to engage the twofold challenge of finding an answer to “the social question”, and providing a commentary on a new form of order as the basis of peace was his landmark encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, promulgated on 15th May 1891. From the opening paragraphs, one can see the clear influence of “Perfect Society” ecclesiology permeating the document. While the notion of order was not explicitly explored in the document, it did serve as the logical underpinning of all the teachings in the document. In addition, there was a clear indication of the necessity for the Church’s supervision of that order. A large part of the opening paragraphs are dedicated to justifying the Church’s competence in dealing with something that, at first glance, had veered off outside the periphery of the Church’s “spiritual” focus.

Bringing the matter of the “social question” into the supervisory orbit of the Church rested with the notion of the Church as an omniscient teacher to mankind, which was implicit in the ecclesiology of the First Vatican Council. In paragraph sixteen of *Rerum Novarum*, Leo as Pope proclaimed his ability to

...approach the subject with confidence...for no practical solution of this question will be found apart from the intervention of religion and of the Church...It is We who are the chief guardian of religion and the chief dispenser of what pertains to the Church; and by keeping silence we would seem to neglect the duty incumbent on us...It is the Church that insists on the authority of the Gospel, upon those teaching whereby the conflict can be brought to an end, or rendered, at least,

²⁸⁴ Cited in Ibid.

far less bitter; the Church uses her efforts not only to enlighten the mind, but to direct by her precepts the life and conduct of each and all.²⁸⁵

It was the insistence of ecclesial omnicompetence that allowed Leo, as head of the Church, to set out to teach “on the condition of the working classes”. The influence of the Ultramontanists soon becomes apparent when, as an antidote to what seems to be a modern insistence on original chaos, Leo prescribes a teaching that gravitates around the pole of original order. The key paragraph that demonstrates this is found in his critique of Socialism and its assertion of class driven conflict as a fundamental, unchangeable social category

The great mistake made...is to take up with the notion that class is naturally hostile to class, and that the wealth and the working men are intended by nature to live in mutual conflict...²⁸⁶

Instead, Leo spoke of social life having an original “symmetry” and “beauty of good order” like that of the “human frame”. Using this analogy, the pope began to spell out a society founded on an original “harmony and agreement”, and a “beauty of good order”.²⁸⁷

In elaborating on just how this harmony is established in the paragraphs that follow, Leo demonstrates the clear influence of the corporatism of the Fribourg union. Like the human body, Leo spoke of society having a “suitable arrangement of the different parts” that maintains “the balance of

²⁸⁵ Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum* (1891), 16

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum_en.html.

This document will hereinafter be cited as “*RN*”.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 19

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

the body politics”.²⁸⁸ In an industrial age, Leo spoke of the interdependency of capital and labour, and that one could not exist without the other. Thus, restoring the original “beauty of good order” required “mutual agreement” between all the concerned parties in the body politics. This involved not just the poles of capital and labour, but also that of “public authorities” (the state). In addition, the body politics for Leo encompassed a range of other bodies that mediated the three poles. A “suitable arrangement of the different parts” required the supervision of all these parts, and for Leo, there was no agency more qualified to supervise these parts than the Church

Now, in preventing such strife as this, and in uprooting it, the efficacy of Christian institutions is marvellous and manifold. First of all, there is no intermediary more powerful than religion (whereof the Church is the interpreter and guardian) in drawing the rich and the working class together, by reminding each of its duties to the other, and especially of the obligations of justice.²⁸⁹

Leo’s placing of the Church at the centre of any corporatist arrangement stemmed from his assertion that the Church was the fulcrum of societal wellbeing. Contemporary society, said Leo, was “renovated in every part by Christian institutions”.²⁹⁰ Therefore, the health of the institutions of contemporary society rested on its ability to cohere with those of the Church

And if human society is to be healed now, in no other way can it be healed save by a return to Christian life and Christian institutions. When a society is perishing, the wholesome advice to give to those who would restore it is to call it to the principles from which it sprang...Hence, to fall away from its primal constitution implies disease; to go back to it, recovery²⁹¹.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 27

²⁹¹ Ibid.

Recovering that harmony between all the different segments of society thus required their subjecting themselves to the authority of the Church, and the religious practices that bound all the different segments together. This explains why after the spelling out corporatism as the instructing principle, the practical prescriptions that immediately followed concerned ensuring that religious observances were met by all, in particular by the workers.²⁹² The Church recognised the impact of long hours, intensive labour and the repetitive nature of factory work. Not only did such work wear out the bodies of worker, but it also “stupef[ied] their minds”. These conditions leave the worker in a less than ideal state to fulfil those religious observances, but the long hours required of them also meant that even if they so desired it, they were impeded from availing themselves to the means whereby the Church could properly tend to their souls. To avail the worker to the Church’s services, there was the need for the State to observe “obligation of the cessation from work and labour on Sundays and certain holy days”. At the same time, it was necessary to ensure that workers are protected against “the cruelty of men of greed, who use human beings as mere instruments for money-making”. The protection against such men lay in ensuring conditions that enabled workers to fulfil religious observances. The protection of the physical arrangements that tends to the sacramental lives of workers becomes the primary means by which the material conditions of the workers could be improved.²⁹³ Maintaining the sacramental lives of workers is important also because it provided the basis the Church to dispense its duty to “educate”. In this educative role, Leo saw the central role of the juridical institutions of the Church, namely “the intermediary of her bishops and clergy [to diffuse] her salutary teachings”.²⁹⁴

The implementation of these teachings demonstrates again the thoroughly corporatist orientation of the encyclical. Leo spoke of the necessity for all sectors of the Church and civil society to cooperate

²⁹² Ibid., 20

²⁹³ Ibid., 41

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 26

and ensure they were “of one mind”. Ensuring this required the necessary role of interconnected collectives of workers and employers. Leo endorsed two kinds of associations: those consisting of employees alone as well as those that mixed workers with employers.²⁹⁵ Leo envisaged such associations operating both within the context of entire industries, as well as in the context of a single corporation. These associations would mediate the different sectors in negotiations over wages, the provision of aid to the poor, the provision of instruction in trades and further the educative role of the Church by extending their teachings to their particular professional contexts.²⁹⁶ The encyclical commended the guilds of medieval times, attesting to their “excellent results” and their suitability as a model for the requirements of contemporary industrial relations, both as a model for arranging civil society in general, and as a model for arranging the corporation in particular.

Another area where the corporatism of the Fribourg Union proved highly influential on Leo concerned the encyclical’s reversal of the Church’s immediate post-revolutionary position regarding the State. While the Church’s regarded the newly consolidated Modern State as a force for atheism and social chaos in the immediate wake of the liberal revolutions, Leo (like the Fribourg Union) actually envisaged a positive role for the State.²⁹⁷ However, this positive reevaluation was not unconditional. The State played a crucial administrative role in the lives of these various associations, but the state in this case did not equate to the liberal nation state that the revolutions brought about. It was clear from the encyclical that they were not to be objects of devotion, since the only proper place where devotion took place was the Church. Leo’s state was an administrative institution responsible for the overseeing of laws and institutions that protect “public well-being and private prosperity”²⁹⁸. The state also had a role in protecting the life of the Church, and ensuring its

²⁹⁵ Aaron I Abell, "The Reception of Leo XIII's Labor Encyclical in America 1891-1919," *The Review of Politics* 7(4) (1945): 466.

²⁹⁶ *RN*, 49

²⁹⁷ Normand Paulhaus, "Fribourg Union," in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought*, ed. Judith Dwyer (Minneapolis: Liturgical Press, 1994), 405.

²⁹⁸ *RN*, 32

privileged social position. Leo stressed that maintaining the proper balance in the societal frame enjoined the Church's supervision, and thus its independence from any interference, in particular the states. Indeed, the state had a special role in maintaining its privileged place in the commonwealth.²⁹⁹

Desiccation of the "Perfect Society"

Many writers attest to the enthusiastic reception of this Leonine encyclical. In an era when many members of the higher echelons of the Church were identified with the old aristocracy or the middle classes that were the owners of capital, the encyclical was successful in shaking these sectors of the Church of their indifference to the plight of the workers.³⁰⁰ To those that had committed themselves to the cause of the workers, the encyclical was seen as a vindication of efforts that had previously been marginalised by those in secular and ecclesiastical authority. The document encouraged these and many others to participate in actions to alleviate the dreadful conditions that industrial Europe had imposed on workers. So enthusiastic was the reception within the Church that, as Maren noted, "the Catholic population played a role in the 'labour question' out of proportion to their numbers in the general population".³⁰¹ Catholic associations sprang up in both Europe and America, dedicating themselves to a variety of social roles including labor foundations and even credit unions.³⁰² Catholic political parties pressed for reforms that paralleled the corporatist contours set in the encyclical, including the laws that called for the establishment of collective or enterprise based councils, and those that called for a ban of work on Sundays.³⁰³ Interest in the reforms brought about in Europe encouraged a number of major corporations to implement similar measures such as the establishment of company unions to promote greater workplace democracy, and the provision of company stock plans for employees. In the American case however, it is debatable as to whether the encyclical or

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 53

³⁰⁰ Stephen Pope, "Rerum Novarum," in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought*, ed. Judith Dwyer (Minneapolis: Liturgical Press, 1994), 843.

³⁰¹ Marens, "Timing Is Everything," 292.

³⁰² Misner, *Social Catholicism*, 255.

³⁰³ Marens, "Timing Is Everything," 293.

widespread industrial unrest had a greater role to play in motivating the implementation of such measures.

The Modern Corporation and Share Ownership

However, did the “Perfect Society” ecclesiology around which the encyclical orbited provided a thoroughgoing challenge to the injustices of the modern industrial age? While it is true that the encyclical spurred many to implement reform in the workplace, the workplace itself could not for long sustain the corporatist reforms prescribed in the encyclical. While corporatism indeed implied a multiform model, it was united in its fundamentals in a way that was best characterized by Philippe Schmitter

...non-competitive, hierarchically ordered...interest associations exercising representational monopolies and accepting (de jure or de facto) governmentally imposed or negotiated limitations on the...scope and intensity of demands they routinely make upon the state³⁰⁴

In other words, corporatism was a system that required complex interlinkages between diverse vocational, professional and social sectors of the populace, built on a foundation of a lack of competition in order to work properly. At the same time, the maintenance of these networks required a great deal of long term cooperative investment both in material and social capital. Both of these would be undermined severely by the consolidation of competitive, profit-driven industrial capitalism, which made these potential partners into actual competitors for investment.

According to Marvin Mich, the central mechanism that undermined the whole corporatist model was the introduction of the modern corporation, which in turn introduced a corporate landscape that intensified the fragmentation between classes operating within a largely interconnected workplace into a multiplicity of monadic competitive spheres. One key development that facilitated this

³⁰⁴ Philippe C. Schmitter, "Still the Century of Corporatism?," *The Review of Politics* 36(1) (1974): 100.

fragmentation was the proliferation of corporate stocks for trade on the market. The constant circulation of shares meant a rapid stream of changes in ownership of the corporation between an ever changing pool of owners with little knowledge or interest between themselves and even less so in the corporation itself. This wall of anonymity between the company's owners and those that worked in them, minimized interest in the long term welfare of its workers, and thus eschewed any channelling of resources into any program that did not provide short term improvements to profit margins.³⁰⁵ Management within corporations, eager to secure for themselves a share in this flow of capital, and having to compete with hundreds of other corporations in the process, had next to no incentive to oversee the provision and maintenance of structures that went beyond securing the maximum short term profit for shareholders. Under such conditions, the maintenance of long term ties that underpinned any corporatist arrangement within industry could not endure.

Socialism's Compelling Challenge

With the institutional focus characteristic of the "Perfect Society" ecclesiology that informed Leo's drafting of *Rerum Novarum*, the document retained the reactionary impulses of the Ultramontanism that informed the ecclesiology. The focus on institutionally consolidating the "beauty of good order" as the means for alleviating the worker's dreadful conditions meant that the encyclical provided next to no positive guidance on the issue of work itself. Also, the ecclesiology seemed to take for granted the allegiance of Catholics, and their focus on heaven as a post-temporal phase of life. The Church had underestimated the extent to which temporal concerns had so captured the Catholic imagination that workers would be willing to trade their faith in Christ with that in Marx. In the fifty years since the publication of the Communist Manifesto, socialism had evolved to provide not only comprehensive political programs promising better material conditions, but also highly compelling philosophical foundations that intrigued intellectuals as well as ordinary workers. In light of this, according to contemporary observers, there was a need for the Church to cease to rest on its laurels and take pains to enter the marketplace of ideas, and present Catholicism as an equally compelling

³⁰⁵ Mich, *Catholic Social Teaching and Movements*, 14.

alternative to either liberalism or socialism. Doing so required prescriptions for structural reform to be accompanied by an alternative to undermine socialism's theoretical underpinnings.³⁰⁶

In this respect, the Church left its flank exposed, by warning Catholics about the dangers of Socialism, without providing any theoretical underpinnings for a Catholic alternative, such as provision for a comprehensive theological account of work.³⁰⁷ With the perfect society's focus on an ecclesio-centric, institutional consolidation, combined with the Church's complacency over the continued loyalty of the workers in its congregation and the lack of a compelling Catholic philosophy of history that interfaced with the worker's concrete situations, the encyclical's condemnation of Socialism, whilst a valid pastoral move, created an unshakable impression amongst workers both in Europe and in America, that in practice the Church supported the injustices imposed on the workers by industrial Capitalism. The workers thus gave more credit to the Socialists' critique of the Church as an instrument for Capitalist consolidation.³⁰⁸

State Sovereignty, National Interest and Total War

Socialist or liberal, however, the state proved key when it came to the implementation of any political program. On the issue of political reform revolving around statecraft, the encyclical was indicative of what was arguably Church's biggest miscalculation. A key feature of the perfect society ecclesiology was the framing of its independence from the new nation states in terms of temporal sovereignty, that is, by collapsing the Church's identity with its juridical institutions and prerogatives. However, in light of the seizures of the land holdings and encroachments on ecclesiastical prerogatives on issues like marriage and education during the liberal revolutions, such sovereignty could only be founded on the concessions these new states made. Such concessions were primarily secured through the avenue of legal contracts, or concordats. Seeing that the balance of

³⁰⁶ Abell, "Leo XIII's Labour Encyclical," 482.

³⁰⁷ Mich, *Catholic Social Teaching and Movements*, 22.

³⁰⁸ Abell, "Leo XIII's Labour Encyclical," 482.

power now lay in the modern national state, ecclesiastical cooperation with the secular sovereign thus becomes central to the operationalisation of the “Perfect Society”.

Yet, implementing the Church’s social mission along the lines set by *Rerum Novarum* called for a reversal of that order. In other words, it required a subordination of the State to the Church. *Rerum Novarum* conceived of the State as an administrative instrument that implements policies framed by the Church’s teachings. To an extent, such a conception worked off the presumption that the Church still retained the power to “make and break kings and emperors as one prerogative of the papal office”.³⁰⁹ This was highly problematic as the Church reached the modern age. First, in allowing its key aspect of self-identification to shift from medieval sacramentality to modern temporal sovereignty, the Church concomitantly registered a shift in reliance on the basis of authority for mobilising the body of Christ. Rather than basing authority on the Augustinian notion of enabling the innate desire within the person to move towards its inbuilt object – the participation in God³¹⁰ - it relied on a Lockean logic of moving the Body of Christ in the direction where the greatest force is exerted, that is a reliance on the use of manipulation and coercion on both members within the Church and those in the newly formed secular societies.³¹¹

Arguments of the incompatibility of manipulation and coercion with Christian praxis tend to obscure more than reveal. It obscures the fact that, as demonstrated by the mass defections of Catholics towards socialism as the industrial revolution unfolded, the focus on bureaucratic governance as the central thread of ecclesial life had produced a

³⁰⁹ Elshtain, *Sovereignty*, 31.

³¹⁰ Augustine, *On the Spirit and the Letter* (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1925), 38.

³¹¹ Alisdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (London: Duckworth, 1981), 30.

Progressive impoverishment of the inner life, since the individual must assign...a meaning not grounded in his own convictions and personal involvement, but in the impersonal calculations of an administrative power³¹²

The argument of incompatibility also obscures the fact that by the time the encyclical was promulgated, the State had completed its metamorphosis from the secular extension of the Church's supervisory apparatus to a fully sovereign political formation, completely independent of any ecclesiastical influence, with even greater bureaucratic capacities than the Church could ever hope to command. The encyclical had made little provision to accommodate a situation where the state would implement policies based on its own interests. With the consolidation of the modern nation state by the late nineteenth century, the vesting of power to make decisions legitimately had become a construction based on a polity with a single, supreme and absolute point of power to decide solely for itself.³¹³ In short, national interest had overridden the common good.

This was not merely the fantasy of a select ruling class within the state. The notion of legitimacy in political decision making resting with civil authorities alone had come to characterise the mindset of a critical mass of national populaces as well. The process of industrialisation had integrated the populace into large homogenous social classes. This in turn provided the basis for a sense of belonging within larger groupings than pre-industrial counterparts, and further streamlined the process of integration into a national polity. At the same time the consolidation of the State's administrative and pedagogical apparatuses, through the direct control of schools, universities and the infrastructure supporting the new emerging communications technologies, had manufactured a rapid and massive shift in public loyalties. The state was better able to conjure and direct nationalist impulses amongst these emerging homogenous groupings, and cement in the popular imagination the

³¹² Vaclav Belohradsky, "Bureaucracy, Ideology and Evil," *Salisbury Review* 2(1) (1983): 11-12.

³¹³ Elshtain, *Sovereignty*, 114.

idea of the modern nation state as *the* political community bar none.³¹⁴ One's identity was framed by his/her location within a web of social relations marked by clear cartographic borders. Moreover, all loyalty within that web of relations had become virtually the exclusive property of the secular sovereign, free from external coercion from foreign powers.³¹⁵

With social rearrangements now framed almost exclusively within the horizons of the modern nation state, the *habitus* of either political elites or citizens in accepting the sovereignty of another power, that is, a subordination of the state to the Church just did not exist. This was evinced by the favourable reaction to the general thrust of the encyclical's concern to the plight of the workers, but hostility to the corporatist nature of the proposed solutions. Charles Perrin, a prominent professor of economics at the Louvain University at the time of the release of the encyclical, remarked that the guild system (on which the corporatist model was based) had its day in the medieval period. To revive them in Europe at the turn of the twentieth century would be "to engage in an impossible struggle against the deepest conviction of the society of our own day".³¹⁶ Another prominent economist, Matthew Marshall, was less kind in his review of the encyclical in the *New York Sun*, comparing Leo to a man in the Sahara chasing a mirage.³¹⁷

As a response to violence, the "Perfect Society's" reliance on institutional mobilisation showed itself to be woefully inadequate. The most graphic demonstration of this ecclesiology's impotence in the face of the mobilising power of the modern nation state occurred with the onset of a worldwide mobilisation towards the first global and total war. On every side, nations were seeking to fulfil alliance obligations which had the domino effect of activating other alliances. All of Europe soon

³¹⁴ Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

³¹⁵ F. H. Hinsley, *Sovereignty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 26.

³¹⁶ Cited in Molony, *The Worker Question: A New Historical Perspective on Rerum Novarum*, 39.

³¹⁷ Cited in *Ibid.*, 126.

became mobilised for war. But what was significant in the Great War was that for the first time, virtually every sector in every country in the whole of Europe was mobilised for the purposes of warmaking, and the distinction between civilian and military functions became blurred. All men of fighting age became soldiers and those that could not fight manned the factories. The factories themselves, the mainstay of the business sector once championed as the bulwark against state encroachment in liberal doctrine, now became willing recruits to the logic of warfare. With the introduction of the “war economy”, whole factories became dedicated to the production of munitions. Goods and services, such as jam, shirts, bandages and even the listing of contracts, objects that once fell squarely within the sphere of civilian activity, became subject to the logic of warfare, and the production and facilitation of these objects were given the same level of scrutiny as the production of arms.³¹⁸ Even the erratic financial flows had become channelled into the efforts to resource the mass warfare initiated by the state, with varying degrees of success.³¹⁹ All manner of communications and pedagogy became channels for the legitimization of state policy, which included not just newspapers, but telegraphs, schools, art forms and even prayer, and it worked. Christians were now preparing to kill one another as Britons, Germans, Italians Americans and Russians. After the territorial fragmentation of Christendom in the wake of the Reformation, the Church now underwent a phase of fragmentation in the public imagination. Their membership in the *ecclesia* had become trumped by their citizenship in the nation state and what is more, for the purposes of pitting Christian against Christian.

Conclusion

The Church in the revolutionary and industrial age underwent its most turbulent phase of change. From occupying the peak of a complex hierarchy within Christendom, the largely anticlerical nature

³¹⁸ Gerry R Rubin, *War Law and Labour: The Munitions Acts, State Regulation, and the Unions 1915-1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 17.

³¹⁹ Niall Ferguson, "How (Not) to Pay for the War: Traditional Finance And "Total" War," in *Great War, Total War: Combat and Mobilization on the Western Front, 1914-1918*, ed. Roger Chickering and Stig Forster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 424, Richard Bessel, "Mobilizing German Society for War," in *Great War, Total War: Combat and Mobilization on the Western Front, 1914-1918*, ed. Roger Chickering and Stig Forster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 446.

of the liberal revolutions had reduced the Church to a reactionary political sideshow. In trying to reclaim its proper place in the modern nation state system, the Church had framed its identity in modern bureaucratic terms. Whilst legitimately seeking to retain its independence as a political formation as it did in Medieval Christendom, in the modern age it did so by seeking to become “like the other nations”,³²⁰ by framing its independence through the assertion of the temporal sovereignty of a modern State. This became solidified in the Perfect Society ecclesiology articulated in the First Vatican Council, and its role in framing Leo’s response to the emerging “Social Question” cannot be denied. In seeking to prevent its disappearance into the new Westphalian political landscape, the Church’s framing of itself in purely Westphalian terms proved disastrous as an ecclesiological form, since it was completely beholden to the goodwill of the modern state. At the same time, it was woefully insufficient as a basis for pastoral action, since it sought a hierarchy which the public imagination could no longer accept.

³²⁰ 1 Samuel 8:20

The Mystical Body and the Totalitarian State

Introduction

World War I demonstrated the depletion of the Catholic Church's religious and institutional clout. By the turn of the century, a seachange had set in the collective mindset of Europe whereby material concerns rivaled or even overrode the spiritual. With an ecclesiology centered on protecting the integrity of its bureaucratic offices, the Church was ill-equipped to provide any effective pastoral responses to the new challenges posed by this change, to which many Catholics responded by leaving the Church. Socialism and Nationalism, which had provided more direct interfaces with their temporal lives, proved more attractive alternatives to the Catholic faith of old. The Great War comprehensively traumatised all of Europe, and initiated one of the most turbulent and violent periods of modern history.

This chapter will look at the Church's attempt to negotiate this post-war condition. It will continue the focus on Europe, particularly the consolidation of the totalitarian state in Italy and Germany. These two states form the political centre of gravity due to their radical political reconfigurations, systematic use of violence both within and outside their borders, and their role as the instigators of the Second World War in Europe. This chapter will also explore how these political drivers informed the movement towards the most influential ecclesiological shift in the twentieth century, the Mystical Body. It will also explore the articulation of this concept by both Jacques Maritain and Pope Pius XI, and its operationalisation through *Catholic Action*. It will eventually look at the limitations of an ecclesiology underpinned by the splitting of the spiritual and temporal realms into two autonomous spheres.

The Post-War Political Imaginary

Post War Trauma and Intellectual Life

It would be premature to think of Christianity as the only victim in post-war Europe. Indeed, nothing short of a civilisational crisis was afoot in Europe. Apart from the elimination of ten million young lives in the battlefield, the execution of a transcontinental total war was a phenomenon with a multitude of causes and effects, creating a multitude of experiences. However, according to Joseph Amato, the war was such a profound event that it effected a comprehensive devastation of any category that could be relied upon to make sense of any traumatic event. No psychological, economic, political or spiritual category existing in the period could restore a sense of order to the material, physical or social chaos brought about by the war.³²¹

There emerged a massive psychic vacuum in the European imagination which created a “mood of cosmic questioning”, characterised by an increasing criticism of bourgeois industrial society and a questioning of the ends towards which the modern world was marching. Any modicum of a liberal consensus in Europe was shattered. More fundamentally however, this post-war psychic vacuum also engendered a general loss of faith in any firm ideas of the nature and destiny of humanity. No tradition was of assistance in negotiating this new social milieu. Paradoxically, however, there was also a clamour for *any* kind of psychic anchor, which meant that virtually any doctrine imaginable, in particular some of the most radical pre-war doctrines, became imbued with an aura of credibility.

Against this social backdrop, cultural regeneration rose or fell on the efforts of one particular section of the European public, namely the intellectual. Furnished with a captive audience and less hindered by hurdles imposed by liberal commitments to individualism and unending social progress within the academy, the European intellectual had become a cultural pivot in a way unrivalled by even the revolutionary fervor of the preceding century. So central was their role in this setting that, according

³²¹ Joseph Amato, *Mounier and Maritain: A French Catholic Understanding of the Modern World* (University of Alabama Press, 1975), 56.

to Amato, they had become nothing less than prophets, whose primary task was the proclamation of a new post-liberal man and civilization.³²²

The Rise of the Totalitarian State

Reference to the central role of the intellectual in post-war ecclesial thought would be made later in this chapter. For now, attention must turn to the role of the post-liberal intellectual in the evolution of nationalism. In the post-war abandonment of liberalism, nationalism in its early liberal form underwent another mutation. The post-war devastation and dislocation were further exacerbated by the onset of a series of economic crises that hit sporadically throughout the 1920s. Such crises brought skyrocketing unemployment and hyperinflation, and the resort to strike action to stabilise either employment or incomes only intensified the economic instability. One cannot underestimate the great psychological and social impact of economic crises in societies that have over the centuries evolved to become primarily concerned with material conditions. There was growing frustration with the attempts of liberal democratic governments to secure decisive measures to stave off the worst effects of the crisis, frustration that manifested itself in radical and violent ways.

The most dramatic case in point is the German Weimar Republic. The Weimar Republic's system of proportional representation allowed multiple parties to be represented in the Reichstag, with none holding a majority. Solving the country's problems involved an ongoing need for coalition making, often on an act by act basis³²³, which in turn made compromise the basis on which any legislation could pass. In a setting where no single party can obtain its aims³²⁴, firmness of policy was necessarily excluded. The failure of successive democratically elected governments to handle the instability led to widespread dissatisfaction with parliamentary governance itself³²⁵. Indeed, in

³²² Ibid., 56, 112.

³²³ Alan Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 154.

³²⁴ Arnold Wolfers, "The Crisis of the Democratic Regime in Germany," *International Affairs* 11(6) (1932): 759-61.

³²⁵ E. E. Y. Hales, "Mussolini, Hitler, and Pius XI," in *The Papacy and Totalitarianism between the Two World Wars*, ed. Charles F. Delzell (NY: John Wiley & Sons, 1974). Klaus Scholder, *The Churches and the Third Reich: Volume 1, 1918-1934*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 50.

Germany at least, the democratically elected parties added to the unrest brought about by the economic crisis. The war had led to what Walter Laqueur called a “brutalization of public life”³²⁶ and political parties, or indeed any interest group, demonstrated their authority not just in debates, but also in numerous street battles between party-sponsored militias³²⁷. The overall situation that the combination of economic and social dislocation, lawlessness and total lack of security created is best described by Ronald Rychlak when “6 million jobless men in Germany woke up with little to do each morning, except for the daily routine of street fighting”.³²⁸ The despair generated by the futility of democratic politics led many in Europe to shift their preference towards stronger forms of government which replaced parliamentary with executive rule.³²⁹

These shifts in political preferences were taken up by political thinkers, who soon advocated Fascism as the new form of governance. As the paragraphs below would demonstrate, the concrete forms of Fascist governance were varied. Nevertheless common characteristics cut across its major manifestations. Fascism extended many threads of liberal nationalism. The key similarity was its advocacy for the consolidation and protection of the state. However, while liberal nationalists were keen to consolidate the institutions of state as a means to protect the rights of individuals, Fascist thinking sought the consolidation of the state as the manifestation of a supreme value of national greatness,³³⁰ eroded by years of economic and social disrepair. Liberal notions of rights and equality were regarded as mere legal niceties that masked the natural superiority or inferiority of nations.³³¹

³²⁶ Walter Laqueur, *Fascism: Past, Present and Future* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 17.

³²⁷ Wolfers, "The Crisis of the Democratic Regime in Germany," 780. See also Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 95.

³²⁸ Ronald J. Rychlak, *Hitler, the War and the Pope* (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor, 2000), 47.

³²⁹ Scholder, *Churches*, 150.

³³⁰ Laqueur, *Fascism*, 25.

³³¹ *Ibid.*

Central to the program of restoring national greatness were the institutions of state. Parliamentary rule, these thinkers said, had brought about nothing but massive unrest. Stability can only be returned when political power was channelled through a single party apparatus under the direct and absolute control of a charismatic leader.³³² The leader would monopolise power over a growing section of political life and any opposition to the process was often violently eliminated.³³³ Whilst often associated with the continuation of absolutist monarchs of the middle ages, Shapiro reminds us that the arrival of Fascist thought actually went beyond medieval monarchical models. One area where this was apparent was the relationship between the leader and the legal order. Monarchs and liberal nationalist leaders, however capable they were of changing individual laws, were always nonetheless seen to be subjects of a fundamental legal order. Fascist thinking reversed that order by advocating that purposes higher than the law freed both leaders and the party from any constraints of any legal order.³³⁴ The party was not thus a representative of a section of the public, but an all encompassing institution that controlled *all* of the public.³³⁵

Another aspect of Fascism was the extension of supervisory power of the party into other sectors of life, which blurred liberal distinctions between individual, nation, party and state. In Fascist thought, the individual's worth and dignity was not an inherent given residing in the individual himself, but was fulfilled via his absorption into the state. The self-described "philosopher of Fascism", Giovanni Gentile (who would later articulate for Mussolini the philosophical underpinnings of Fascism), argued that the absorption of the individual paradoxically made the state and extension of "the will of the individual himself in its universal and absolute aspect".³³⁶ Because this was not readily apparent to the individual, the individual had to undergo extensive training to appreciate this virtue. This

³³² Ibid., 23. See also Ian Kershaw, *The "Hitler Myth": Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

³³³ Laqueur, *Fascism*, 14, Leonard Schapiro, *Totalitarianism* (London: Macmillan, 1972), 22.

³³⁴ Schapiro, *Totalitarianism*, 29-32.

³³⁵ Ibid., 59.

³³⁶ Cited in Ibid., 35.

necessitated the party's constant deployment of propaganda measures that intruded into all aspects of the person's life. In a manner far more radical than liberal nationalism, Individual and State thus became conflated, and justified the bringing of not only politics but culture, education and even morals within the purview of state supervision.

The most sinister aspect of Fascism was the pride of place given to Social Darwinism, which transferred Darwin's theory of natural selection to explain the evolution of animal species to the realm of human relations, to explain the durability (or lack thereof) of human societies. A basic belief in a social equivalent of the "survival of the fittest" thus made conflict, struggle and violence the indisputable underpinning of human relations. In Adolf Hitler's words, "History itself is...an eternal battle against thousands upon thousands of resistances just as life itself is an eternal struggle against death."³³⁷ This made the necessity for organisation into collectives for protection as well as collaboration, such as a nation or state, an undeniable fact among the most advanced organisms.³³⁸ The centrality of struggle also meant that violence and warfare became a valorised part of life. It glorified militancy between states, and also justified coercion as the ordering principle within states. The deployment of brute force became the central mechanism by which all social formations are ordered. The centrality of violence legitimated not only the absorption of the individual into the party, but also the coercive means by which that individual would be absorbed into the party. In a political setting underpinned by violence, peoples had to prove their biological worthiness to continue existing, which easily slipped into notions of racial superiority and the need for constant racial purification through violent struggles with inferior races. Such notions not only justified a general increase of militancy as a society, but also legitimated the implementation of policies of eugenics as well as race-based discrimination, deprivation or elimination as a central component of political life.³³⁹

³³⁷ Adolf Hitler, *Hitler's Secret Book*, trans. S Attanasio (New York: Grove Press, 1961), 5.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

³³⁹ Mike Hawkins, *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought, 1860-1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 274.

However, these sinister aspects of the Fascist state were either undetected or ignored by the public in Europe. Fascist movements continued to capture the imagination and commitment of large sections of the public, particularly as the social, political and economic traumas plaguing Europe intensified. The earliest example of these was *Action Francaise*, which began in 1899 under the leadership of the French poet and self-styled mystic Charles Maurras. While the movement started as a journal advocating the restoration of the old monarchical form of government, it soon evolved and developed into a full blown array of militants and political activists that pushed for an “integralist nationalism”, which appealed to the entire nation, politically, culturally, linguistically and religiously.³⁴⁰ Though it did not obtain power in France, the program of *Action Francaise* was highly influential among a generation of disillusioned citizens, and became the blueprint for Fascist movements within and beyond French borders in the years to come.³⁴¹

In Germany and Italy, the National Socialist and Fascists were successfully brought to power by a combination of the vote and political intrigue at the highest levels of government. In October 1922, Benito Mussolini’s Fascists marched 26000 paramilitary *Blackshirts* into Rome. The successful garnering of the support of the military, business and financial leaders and even some liberal parties, as well as the successful deployment of violence via his *Blackshirts* to silence any effective opposition, convinced King Emmanuel III to cut short the term of Prime Minister Luigi Facta and install Mussolini as the legal head of government.³⁴² In Germany, the onset of the Great Depression destroyed what little confidence remained in the often fluid coalition of liberal and social democratic parties, and generated a massive upsurge in electoral support for the National Socialists, who had focused their adept campaigning skills on generating a reputation of the Party being economic

³⁴⁰ Payne, *A History of Fascism*, 40, 47.

³⁴¹ Eugen Weber, *Action Francaise: Royalism and Reaction in Twentieth Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962).

³⁴² Payne, *A History of Fascism*, 108-10.

saviours.³⁴³ By 1932, the National Socialists had become the biggest party in the Reichstag. A combination of manipulation of the then-chancellor Franz von Papen, the party's paramilitary *Sturmabteilungen*'s effective use of street violence and even assassinations as a curb against political opposition, and the timidity of President Hindenburg, finally led to the installation of Hitler as German chancellor in 1933. This then paved the way for Hitler to manufacture crises in law and order to which the Nazis were made to appear as the only solution.³⁴⁴ The tactic worked. In both regional and national elections, the Nazis gradually secured the necessary parliamentary majority to pass the Enabling Act of 1933 that gave Hitler the ability to govern by his personal decree alone.³⁴⁵

Once secure in their positions of power, both movements sought to bring all aspects of their respective societies under party coordination. While Mussolini sought to work through existing state and social structures, Nazi control of Germany consisted of the establishment of a parallel bureaucratic infrastructure governed by the party and ultimately by Hitler - the *Schutz Staffeln* (SS) being the most famous exemplar - which created a great deal of administrative confusion that made it easier for the party and Hitler to assert ever greater degrees of control.³⁴⁶ Despite their differences, both forms of Fascism proved highly successful in using a combination of administrative intrigue and thuggery to bring businesses, schools, universities, labour interests and even religious affiliations under state control. At the same time, both these states also began implementing their respective race policies. In Germany, the implementation of race-based legislation and policies was particularly systematic. Not only were Jews, Gypsies and Slavs the target of relentless waves of economic despoilation, physical assault, deportation and later execution. The Nazi regime also targeted Germans that were deemed unfit for the continuation of the race, such as the mentally ill or

³⁴³ Ibid., 165.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 172-74.

³⁴⁵ It must be said that Hitler had made threatened to resort to the use of force if either the parliamentary majority or the Enabling Act he sought were not secured. On this see Ellen Lovell Evans, *The German Centre Party 1870-1933: A Study in Political Catholicism* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1981), 38.

³⁴⁶ Ernst Fraenkel, *The Dual State: A Contribution to the Theory of Dictatorship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941).

physically deformed. These were dispatched with either through programs of sterilisation to prevent the breeding of unfit Aryans or euthanasia programs to eliminate them altogether.³⁴⁷

Apart from the targeting of racial minorities, an element that set the Fascisms of Italy and Germany apart from France was the deliberate targeting of Christianity. Whilst Maurras saw Christianity as a crucial instrument of national consolidation, Fascism in Italy and especially Germany saw it as at best a hindrance or at worst as inherently antithetical to the nation. The regime of Mussolini favoured a return to pagan traditions as part of his program of national revival. Whilst he initially maintained a strategic relationship with the Church, he did make hidden attempts to make classical pagan Rome the cultural underpinning for national advancement. In addition, his regime from 1931 engaged in an anti-Catholic purge within the Fascist party, harrying Catholic lay associations and their leaders with varying degrees of violence.³⁴⁸

In a similar vein, Hitler saw strategic benefit in maintaining a good working relationship with the Church.³⁴⁹ However, he did see Christianity itself, with its privileging of the weak, as a mortal enemy of the warrior culture that National Socialism sought to nurture.³⁵⁰ Thus, while expressing his collegiality with the churches, Hitler sought also to gain the support of popular pagan movements who attached divine significance to race and nation. He also gave tacit support to the activities of movements that either promoted a revised Christianity along National Socialist lines,

³⁴⁷ For a detailed account of the Nazi's sterilisation programs see Rychlak, *Hitler, the War and the Pope*, 62. For an account of the euthanasia programs, see John Cornwell, *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII* (London: Viking, 1999), 198-99.

³⁴⁸ For a detailed account of Fascist persecution of the Church, see John F. Pollard, *The Vatican and Italian Fascism 1929-32: A Study in Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

³⁴⁹ On his views on the need for a strategic relationship with Christianity, see Guenter Lewy, *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965), 26. For a sample of his tactics to woo the Church authorities in both Germany and the Vatican, see Joseph A. Biesinger, "The Reich Concordat of 1933," in *Controversial Concordats*, ed. Frank J. Coppa (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 124.

³⁵⁰ For evidence of this, see Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Kent: Pimlico, 1992), 413.

or a Volkish faith that rejected Christianity (conventionally understood) altogether.³⁵¹ He appointed Alfred Rosenberg, author of the anti-Christian *Myth of the Twentieth Century*, as head of the Nazi Party's philosophical department, and allowed physical training programs for youth to be coupled with pagan indoctrination.³⁵² Shortly after Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, he unleashed a most comprehensive program of anti-Christian measures. For instance, the regime withheld traditional voluntary grants to the Churches to stifle opposition³⁵³ The Gestapo encouraged constant supervision by Catholic congregations of their clergy³⁵⁴, who were at times even forced out of their dioceses³⁵⁵. As part of a general campaign to control the media, Catholic media outlets were either censored or shut down altogether³⁵⁶. Purely religious or charitable functions were disrupted by police and Hitler Youth bands³⁵⁷. Up to 7000 religious were subject to widely publicized show trials,

³⁵¹ Hitler did affirm what he termed "positive Christianity" as the basis for National Socialism. However, the kind of Christianity he did affirm melded many pagan elements that had as their centre, the glorification of the German nation and race. As an example of this, see the constitution of the "German Christian" movement in Peter Matheson, *The Third Reich and the Christian Churches*, ed. Peter Matheson (Grand Rapids: Eardmans, 1981), 5. For a more extensive treatment of the National Socialist bastardisation of Christianity see Doris L. Bergen, *Twisted Cross: The German Christian Movement in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

³⁵² For commentary on the neo-paganism of the Nazis and their allies, see John S. Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches* (NY: Basic Books, 1968), 141-57.

³⁵³ Roger H. Wells, "The Financial Relations of Church and State in Germany, 1919-1937," *Political Science Quarterly* 53(1) (1938): 42.

³⁵⁴ Conway, *Nazi Persecution*, 169-70.

³⁵⁵ A famous example involved Archbishop Sproll of Rottemburg, who was forced out of his diocese through constant harassment by nazi-incited demonstrations, and police raids. See *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945. Series D Vol.1 (1937-1945) : From the Archives of the German Foreign Ministry*, 6 vols., vol. 1 (Washington: Government Print Office, 1949-1964), no 719, 1049-50.

³⁵⁶ ———, *Nazi Persecution*, 111, 71-72.

³⁵⁷ There exists a work, written by an anonymous author, which provides detailed accounts of the persecution of the Catholic Church during the Nazi era. Though the name of the author is not given, it is submitted that its credibility is ensured by the extensive documentation within its pages. See Anonymous, *The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich* (London: Burns Oates, 1940), 244, 53.

charged with pedophilia or infringements of highly complex currency laws³⁵⁸. By 1934, Nazi agents had even included the assassination of leaders of Catholic lay and youth organizations in their tactical repertoire.³⁵⁹

The Ecclesial Imaginary

Post-War Loss of Ecclesial Influence

The consolidation of the Fascist States took place against a backdrop of a rapid decline in the Church as a civilisational pole. During the war, the states' regard for the Church was proportionate to the extent that the latter served as a resource for further legitimising mobilisation for the former. The belligerent nations from either side of the conflict made attempts to elicit a papal condemnation of the other side for propaganda purposes. However, the fear of ecclesial division caused the refusal of the wartime pope, Benedict XV, to take any sides. Instead, the pope condemned the barbaric nature of the war in general, and made explicit references only to the disaster victims and prisoners of war³⁶⁰.

Ironically, however, Benedict's policy of impartiality only exposed it to accusations by each side of favouring the other, and made them suspicious of the Vatican's diplomatic initiatives.³⁶¹ The belligerents tolerated the Church's efforts in ameliorating the worst effects of combat, which

³⁵⁸ Such currency laws were so complex that a defence lawyer stated on 22nd July 1935:

"I have known experienced Lawyers...remark in the course of private conversations that not only their Colleagues, but even judges and State attorneys, had fallen into theoretical errors in matters of Currency Law".

See Anonymous, *Persecution*, p297.

³⁵⁹ Charles Pichon, *The Vatican and Its Role in World Affairs.*, trans. Jean Misrahi (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1967), 147.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 158.

³⁶¹ Stewart A. Stehlin, "The Emergence of a New Vatican Diplomacy During the Great War and Its Aftermath," in *Papal Diplomacy in the Modern Age*, ed. Peter C Kent and John F Pollard (Westport: Praeger, 1994), 76.

included the provision of humanitarian aid to the victims of war and even prisoners of war.³⁶² However, any attempts at ending the combat itself proved futile as the states scoffed at Vatican attempts to revive its traditional role as a mediator in conflict between sovereigns, with the belligerent nations rebuffing any Vatican offers to be a go-between for a negotiated peace.³⁶³ At the time of post-War settlement, the states sought to sideline the Church's involvement. The Vatican had been excluded as a formal participant in peace talks by virtue of article XV of the 1915 Treaty of London, signed by Italy, Britain, France and Russia.³⁶⁴

Aside from the erosion of the Church's political clout among world leaders, the Great War also dealt a severe blow to the credibility of Christianity itself among the populace. Religious leaders were unable to aid their congregations in making sense of the widespread destruction perpetrated by Christians during the war. In the case of the defeated nations, they proved unable to explain their humiliating defeat despite assurances that their faith ensured national victory; nor could they provide solace when post-war material conditions deteriorated, with inflation, high debt and unemployment levels becoming the norm in victorious and defeated countries alike. All this led many to become disillusioned with the Christian Faith. This all encompassing shock of the immediate post-war period, and the inability of the Church to provide an adequate response, accelerated the exodus from the Church.

While moves towards Fascism were being made in Europe, the Church had also undergone a process of introspection. Arguably aware of the limits of an ecclesiology centring on institutional protection, many thinkers within the Church began to pay more attention to the internal aspects of Church life

³⁶² Musto, *The Catholic Peace Tradition*, 172.

³⁶³ John S. Conway, "The Silence of Pope Pius XII," in *The Papacy and Totalitarianism between the Two World Wars*, ed. Charles F. Delzell (NY: John Wiley & Sons, 1974), 97.

³⁶⁴ Pichon, *Vatican and World Affairs*, 127.

that underlay the institutional trappings. Indeed, such a process of discerning the character of the Church's inner life was already underway around the time of Leo XIII. Despite his eventual framing of his social doctrine along the corporatist lines of the Ultramontanists, Leo himself was noted as saying that an institutional focus did not do full justice to the richness of the Church that lay beneath those institutions. By the time Benedict XV donned the papal crown for the first time in 1914, a corpus of work had already been developed, asserting the need to re-conceptualise the Church away from a purely institutional ecclesiology.

The Mystical Body

The Role of Benedict XV

The post-war articulations of Pope Benedict XV laid the field in this phase of ecclesiological change. At the heart of Benedict's post-war concerns was bringing the love of Christ, consisting in the pursuit of reconciliation, to the forefront of the life of the Church as the Body of Christ. In his post-war encyclical *Pacem Dei Munus Pulcherrimum*, Benedict used the early Church as a model for an ecclesiology enlivened by mutual charity. In doing so, he attempted to infuse contemporary relevance by contrasting the charity of the early brethren with the nations of post-war Europe.

Our brethren of the first Christian ages faithfully observed these commands of Jesus Christ and the Apostles. They belonged to different and rival nations; yet they willingly forgot their causes of quarrel and lived in perfect concord, and such a union of hearts was in striking contrast with the deadly enmities by which human society was then consumed.³⁶⁵

Benedict noted the extensive physical and emotional trauma brought by “the ravages of this atrocious war”, and the need of “Jesus [to]...lay His hands upon the wounds of society”.³⁶⁶ If one were really

³⁶⁵ Benedict XV, *Pacem, Dei Munus Pulcherrimum* (1920), 6

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xv/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xv_enc_23051920_pacem-dei-munus-pulcherrimum_en.html.

This document will hereinafter be cited as “PDMP”.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 11

part of the Body of Christ, according to Benedict, there was an even greater imperative to “imitate the piety and loving kindness of Jesus” and “stretch the bounds of charity”.³⁶⁷

Benedict had inchoately signalled an ecclesiological shift when he collapsed the imitation of Christ with concrete acts of forgiveness and reconciliation. He encouraged pastors to urge the faithful to “abandon hatred and to pardon offences; but and what is more immediately practical, to promote all those works of Christian benevolence which bring aid to the needy, comfort to the afflicted and protection to the weak, and to give opportune and appropriate assistance of ever kind to all who have suffered from the war”.³⁶⁸ He charged states with a similar duty to reconcile with one another through the engendering of mutual good will.³⁶⁹ The general weight of Benedict’s shift in focus from the mechanics of institutional configuration to exhorting a community to revivify itself with the example set by Christ signalled a need to reexamine the old “Perfect Society” ecclesiology, particularly the mode of life that was supposed to occur within that Society.

German Theology and Sociology

Benedict’s was not an isolated call for reform. He had articulated an undercurrent that had begun in the early 1800s. Despite the affirmation of the “Perfect Society” ecclesiology in the First Vatican Council, studies in the margins of Catholic theology were advocating something quite different. Among the earliest manifestations of this were Johann Adam Mohler and his associates in the University of Tübingen in the early nineteenth century. According to Mohler, the “Perfect Society” ecclesiology focussed so much on the *form* of the society that little consideration was given to what constitutes the *substance* of that society, namely the element of spiritual fellowship between Christians.³⁷⁰ Mohler thought that giving primacy to the juridical agencies of the Church left those within the church with little impression of what the experience within those agencies should

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 8-9

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 13

³⁶⁹ Ibid., 14

³⁷⁰ Dennis M. Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology: Vision and Versions* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2000), 13.

encompass.³⁷¹ According to this argument, institutions had been hollowed out and rendered devoid of the meaning that the Catholic sought. Thus, they became perceived as nothing more than a form of social domination. It was this kind of hollowed ecclesiology that caused the mass defections from the Church.³⁷²

As a corrective, Mohler published his *Unity in the Church* in 1825. Mohler sought to emphasise the true substance of the Church, arguing that “the Church exist[ed] through a life directly and continually moved by the divine Spirit, and is maintained and continued by the loving mutual exchange of believers”.³⁷³ This view of the Church became marginalised in favour of the more institutional models mentioned above. Indeed, Mohler himself would distance himself from the claims in *Unity of the Church* and emphasise more on the issue of authority within the Church in his 1832 book, *Symbolism*.³⁷⁴ Nevertheless, Mohler encouraged the development in the late 1800s of what Robert Krieg calls a wave of “reform Catholicism” among German Catholic scholars and pastoral leaders, who called for an ecclesial breaking out of its own self imposed confines and renewal of what were deemed outdated practices and institutions. As will be demonstrated below, the generation of multiple waves of German Catholics emphasising reform laid the social milieu for the production of an alternative ecclesial imaginary to rival the strict centralising and institutionally focussed ecclesiology that prevailed during the late 1800s.

The vision of an inner life of the Church was given further articulation by secular sociology, which was in the process of emerging out of the traditional disciplines of law, history, philosophy and economics, and consolidating itself into its own intellectual site of power in both Europe and

³⁷¹ Ibid., 24.

³⁷² Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 46.

³⁷³ Johann Adam Mohler, *Unity in the Church* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 23.

³⁷⁴ Prusak, *The Church Unfinished*, 252.

America³⁷⁵. In 1887, Ferdinand Tönnies published his *Community and Society* (*Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*). In contrast to what he called “pure theoretical mechanics”, an institutional emphasis that collapsed the institutions of society with society itself, Tönnies made a distinction between external or “mechanical structure” which defined “society” and the internal “real or organic life” that took place within that structure (“community”).³⁷⁶ For Tönnies, what was real was not the “mechanics”, since they only related to part of what of reality. One had to focus not on the external institutions of society to find its inner vitality, but on what was organic in societies, since the organic related to “the totality of reality”.³⁷⁷ In seeking to articulate a connection between the interior riches of the Christian life and the new material realities presented to a new generation jaded both by the violence of war and the dislocation of the now entrenched industrial societies of Europe, theologians found a voice in Tönnies. In seeking to find the masterframe for the study of the Church itself, they quickly incorporated the strong sociological distinction between the inner and outer life of any given society.

The first amongst these was Arnold Rademacher, whose most noteworthy work was *The Church as Community and Society* (*Die Kirche als Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*). Rademacher charged the “Perfect Society” with collapsing external forms with the essence of the Church. In a move framed along the lines laid down by Tönnies, Rademacher argued that the Church encompassed an outer form, called the “association”, which hid an inner substance which he called the “community”. The relationship between these two elements was summarised by the passage, which argued that “Life is being tamed by form so that it should not dissolve, as a form is being kept in motion by life, so that it should not ossify”.³⁷⁸ This was no different for the Church. The “association” Church was underpinned by the “community” Church. Furthermore, “the realisation of the community is the end

³⁷⁵ Steven Seidman, *Contested Knowledge: Social Theory Today*, Third ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 280.

³⁷⁶ Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Society* (New York: Courier Dover Publications, 2002), 33, 35.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 35.

³⁷⁸ Cited in Werner Stark, *The Sociology of Religion: A Study of Christendom V5* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), 73.

of the association's endeavours". The institutions of Church were meant to realise an "all-comprehensive human brotherhood",³⁷⁹ which was the ultimate reality of life in the Church.³⁸⁰ The circulation of Rademacher's work succeeded in clarifying important aspects of ecclesiology for both general readers as well as clergy.³⁸¹

The framing of an ecclesiology by these theologians around Tonnies' bifurcation between the outer "society" and the real inner "community", laid the groundwork for an alternative ecclesiology known as the "Mystical Body". In a model similar to Tonnies' *Gesellschaft und Gemeinschaft*, conceptualising the Church as the Mystical Body meant looking at the Church as encompassing two interlocking aspects. There was the outer phenomenon of the Church, with the community constituting its inner core. Like Mohler, Rademacher did not jettison the Church's institutions. Indeed, they are affirmed as necessary manifestations. However, such manifestations were meant to reflect an interior reality that, as per Tonnies' distinction, was meant to be the *real* reality. This inner reality of communion, or *koinonia*, was invisible and yet still tangible to the experience of the member. An individual within the Church is not merely an isolated atom, but part of a cohesive whole. Rather than being subsumed into this whole however, the allusion to the body provides a more organic vision in which the individual's value is recognised paradoxically by its corporate membership. Most importantly, there was a recognition here of the necessity for the Church to do more than fulfil the function of teaching and supervising, as the old ecclesiology emphasised. There was an emphasis in living out those teachings in concrete acts of love and actually enacting a palpable feeling of unity within the Church.

One of the earliest convergences between Mystical Body ecclesiology and Tonnies' sociology was in Karl Adam. In 1924, Adam published *The Spirit of Catholicism*, which was a broadside critique of

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 74.

³⁸⁰ Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 47.

³⁸¹ Robert Anthony Krieg, *Catholic Theologians in Nazi Germany* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 165.

secular Modernity. Adam argued Modernity had not enlivened society through the pursuit of liberty. Instead, it resulted in a degeneration of the spirituality of Europe, and an indulgence in “boundless subjectivism” which resulted in a slow process of atomisation. This atomisation put asunder man’s “inner relationship to one another” and “organic communion”, which was the “sum total of all who are redeemed in Christ”. In Germany, this decline was demonstrated in the post-war Weimar republic. Whilst a lot more accommodating to the Church than the previous Bismarckian administration, it was a thoroughgoing secular and liberal state.³⁸² Not only was the Church marginalised in public life, the Weimar Republic was also highly atomistic, exceedingly permissive and morally bankrupt. Reversing this bankruptcy lay in the restoration of belief in Christ. However, this did not entail the implementation of the corporatist ideal of ecclesiastical supervision of all aspects of life, nor did it entail the reliance on abstract apologetics to prove the rationality of Christian categories. Rather, restoration of belief required a renewal of the experience of the Spirit, which occurred communally in the internal life of the Church. The internal focus of Adam’s ecclesiology was made clear when he said that “we” bore the Spirit, which was then manifested in the concrete community.³⁸³ The restoration of belief then, for Adam, coincided with the internal reconstruction of the Church and injecting “a constructive and effective religious power, a positive moral energy and a vitalizing enthusiasm”.³⁸⁴

The Spirit of Catholicism was not a revolutionary theological work. However, the book was significant for its coherence as well as its simplicity, which made the Tübingen School accessible to both sophisticated theological minds and a mass readership. What was more, this mass audience, already heavily involved in internationally prominent liturgical and lay Catholic movements, had aspirations for reform that had suddenly become articulated by the work. All these factors made *The Spirit of Catholicism* an international theological publishing phenomenon. Riding on a wave of great

³⁸² Ibid., 39.

³⁸³ Ibid., 89.

³⁸⁴ Karl Adam, *The Spirit of Catholicism*, trans. Dom Justin McCann (New York: Crossroad, 1997), 95.

advancements in print and communications technology at the turn of the century, which ensured that the book was rapidly distributed amongst a diverse Catholic readership in Germany and internationally, it went through fourteen reprints in German over forty years, and translated into thirteen languages.³⁸⁵ It is precisely this ability to render coherent the desires for reform within the Church amongst a critical mass that made the work crucial in laying the field for the nurturing of reform-oriented scholarship that focussed on the internal riches of the Church.

Nevertheless, Adam had not yet provided a direct and coherent ecclesiological statement that enabled any direct interface between ecclesial and increasingly turbulent social contexts. More specifically, Adam had not yet articulated the Church's place in politics, especially in light of the consolidation of the Totalitarian state in Germany and Italy. Adam exhibited a practical ambiguity, opposing the *ethos* of the National Socialist movement whilst still seeking accommodation with Fascist-occupied governments.³⁸⁶ This ambiguity meant that a cogent ecclesiological statement was not forthcoming until the summer of 1933. The immediate bridge between Adam's work on Church/State relations and the general corpus of work on reform was provided by another theologian, Karl Eschweiler.

Eschweiler's most instructive work on this score was a 1930 excavation of Mohler's work, which was then focussed on the issue of Church/State relations.³⁸⁷ Eschweiler argued that the Church had failed to adequately defend itself as an *objective* reality on par with the state, even when trying to be an independent *institutional* reality rivalling that of the state. According to Eschweiler, Mohler's *Unity in the Church* and *Symbolism* underpinned the idea of a Church as its own ontological reality. The Church was both a *subjective* union held together by the Holy Spirit as well as an *objective* work of Christ in human history via human institutions. Both Church and State were thus objective

³⁸⁵ Krieg, *Catholic Theologians in Nazi Germany*, 83.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 97.

³⁸⁷ Karl Eschweiler, *Johann Adam Mohlers Kirchenbegriff: Das Hauptstück Der Katholischen Auseinandersetzung Mit Der Deutschen Idealismus* (Braunsberg: Herder, 1930).

realities - the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ stood on equal terms with the State. Nevertheless, it was not in opposition to the state. The state and the Church were “two distinct and...independent realms in one ethical reality”, with State and Church properly exercising its authority in each realm, with each respecting, and indeed reinforcing, the proper authority of the other in its proper realm.³⁸⁸ While the State worked to maintain the physical wellbeing of the community, the Church was needed to attend to questions of truth, which the State could not answer, but still needed to tackle as part and parcel of the political life. In that respect the Church, according to Eschweiler, exercised “indirect power in the temporal realm”.³⁸⁹ This emphasis on truth tied in with the developing work on the Mystical Body, for it gave the Church, as part of its task of revitalising its inner life, an important role in educating a generation that had forgotten all notions of truth grounded in Christian faith.

Although Eschweiler’s work was the most explicit work to date in giving an interface between the inner reality of fellowship in the Church and the lived experiences of Catholics within the context of the consolidation of Totalitarianism, he did not achieve the same level of circulation as Adam, at least outside Germany. The enthusiastic support Eschweiler afforded to the Nazi government when it eventually came to power had probably served to isolate him from a wider readership that was largely hostile to the Nazi regime.

Jacques Maritain and New Christendom

The conduit between Eschweiler’s crystallization of the Church’s position with the State and twentieth century ecclesiology would be the penmanship of the French lay philosopher with whom he had maintained a correspondence, Jacques Maritain.³⁹⁰ Maritain would be the lynchpin of much of twentieth century ecclesiology. To understand the prominence accorded to Maritain, it is necessary to understand his position within French Catholic scholarship, which was enjoying a great degree of

³⁸⁸ Ibid., 158.

³⁸⁹ Cited in Krieg, *Catholic Theologians in Nazi Germany*, 39.

³⁹⁰ See Philippe Chenaux, "L'influence De Jacques Maritain En Allemagne," in *Jacques Maritain En Europe: La Réception De Sa Pensée*, ed. Bernard Hubert (Paris: Editions Beauchesne, 1996).

prominence within the cultural imaginary of Europe generally and France specifically. The clamour for a psychic anchor gave credibility to all manner of philosophical inquiry, and this laid the field for Catholic scholarship to pose arguments in the cultural debate to which a considerable audience was listening attentively.³⁹¹ The *habitus* to grant credibility to the Catholic intellectual was also the function of the efforts of French Catholics during the war. Additionally, post war France was experiencing a general shift to the right of the political spectrum which led to an easing of the previously relentless anticlerical political culture, a shift demonstrated by the ascendancy of *Action Francaise*. The Church was thus accorded an important role in the revitalisation of French politics and culture.³⁹²

Intellectually, French Catholicism centred on the works of a community that had as their central pole Jacques Maritain and Emmanuel Mounier. Through the journal *Espirit*, both men contributed to the growth of a community of thinkers that would nurture Christianity's twentieth century focus on the human person, the bedrock of Christian social thinking for much of the twentieth century. A branch of what began as an attempt to find common ground with an ascendant European socialism in the 1930s,³⁹³ which would implicate Mounier and Maritain,

³⁹¹ Amato, *Mounier and Maritain*, 51.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, 57.

³⁹³ The growth of the French socialist scene was one of the fastest outside the then newly formed Soviet Union. An indication of this rapid ballooning of support for Marxism could be gauged from the membership of the French Communist Party, which more than sextupled between 1934 and 1936. See John Hellman, "French "Left-Catholics" And Communism in the Nineteen-Thirties," *Church History* 45(4) (1976): 508.

Many Catholics critical of the social dislocation and atomisation brought about by Capitalism and the Industrial Revolution were nonetheless frustrated with the Church's lack of comprehensive engagement with the plight of the urban poor, and drawn to the perceived promise in Marxism. The offer by the leader of the French Communist Party, Maurice Thorez, of an alliance with Catholics against Fascism only served to intensify efforts among "Left Catholic" intellectuals to try reconciling Catholic theology with Marxist theory. See *Ibid.*, 507, 510.

A detailed analysis of the involvement of French Catholic and Socialist intellectuals, and the place of Mounier and Maritain in this context can be found in ———, *Emmanuel Mounier and the New Catholic Left 1930-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981).

would later be labelled “French Personalism”, given its intellectual focus on maintaining the dignity of the person as an embodied temporal subject. This turn to a historically embodied subject was deemed crucial in the face of a growing ideologisation of politics among the Left and the Right, which made the person subservient to abstract ideologies, through the manifestations of liberal Capitalism, and Fascist or Communist dictatorships.³⁹⁴

Mounier’s influence will be discussed in Chapter 8, but several circumstances would make Maritain the defining Catholic intellectual of immediate post-War Europe. Maritain’s prominence within the Catholic intellectual imaginary lay in his prominence in philosophy. Through his early work as the philosophy editor of the prominent French journal *La Revue Universelle*,³⁹⁵ and later in his teaching career at the College Stanislas and his appointment to the Chair of modern philosophy at the *Institut Catholique*, Maritain rose to a position of prominence as an intellectual. What further accelerated his rise to prominence within the Catholic intellectual imaginary was his immersion in the Thomistic revival. Leo XIII had in 1879 called for a revival of Aquinas, the “chief and master of all towers” of Scholastic Doctors, as the primary intellectual tool against post-Enlightenment philosophy.³⁹⁶ Catholic intellectuals nurtured Thomism to become the privileged lens within Catholic thought. Aquinas’ *Summa Theologica* proved to be crucial to Maritain’s intellectual evolution. He himself described it as “an illumination of reason”³⁹⁷ that put up “no opposing obstacles”.³⁹⁸ So neat was the

³⁹⁴ John Hellman, "John Paul II and the Personalist Movement," *Cross Currents* 30 (1981): 411.

³⁹⁵ Bernard Doering, *Jacques Maritain and the French Catholic Intellectuals* (New York: University of Notre Dame Press).

³⁹⁶ Leo XIII, *Aeterni Patris* (1879), 1-17

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_04081879_aeterni-patris_en.html.

³⁹⁷ Jacques Maritain, "Confession of Faith," in *The Social and Political Philosophy of Jacques Maritain*, ed. Joseph W Evans and Leo R Ward (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), 331.

³⁹⁸ ———, *Bergsonian Philosophy and Thomism*, trans. Mabelle L Andison (New York: Philosophical Library, 1955), 17.

fit between the works of Aquinas and Maritain's search for absolute truth that, for him, not resorting to the work of the "Angelic Doctor" would be a source of woe.³⁹⁹ Maritain soon demonstrated his capabilities as one of the most innovative Thomists alive in twentieth century Europe. Not only was his grasp of traditional Thomistic categories unrivalled by his contemporaries, but as Paul Sigmund notes, Maritain also had the uncanny ability to use "traditional Thomistic categories to argue to a conclusion that would have horrified Saint Thomas".⁴⁰⁰ This innovation was important because Maritain was able to accord to Catholic philosophy contemporary currency through his near seamless integration of thirteenth century Catholic theology with twentieth century social trends.⁴⁰¹ Because of this ability, Maritain successfully expanded the appeal of Thomism beyond the narrow clerical audience for which the revival of Thomism was originally intended. His bridging the previously exclusive world of Thomistic philosophy, contemporary social issues and a mass reading audience would also explain his prominence in Catholic intellectual circles.⁴⁰² Indeed, so prominent was Maritain that he would become the most important bridge within the Catholic Church between the Thomistic theology the Church was seeking to excavate, and the new post-war condition with which it was trying to negotiate.

Among the most pressing aspects of this condition was the consolidation of authoritarianism in much of the European political scene. To the man who could tie something to everything else, politics was not immune from the claims of truth. For Maritain, politics as a temporal enterprise did not operate

³⁹⁹ Maritain, "Confession of Faith," 331.

⁴⁰⁰ Paul E. Sigmund, "Maritain on Politics," in *Understanding Maritain: Philosopher and Friend*, ed. Deal Hudson and Matthew Mancini (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1987), 161.

⁴⁰¹ James V. Schall, *Jacques Maritain: The Philosopher in Society* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998), xi-xii.

⁴⁰² Donald Gallagher and Idella Gallagher, *The Achievement of Jacques and Raissa Maritain: A Bibliography, 1906-1961* (New York: Doubleday, 1962), 9.

outside the scope of the search for truth of being,⁴⁰³ and modern politics was operating on a defective understanding of being. The modern rupture between politics and religion had created the error of a self-enclosed and self sufficient humanism.⁴⁰⁴ Rather than engender greater fraternity among fellow men, this form of humanism asserted the centrality of the individual will rather than mutual participation. As such, man was left “truly alone”.⁴⁰⁵ Maritain sought to reverse Modernity’s insistence on leaving the religious and secular relating to each other only tangentially, and to return to a more complete, theocentric view of the human person.⁴⁰⁶ However, Maritain did not hanker for a return to the institutionally focussed “Perfect Society” ecclesiology. To understand how Maritain’s integration of faith and politics spoke to the aspirations of “reform Catholicism” generally, and spelled out the Church’s political vision specifically, it is necessary to briefly consider Maritain’s conceptualisation of the relationship between nature and the supernatural.⁴⁰⁷

As he would later write in *Integral Humanism*, Maritain’s rejection of Modernity rested on his realisation that man simultaneously sought two “absolutely ultimate ends”, a purely natural goal of seeking “perfect prosperity” and another purely supernatural goal that sought “perfect beatitude in heaven”. He saw the danger of this sharp separation of planes in its imposition of a “mechanical dichotomy” that split man into two distinct beings. Whilst having legitimate temporal ends, temporality was still subject to the natural law, which made the temporal sphere unavoidably oriented towards God.⁴⁰⁸ There was thus an “organic subordination” of the natural to the supernatural into a

⁴⁰³ Patrick McKinley Brennan, "Jacques Maritain (1882-1973): Commentary," in *The Teachings of Modern Roman Catholicism: On Law, Politics and Human Nature*, ed. John Witte Jr and Frank S Alexander (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 113.

⁴⁰⁴ Jacques Maritain, *Antimoderne* (Paris: Revue de Jeunes, 1922).

⁴⁰⁵ Sigmund, "Maritain on Politics," 157.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 122.

⁴⁰⁷ Brennan, "Jacques Maritain (1882-1973): Commentary," 110.

⁴⁰⁸ Maritain, *Religion and Culture: Essays in Order 1*, 5-8.

cohesive whole.⁴⁰⁹ The correct conception of the relationship between nature and supernature for Maritain thus lay in the joining of two “movements”, where the “horizontal” historical movement of man can only be understood by reference to a “vertical” movement towards eternal life, which occurs supernaturally and historically.⁴¹⁰

Nevertheless, Maritain’s antipathy to the Enlightenment was not complete. While Maritain saw Modernity’s dichotomising of the human person as harmful, he also saw great benefits in the Enlightenment’s general process of secularisation. At its core, Maritain was critical of medieval Christendom’s failure to fully grasp the Gospel message of freedom,⁴¹¹ which translated into history as the legitimate human goal of self mastery and autonomy from coercive forces that compelled man only to exist to pursue aspirations that were antithetical to his own.⁴¹² More specifically, Maritain was critical of the tendency in previous ecclesiologies to instrumentalise the natural to the complete service of the supernatural, as if the natural had no proper purpose of its own. Maritain argued that whilst nature had to be subordinated to *absolute* supernatural ends to affect the right ordering of the universe, the natural still had *relatively* ultimate ends of its own that could be legitimately pursued independently of the supernatural ends.⁴¹³ Maritain thus affirmed the Enlightenment’s creation of a sphere of freedom for the secular to operate free from the illegitimate confinement of the supernatural, the “autonomy of the temporal as an intermediate or infravalent end”.⁴¹⁴

⁴⁰⁹ Jacques Maritain, *Integral Humanism* (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1968), 22.

⁴¹⁰ ———, "Integral Humanism and the Crisis of Modern Times," *The Review of Politics* 1(1) (1939).

⁴¹¹ Sigmund, "Maritain on Politics," 157.

⁴¹² Jacques Maritain, *On the Philosophy of History* (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1957), 125.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, 130-32.

⁴¹⁴ Maritain, *Integral Humanism*, 176-77.

This affirmation of the autonomy of legitimate secular ends however, did not mean a fundamental separation between nature and supernature. The latter still related to the former, but indirectly and non-coercively. Rather than instrumentalising the secular through the extrinsic application of force, Maritain argued that the supernatural properly subordinated nature by “vivify[ing] to its most intimate depths the order of...the temporal”⁴¹⁵. The supernatural thus no longer coerces nature because it operated within the structures of nature. There was thus an effective bifurcation of the divine and temporal into two separate spheres, which underpinned Maritain’s ecclesiological reconceptualisation of Christendom. As Maritain would declare in 1930 in his *Religion and Culture*, this was the underpinning for the realisation of a “new Christendom” where “the spiritual and moral action of the Church presides over a temporal order”.⁴¹⁶

Maritain’s “New Christendom” ecclesiology, centred on the bifurcation between the divine and the temporal realms, would only be given its full articulation after the war. Nevertheless, there is evidence that such a relationship between the realms shaped Maritain’s thought on the most pressing political issue of the day, the consolidation of Fascism in Italy, Germany and France (though no fascist government was installed in France prior to Marshall Philippe Petain in 1940). Indeed it was the ascendancy of Fascism that compelled Maritain to decisively focus his Thomism on the issue of truth in the political realm.⁴¹⁷ Maritain was, like many French Catholics in his day, initially sympathetic to the right wing movements in France, especially *Action Francaise*.⁴¹⁸ French Catholics saw great promise in Maurras’ and *Action Francaise*’s “single minded opposition to the worldly forces of Modernism”. In particular, Maurras found in many conservative French Catholics a ready audience when he advocated not just a natural unity between the French nation and the monarchy

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 176.

⁴¹⁶ Cited in Amato, *Mounier and Maritain*, 107.

⁴¹⁷ Gallagher and Gallagher, *The Achievement of Jacques and Raissa Maritain: A Bibliography, 1906-1961*, 18.

⁴¹⁸ For coverage on the support given to *Action Francaise*, see Rene Remond, *The Right Wing in France*, trans. James Laux (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1966).

(the antipathy of the Church's enemy, the liberal Republic). Maurras also advocated that the natural relationship between the French nation and the Roman Catholic religion made the Church a central component in public life.⁴¹⁹ So great was the admiration of French Catholics for the movement that they "tended to consider [Maurras'] anti liberal ideas as infallible".⁴²⁰

Maritain saw so much commonality between his efforts at Catholic philosophical renovation and *Action Francaise's* program of national restoration, that he collaborated in and even financed the movement's journal, *Revue Universelle*.⁴²¹ However, Maurras' advocacy of a natural unity between the Church and France only went as far as it bolstered the interests of the French nation. The Church was thus reduced to a pawn in Maurras' political calculations,⁴²² and the Church's authority as a teacher was being usurped by the movement.⁴²³ In 1926, Pope Pius XI publicly disendorsed *Action Francaise*, a move which sparked intense debate among French Catholics who supported the movement, leading to accusations that the Church had overstepped its role as a teacher and directly interfered in politics. Many of them even accused the Church of forcing French Catholics to commit sin - against France.⁴²⁴ To counter the tide of discontent, Pius XI commissioned Maritain to furnish an intellectual defence. Considering his previous association with Maurras, this commission sparked a crisis for Maritain, creating a tension between Maritain the French national, and Maritain the faithful son of the Church.⁴²⁵ Eventually, his commitment to the Church won out and in 1927,

⁴¹⁹ Amato, *Mounier and Maritain*, 74. For a more detailed coverage on the integration between politics and Catholicism in the thought of Maurras, see Michael Sutton, *Nationalism, Positivism and Catholicism: The Politics of Charles Maurras and French Catholics 1890-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

⁴²⁰ Weber, *Action Francaise: Royalism and Reaction in Twentieth Century France*, 220.

⁴²¹ Amato, *Mounier and Maritain*, 73.

⁴²² Anthony Rhodes, *The Vatican in the Age of Dictators, 1922-1945* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1973), 105.

⁴²³ Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 158.

⁴²⁴ Ibid.

⁴²⁵ Amato, *Mounier and Maritain*, 75.

Maritain published *The Primacy of the Supernatural* (*Primaute du Spirituel*, but translated into English under the title *Things that are Not Caesar's*).⁴²⁶ The work not only furnished a defence against *Action Francaise*, but also cemented New Christendom's place as the foundation of ecclesial politics in the 1930s.

Maritain took Christ's famous instruction to "render unto Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God" to be a Christ-given mandate for the separation between the spiritual and political spheres and the proper autonomy of one from the other. By giving this instruction, Christ "distinguished the two powers and in so doing emancipated the souls of men".⁴²⁷ In showing how this was the case, the influence of Eschweiler is apparent. According to Maritain, spiritual and temporal powers operated legitimately in two distinct realms. More importantly, they operated *autonomously* from each other. The Church was the proper ultimate authority in the spiritual realm, "the province of faith and morals [and] of salvation".⁴²⁸ The authority to directly govern political things in the temporal realm lay with the state. One power from one sphere thus cannot legitimately directly force an outcome in another. According to this framework, it was not the Pope's condemnation of *Action Francaise* that violated the autonomy of the political realm. For Maritain, *Action Francaise's* fused its teachings on politics, morals and religion in such a way as to constitute a spiritually pedagogical function. This meant that the party had trespassed into the spiritual realm over which the Church had proper direct authority. By usurping the Church's pedagogical role, *Action Francaise* was guilty of violating the autonomy of the spiritual realm, confusing spiritual and temporal and ultimately causing harm to the temporal interests of France.⁴²⁹

⁴²⁶ Jacques Maritain, *The Things That Are Not Caesar's*, trans. J F Scanlan (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931).

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, 59.

The Primacy of the Supernatural extensively spelt out the Church's proper place in a context of a bifurcation of the spiritual and political. Whilst the Church had the authority to directly intervene in this one particular political issue (namely the propriety of the teachings of *Action Francaise*), Maritain's conception of an autonomous political sphere did not allow the Church to intervene in just any political issue. This is because political issues could only properly be dealt with directly by the State. The state is granted a lot of capital in this work. According to William Cavanaugh, Thomas Aquinas' conception of temporal authority seamlessly flowed into the Modern State for Maritain. Despite his critiques of Modernity, Maritain seemed to regard the Modern state as "the most perfect natural community...which mankind can form in this world",⁴³⁰ since it epitomised the "proper differentiation of the temporal from the spiritual".⁴³¹ What is more, Maritain did not seem to differentiate between a Modern state that was democratic and one that was authoritarian. Both seemed to have a legitimate place in ensuring a minimum level of social cohesion. Indeed, Maritain is on the record as saying that strong state apparatuses can sometimes be defended.⁴³²

Maritain's endorsements of authoritarian movements notwithstanding, it is instructive to note that his ambivalence stemmed from the fact that state organs worked properly only if they were confined to a facilitative capacity and could not seek to assume themselves to be an ultimate end of human life. For Maritain, man is "ordered directly to God as to his eternal end" and only the Church as the proper hegemon of the spiritual realm could lay any such claims to ultimacy.⁴³³ The temporal realm is thus not fully independent of the spiritual, since a Maritainian humanism requires the latter in order to find meaning in the former. Whilst the political realm is rightfully autonomous within its own sphere,

⁴³⁰ Ibid., 2.

⁴³¹ Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 161.

⁴³² Schall, *Jacques Maritain: The Philosopher in Society*, 72.

⁴³³ Maritain, *The Things That Are Not Caesar's*, 4.

it is subordinate to the spiritual realm in matters of ultimate meaning.⁴³⁴ Thus, Catholics can both be good citizens supporting the good of the state, and be spiritually above every political faction.⁴³⁵

The political dividend of recognising the autonomy of both the temporal and spiritual planes was that it was possible to engender unity even in times of severe political division. When state was pitted against state, when one section within the state has set itself against the rest of the nation, and even when one Catholic citizen set out to claim the lives of another,⁴³⁶ Catholics *as members of the Church* can become a source of unity that political efforts just could not provide. Temporal unity, according to Maritain, was ephemeral and whilst good, could not be relied upon as the ultimate measure of engendering unity, since the state's defence of the legitimate ends of the temporal would inevitably put under strain and even put asunder any transnational unity.⁴³⁷

Whilst Catholics *as citizens* could not help but be part of this temporal fracturing, they could however *as members of the Church*, that is as members of the Mystical Body in the spiritual realm, become a compact that was “essentially supra-temporal, supra-political, supra-national”.⁴³⁸ In other words, Catholics as members of the Church can *spiritually* overcome all political and even national divides, and thus overcome the violence between any state and any faction.⁴³⁹ But to engender this unity, it must do so as a “country of souls”.⁴⁴⁰ For the Church to be free to act as this source of

⁴³⁴ Ibid., 14.

⁴³⁵ Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 162.

⁴³⁶ Maritain sees these as part of the proper submission to temporal authority. See Maritain, *The Things That Are Not Caesar's*, 88.

⁴³⁷ Ibid.

⁴³⁸ Ibid., xx.

⁴³⁹ Ibid., 90.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid., 10-12.

transnational unity, it must assume what Maritain calls “a minimum of body”.⁴⁴¹ Within the context of Maritain’s split between an autonomous spiritual and an autonomous temporal realm, it means that the Church had to avoid any direct involvement in political matters.

Cavanaugh notes, however, that Maritain’s endorsement of the autonomy of the secular did not mean a complete cloistering of the spiritual away from temporal matters. The temporal was still subordinate to the spiritual, and the Church’s important bridging role between the two spheres. Whilst the Church did have direct authority over the spiritual realm, the temporal realm’s need for the spiritual still meant that the Church had an indirect influence over the temporal. The Church exercised its direct authority in spiritual matters concerning the souls of Christians and thus could directly intervene in areas where the salvation of souls was at stake. But if in doing so, there is a secondary temporal effect, this still would not violate the autonomy of the secular, since the Church would not have directly intervened in political matters.⁴⁴² Put another way, the Church could still properly exercise an indirect political influence if it is only a secondary result of its direct exercise of its authority in the spiritual realm. In 1926, this manifested itself in the challenging of the political authority of *Action Francaise*.⁴⁴³ Such a challenge was not the result of a direct political intervention by the Church, but rather the inevitable, indirect result of a direct spiritual action. In finding concrete exemplars of this kind of action, Maritain made as his primary reference point the Perfect Society Church’s teaching role in a modified form. A New Christendom Church would not be expected to directly intervene in political matters, but be a custodian of spiritual values which the Church hierarchy imparts through “*counsels and directions*, which the nations will always expect from her moral authority”.⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., xx.

⁴⁴² Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 159-61.

⁴⁴³ Maritain, *The Things That Are Not Caesar's*, 56-54.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., xii.

Moral authority, as the name suggests, is not the result of extrinsic coercion, but an internal spiritual animation. The ordinary Christian as a member of the Mystical Body of Christ plays a vital role here. As a part of the temporal realm, the Christian is properly subject to the authority of the State and rightfully ought to be a full participant in the life of his or her political community, even when that community was engaged in the violence of warfare.⁴⁴⁵ In participating corporeally in the activities of the State, however, Christians must be mindful that they are also called to sanctify life in the temporal realm by reorienting it to its ultimate supernatural end. This is effected by their being a spiritual conduit between the hierarchy's teaching authority and secular life. The Christian qua Christian takes the counsels of the Church and invisibly transforms political life by spiritually impregnating it, through their work "on the hearts of people of all nations" via their appeal to the consciences of fellow citizens⁴⁴⁶ In so doing, the Christian both indirectly reorientates the temporal to its proper supernatural end, and directly engenders greater transnational unity by solidifying the "country of souls".

Pius XI, the "Peace of Christ" and Catholic Action

The Concerns of Pius XI

The focus on philosophy brought about by post-war trauma in Europe generally, the credence given to Catholic philosophy, the revival of Thomism as a way to engage the onslaught of the Enlightenment, and Maritain's prominence in all these imaginaries all served to make New Christendom the defining framework for the Church's engagements with the consolidation of Fascism in Europe. However, Maritain's framework alone was insufficient to generate the contours of the operationalisation of Maritain's separation of the spiritual and temporal into two indirectly linked spheres. The field that shaped the actions of the Church and the necessary articulation of the nature of that Church had to be generated from other sources. Attention on this score must be focussed on *Catholic Action* and Pius XI.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., 88.

⁴⁴⁶ ———, *Religion and Culture: Essays in Order 1*, 10-12.

Pius' central concerns, and the ecclesiology that informed his engagement with those concerns, could be gleaned from two documents. The first was *Ubi Arcano Dei Consilio*, which Pius promulgated in 1922. Pius' ecclesiology retained many important elements of the institutional and corporatist focus of the old Perfect Society ecclesiology which, one could argue, was the function of the work of Heinrich Pesch. Pesch's work was relayed to Pius via the German Jesuits Oswald von Nell-Breuning and Gustav Gundlach, both of whom were frequently consulted by Pius on socio-political issues. Pesch championed a form of corporatism that had at its heart a high degree of vertical national integration. Like the previous form of corporatism mentioned in the previous chapter, all social segments within a national unit were duty-bound to cooperate with one another. However, as their central guiding principle, there was a greater emphasis on the subordination of these sub units for the sake of common prosperity. Pesch argued that this theory of "solidarism" would protect the social groupings that protected the individual, avoid rampant individualism and reduce the risk of class conflict.⁴⁴⁷ The influence of this rather authoritarian version of corporatism in Pesch's work is evident in some sections of *Ubi Arcano Dei Consilio*. Key among these is a critique of a new spirit of insubordination, which he held responsible for sowing internal discord within nations, which he regarded as "a much more serious and lamentable evil" than threats of external aggression.⁴⁴⁸ Many seem to focus on sections emphasising authority to demonstrate Pius' authoritarian streak, which is argued to be decisive in his seeking to maintain cordial relations with the totalitarian states. This line of argument, however, fails to do justice to the bulk of sections that speak of the central role Pius accorded to *Catholic Action*. While it is true that Pius may have exhibited the influence of Pesch in some sections of the encyclical, there were many more that betrayed the strong influence of the idea of New Christendom as outlined in *The Primacy of the Supernatural*, the work he commissioned Maritain to write.

⁴⁴⁷ For a more detailed coverage of Pesch's work see, Heinrich Pesch, *Ethics and the National Economy*, trans. Rupert Ederer (Manila: Divine Word Publications, 1988).

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 24

To show the predominance of Maritain's influence in Pius' ecclesiology, it is necessary to return to Pius' concerns, chief among which was the pervasiveness of violence. Evidence of this could be gleaned from *Ubi Arcano*'s preamble, "the Peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ". Pius lamented the comprehensive state of unrest that lingered long after the end of the "Great War", where

individuals, the different classes of society, the nations of the earth...do not enjoy...fruitful tranquillity which is the aspiration and the need of mankind⁴⁴⁹

Pius saw as the main cause for this unrest the inordinate desire for temporal advantage, particularly material wealth and political power. This resulted in the continuation of a comprehensive breakdown in the social fabric within nations as well as between them. This desire was so pervasive and had so saturated European culture that it was

hidden under the manipulations of politics or concealed beneath the fluctuations of finance, but openly appearing in the press, in reviews and magazines of every type, and even penetrating into institutions devoted to the cultivation of the arts and sciences, spots where otherwise the atmosphere of quiet and peace would reign supreme.⁴⁵⁰

Pius then drew a link between this inordinate desire with the liberal nationalisms of the late nineteenth century, and the totalitarianisms emerging in the post-war period. Because almost every aspect of culture had become subject to these desires, even acts done in the name of the public good, such as for love of country, had become "debased to the condition of an extreme nationalism", which prioritised national chauvinism at the expense of one's belonging of "the same great human

⁴⁴⁹ Pius XI, *Ubi Arcano Dei Consilio* (1922), 7

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_23121922_ubi-arcano-dei-consilio_en.html.

This document will hereinafter be cited as "*UADC*".

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 10

family”⁴⁵¹. This inordinate desire for autonomy and self-maximisation had resulted in a pervasiveness of violence both between and within nations. Together with a national chauvinism this led to the distortion of any notion of harmony into an “armed peace which is scarcely better than war itself”.⁴⁵²

Spiritual Renewal and the Revival of Order

In Pius’ seeking to counter the violence brought about by the inordinate desire for material power, one can see the influence of Maritain’s bifurcation of the spiritual and the temporal, mixed in with the old “Perfect Society” ecclesiology. For instance, Pius saw the necessity of the Church as “the infallible teacher of [God’s] doctrines in every century and before all nations”.⁴⁵³ While this sounds like a repetition of the “Perfect Society”, it is noteworthy that Pius’ focus on the Church’s teaching role was framed in terms of the inculcation of values of justice, reconciliation and the brotherhood of man. This in turn required addressing the need for a revival of spiritual life amongst the citizenry, instituting a spiritual peace nourished by things of heaven. The “peace of Christ” was thus not merely a system of “acts of external or formal courtesy”, but a peace that will “penetrate the souls of men and which will unite, heal, and reopen their hearts to that mutual affection which is born of brotherly love”.⁴⁵⁴

This emphasis on the spiritual inculcation of values sat alongside an emphasis on the submission to proper authority. Once again, echoes of the “Perfect Society” intermixed with Maritain’s bifurcation of spiritual and temporal spheres. Whilst spiritual renewal lay at the heart of civilisational revival, Pius still saw a need for order to underpin any kind of peace. This was not the submission to the supreme authority of the Church in both temporal and spiritual matters. Rather, order was predicated on Maritain’s splitting of the spiritual and temporal into two separate and autonomous spheres. This

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., 25

⁴⁵² Ibid., 11

⁴⁵³ Ibid., 41

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., 33

can be gleaned first from Pius' cautioning of the Church against being mixed up in "purely civil affairs" without just cause.⁴⁵⁵ In *Ubi Arcano Dei Consilio*, Pius spoke of the "supreme authority" of the State, recognising that the State, not the Church, had proper authority in temporal affairs.⁴⁵⁶ At the same time, Pius spoke of the need for recognising the position of Church as teacher, and for the need of the Church to be "held...supreme *in its own sphere*".⁴⁵⁷

While *Ubi Arcano* outlined the Church's concerns and general plan of action, it was *Quadragesimo Anno* and *Non Abbiamo Bisogno* that actually spelled out Pius' ecclesiology. Pius once again focussed on the threat posed by the "evil individualistic spirit" of the age,⁴⁵⁸ which manifested itself in inordinate material maximisation at the expense of communal welfare, and in turn encouraged "unlimited freedom of struggle among competitors".⁴⁵⁹ He saw this individualistic and materialistic mindset at the heart of liberal Capitalism, which he said had transformed any notion of economic freedom into a "despotic economic dictatorship" that "ha[s] so firmly in [its] grasp the soul...of economic life that no one can breathe against [its] will".⁴⁶⁰ At the same time, Pius saw the risk of individualism leading to an extreme collectivism of both Communism and Fascism, where an overreliance on the State to regulate any conflict of interests led to the State becoming "overwhelmed and crushed by almost infinite tasks and duties".⁴⁶¹ The threat of both these extremes lay in the

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid., 65

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., 12

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., 48. Emphasis added.

⁴⁵⁸ Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), 88

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19310515_quadragesimo-anno_en.html.

This document will hereinafter be cited as "QA".

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., 107

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., 105-6

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., 78

perpetuation of violence at every social level, involving individuals, classes and states in a war of all against all.

The “Peace of Christ” would resist this disintegration via the introduction of mediating structures that protected individuals from both savage individual competition and absorption into collectivism. Pius saw the mystical body of Christ to be that vital mediating agent, a social glue which had as its central pole the Pauline idea of an intimately interconnected social body, where the whole is “joined and knit together through every join of the system according to the functioning...of each single part”, and is “buil[t] up of itself in love”.⁴⁶² In a manner similar to the old Perfect Society ecclesiology, the Mystical Body was a corporatist collection of parts, each performing its own specialised function in cooperation with each other. Where the similarities ended, however, was that rather than engender unity through the consolidation of juridical institutions, the “Peace of Christ” sought a moral unity. In the context of a culturally disintegrating Europe, this unity could only come about through a process of “correction of morals”, via formation of the faithful in charity.⁴⁶³ As providential convergences of both these elements of the Mystical Body, Pius extolled the virtues of “syndicates and corporations of the various callings”, in which “workers...every kind, with the counsel of the Church and frequently under the leadership of her priests, give and receive mutual help and support”.⁴⁶⁴

Pius did not suggest anything radically new here. The Pontiff would have found a highly receptive audience amongst members of the many lay movements that emerged and consolidated in the decades since *Rerum Novarum*. Such movements had been strongly influenced by the centralising tendencies of Ultramontanism, and had by the time of Pius X consolidated themselves into a rather cohesive transnational movement that maintained strong ties with the hierarchy, and sought to

⁴⁶² Ibid., 90

⁴⁶³ Ibid., 78, 138

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid., 24

strengthen the Church's organisation and bring Europe back to the Catholic fold.⁴⁶⁵ This "participation of the laity in the hierarchical apostolate" by this collection of vocational and charitable organisations,⁴⁶⁶ which Pius would label *Catholic Action*, became regarded as the "apple of our eye".⁴⁶⁷ The close supervision of these movements by the hierarchy was certainly one reason for Pius' favouring of *Catholic Action*. However, as Cavanaugh observes, there were other reasons that went beyond cynical power plays.

One reason why Pius favoured *Catholic Action* was because the movement provided important mediating structures to protect individuals from raw bureaucratic power. This was ensured by their organisation according to the principles of "subsidiary function". By having subsidiary social units handle "matters of lesser importance", conflicts between individuals, social groupings and states would be eliminated.⁴⁶⁸ The other, and more important, reason shows the influence of Maritain's stressing of the autonomy of the secular. Pius favoured *Catholic Action* because, as an association of associations, it was not constituted as a political party. As such, Pius saw *Catholic Action* as an avenue whereby the Church could both remain politically engaged whilst still removing itself formally from divisive party politics. With intensifying economic crises and resultant social dislocations, Catholic parties with whom the Church previously had strong ties, most notably the Italian Popular Party and the German Centre Party, were experiencing declining electoral fortunes as Communists and Fascists slowly gained in popularity.⁴⁶⁹ This made the Catholic parties an increasingly ineffective ecclesial means of influencing temporal affairs. On the other hand, "abstention from every political activity", as he would later write in another encyclical, *Non abbiamo*

⁴⁶⁵ Holland, *Modern Catholic Social Teaching*, 195.

⁴⁶⁶ Letter by Pius XI to Cardinal Bertram of Breslau, dated 13 November 1928. Cited in Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 138.

⁴⁶⁷ Cited in *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁸ QA, 80

⁴⁶⁹ For some coverage on the declining electoral fortunes of the German Centre Party, see Avro Manhattan, *The Vatican in World Politics* (New York,: Gaer Associates, 1949), 76, Lewy, *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany*, 6.

Bisogno, had become the “fundamental law of Catholic Action”.⁴⁷⁰ In a 1938 address to the College of Cardinals, Pius would reiterate *Catholic Action*’s apolitical status, declaring it was “neither engage[d] in politics nor br[ought] an undesired rivalry”, but instead “solely s[ought] to make good Christians living their Christianity”.⁴⁷¹

Catholic Action’s apolitical status did not quarantine the Church from temporal affairs. Whilst defending *Catholic Action*’s abstention from politics, Pius still regarded it as an “element of the first order for the public good”.⁴⁷² Once again, the reasoning behind this again evinced the influence of New Christendom ecclesiology, which regarded the Church as a purely spiritual agent that only indirectly affected the temporal realm. In the same way, Pius saw the work of *Catholic Action* as a proper manifestation of the Church being, as he stated in *Ubi Arcano*, “supreme...in its own sphere”⁴⁷³. According to Pius, the work of *Catholic Action* centred in integral Christian formation of every member via the transmission of the Church’s teachings to him or her. Thus, the work of *Catholic Action* was directed at their souls, which made the work “spiritual, not temporal, supernatural, not of this world, religious, not political”.⁴⁷⁴ However, as Cavanaugh also observed, the direct spiritual work of *Catholic Action* still had what Yves Congar would later call an “area of indirect, suggested or partial efficaciousness, which touches nature or creation itself”.⁴⁷⁵ In other

⁴⁷⁰ Pius XI, *Non Abbiamo Bisogno* (1931), 25

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_29061931_non-abbiamo-bisogno_en.html.

This document will hereinafter be cited as “*NAB*”.

⁴⁷¹ Cited in Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 138.

⁴⁷² Cited in *Ibid*.

⁴⁷³ *UADC*, 48

⁴⁷⁴ Pius’ letter to Cardinal Bertram, cited in Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 139.

⁴⁷⁵ Yves Congar, *Lay People in the Church: A Study for a Theology of Laity*, Revised ed. (London: Geoffrey Chapman 1985), 351.

words, by forming the souls of members with values generated by the teachings of the Church, the work of *Catholic Action* would spill over into the temporal realm as those members bring those values to bear on their temporal roles. Pius thus sought to carve out for the Church a sphere of action quite external to but branching out from the spiritual sphere, which was the proper domain of the Church but also quite apart from what he claimed to be “purely civil affairs”.

Pius’ ecclesiology was similar to that of Leo XIII in that it had corporatist contours through his insistence of *Catholic Action*’s links with the clerical hierarchy. It was also similar in that it placed an especially strong focus on the Church’s teaching role. Unlike the Perfect Society, however, the Church’s teaching role went beyond the hierarchy and extended into the various formative activities of the laity via *Catholic Action*. The formative focus of *Catholic Action* made the Church recognise Maritain’s autonomy of the spiritual and temporal spheres. For *Catholic Action*, the mind and soul was the main arena within which the Church operated, and would thus properly constitute direct action by the Church that was confined to the spiritual realm. However, such spiritual actions were also “social” insofar as they had an indirect effect in the temporal realm. Conversely, the autonomy of both spheres from each other also meant that the sphere of formation and education, being spiritual in nature, lay beyond the mandate of the State. In the same way that the Church reigned supreme in its own sphere and was the supreme moral counsellor of the temporal order in Maritain’s New Christendom, the “Peace of Christ” enjoined the Church’s fierce defence of its role as the sole formator of souls. This explains why Pius’ relations with the states, in particular the totalitarian states of Italy Germany, pivoted on the issue of the protection of the Church’s role as educator and spiritual formator.

The Practice of the “Peace of Christ”

The Church under Pius XI was a mixture of elements from both the old Perfect Society and Maritain’s New Christendom. The practice of Pius’ “Peace of Christ” would similarly involve the old practices of the Church as State, as well as those of the Church as spiritual formator, with *Catholic Action* forming the lynchpin.

Catholic Action

The mainstay of Pius' ecclesiology was the consolidation of *Catholic Action* into a network of organisations focussing on various aspects of a person. Such aspects included age, sex, vocation, specialisations in work, regional location, social grouping, or family. As such there would be youth, student, religious, men's and women's organisations, as well as organisations for particular professions like lawyers or teachers.⁴⁷⁶ Though formally run by a network of committees of both laity and clerics at the diocesan level,⁴⁷⁷ *Catholic Action* de facto operated with some degree of coherence both nationally and internationally, given the high degree of cross membership as well as the close relationships with clusters of clerics or bishops. In addition, the Lateran Treaty had made provisions for the oversight of *Catholic Action* by central authorities in the Holy See. Because the movement had evolved from the myriad of lay movements that spawned in the 1800s, *Catholic Action* still retained some of the characteristics of the old Perfect Society ecclesiology, in that it attempted to set up parallel institutions within the newly consolidated states. For example, in the closing years of the 1920s, the Italian Catholic Action ran an insurance scheme that rivalled a state sponsored alternative, attracting a number of policy holders.⁴⁷⁸ However, such structures were largely *ad hoc*, grassroots enterprises and in no way rivalled the kind of bureaucracies set up by the Holy See.

Such efforts were secondary to its educative and formative mission, as part of the building of the Mystical Body of Christ. *Catholic Action* meetings were not purely devotional exercises, but were also courses in spiritual, moral and educative formation. Such instruction was supposed to prepare members to apply their faith in their respective roles within secular society, and in so doing penetrate European society by bringing a Christian spiritual influence to bear on all secular duties that are being carried out.⁴⁷⁹ While this may appear to leave the temporal status quo largely intact, according

⁴⁷⁶ Tom Truman, *Catholic Action and Politics* (London: Merlin Press, 1960), 58-59.

⁴⁷⁷ Rhodes, *Vatican*, 50.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁹ Truman, *Catholic Action and Politics*, 59.

to the logic of *Catholic Action*, what is crucial is the transformation of disposition of the person carrying out the task. Again, this program betrays the influence of Maritain's Thomism, which drew a distinction between the natural end of the temporal duty, and the supernatural end of the person that carries out that duty. Whilst the task temporally remains the same, the reorientation of that person's intention towards God is what ultimately transforms and sanctifies the task being carried out, thereby extending the Mystical Body of Christ. The success of *Catholic Action's* formative work and ultimately in transforming society pivoted not on the changing of the contours of the temporal task, but rather on changing the hearts and subjective intentions of the person carrying out the task, so that ultimate destiny of the person is recalibrated back to Christ.⁴⁸⁰ In this way, the autonomy of the temporal is respected, while temporality is still brought back under the authority of Christ.

Treaties and Concordats

Still, one must note that for Pius, the fundament of *Catholic Action's* formative work as part of the Mystical Body of Christ was a juridical one, along the lines set by the Perfect Society. This could only make sense in light of the legal consolidation of the nation state, though the imposition of regimes of law of ever increasing scope, which slowly posited the state the sole point of legitimate authority. Such a process marginalised the Church by expropriating the Holy See's legal basis of existence, and making each congregation a subject of the State before it was a congregation of the universal Church. For Pius, asserting the autonomy of any Catholic agency meant having to counter arguments that any restriction on an ecclesiastical agency was purely a state matter.⁴⁸¹ To him, the only avenue of overcoming this legal hurdle lay in the re-establishment of the Holy See's juridical standing as an independent sovereign. To legally protect Catholic agencies, Pius had to protect the statehood of the Vatican. Thus the Lateran Treaty was concluded with Italy in 1929. The importance of this document did not just lie in the fact that the legal personhood of the Vatican was ensured. The treaty also assured that *Catholic Action* would be granted full autonomy as an agency of the

⁴⁸⁰ Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 139-40.

⁴⁸¹ John Jay Hughes, "The Reich Concordat of 1933: Capitulation or Compromise," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 20 (1974): 174.

Church.⁴⁸² In a concession that pandered to Pius' conceptualisation of the Church as the primary formator, the treaty also provided for the authority of the Church to provide Catholic education in schools, and even provided state aid for such programs.⁴⁸³

The Lateran Treaty became the model for protecting the legal status of the Holy See and *Catholic Action*. While another concordat was concluded with Austria in May 1933, the major country with which Pius was particularly anxious to conclude an agreement was Germany, as the National Socialists made more inroads in consolidating party control over the state and all sectors of society. However, Hitler was more astute than Mussolini in seeing Pius' preference for a legal settlement as the basis of assuring ecclesial autonomy, and also recognised the great propaganda value of a treaty with the Vatican. Internally, he would be able to secure his position among the large Catholic minority; internationally, he would obtain the prestige of being allied with an internationally recognised moral power. Thus, when Hitler assumed the Chancellorship, he made an offer of a conclusion of a concordat.⁴⁸⁴ While receptive, the Vatican was also aware of the awkward position in which the Reich's offer had put it. It was not optimistic that the terms of the Concordat would be respected.⁴⁸⁵ However, it also knew that, with the Reich conceding to virtually all of the Vatican's

⁴⁸² Rhodes, *Vatican*, 45.

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁴⁸⁴ There is however, some disagreement over who initiated the negotiating process. For a discussion on this issue, see Biesinger, "Reich Concordat," 129-30.

⁴⁸⁵ An indication of such suspicion can be found in the terms of the concordat itself. Attached to the concordat was a secret protocol that gave German seminarians certain exemptions in "the event of a reorganisation of the present German military system by the introduction of general military service". Any such arrangement would have been in violation of the Versailles Treaty, which banned Germany from introducing conscription.

See Gerhard L. Weinberg, *The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany: Diplomatic Revolution in Europe 1933-36* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), 54.

Indeed, on the issue of conscription of seminarians there is some evidence that the Reich did breach the terms of the concordat. There exists in the literature an autobiographical account of a Franciscan seminarian, Gereon

demands, more than any previous government was willing to countenance,⁴⁸⁶ “responsibility of a refusal would have devolved upon the Holy See.”⁴⁸⁷ Refusal would represent a propaganda victory for the Reich, by giving it the opportunity to accuse the Vatican of refusing to come to terms with the Reich. The Reich could then impose its own terms should it present another offer⁴⁸⁸, or “predictably [the Church] would have faced another *Kulturkampf* with unforeseen consequences⁴⁸⁹”.

What is more, captured German documents reveal that Hitler had made threats to shut down Catholic schools and youth movements should a Concordat not be signed.⁴⁹⁰ Such threats were accompanied by constant attacks and arrests of leaders and members of Catholic organizations,⁴⁹¹ and intensified as negotiations reached its final stages.⁴⁹² Whilst these assaults were taking place, the Reich was closing off any alternative avenues of ensuring any ecclesiastical freedom of action or addressing any grievances. The government had channelled all administrative power from the provinces to Berlin, rendering any provincial agreements entered into with the Church void.⁴⁹³ The final blow to the Vatican’s bargaining position was thrown when in the middle of negotiations, the Catholic Centre

Goldmann, who was conscripted into the SS. See Gereon Goldmann, *The Shadow of His Wings* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1964).

⁴⁸⁶ Conway, "Silence," 86.

⁴⁸⁷ Statement by Pope Pius XII, 2nd June 1945. See Pinchas Lapide, *Three Popes and the Jews* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1967), 101.

⁴⁸⁸ Rychlak, *Hitler, the War and the Pope*, 58.

⁴⁸⁹ Biesinger, "Reich Concordat", 136.

⁴⁹⁰ Rhodes, *Vatican*, 174.

⁴⁹¹ Stewart A Stehlin, *Weimar and the Vatican, 1919-1933 : German-Vatican Diplomatic Relations in the Interwar Years* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), 439.

⁴⁹² Cornwell, *Hitler's Pope*, 147-48.

⁴⁹³ Stehlin, *Weimar and the Vatican*, 441.

Party, after a constant campaign of attack by Nazi Party agents, agreed to disband in June 1933.⁴⁹⁴ With more and more legal avenues being closed off by the Nazis, and with the Nazis more than making good on their threats against Catholic organizations, Vatican negotiators were under immense pressure to establish a final, legal line of defense and hastily concluded German concordat in July 1933.

However, in its haste to draw up the terms of the Concordat, the Vatican gave little regard to the precise meaning in terminology,⁴⁹⁵ which adversely affected the position of *Catholic Action* in Germany. A particularly troublesome clause was Article 31, which was meant to protect lay organisations against dissolution. Because of the constant onslaughts by the Nazis, the Vatican was given no opportunity to draw up a schedule to outline exactly what organisations were to be protected. Rather than provide a comprehensive recognition of autonomy for *Catholic Action*, as the Lateran Treaty did, the German concordat put the Vatican in a situation where it had to frequently consult Nazi authorities for clarification, which the Nazis often responded to by ignoring any Vatican requests for clarification.⁴⁹⁶ The lack of clarification also provided Hitler with many legal loopholes to exploit. For example, he would often argue that ambiguity led to the favouring of ultimate Nazi

⁴⁹⁴ On 7th July 1933, the British Foreign Office received a telegram from Berlin on the dissolution of the Centre Party. Part of the telegram read:

“In their farewell manifesto the Centre leaders state that they have acted ‘in agreement with the Chancellor’ and that *they now feel confident that no further arrests or sequestrations will henceforth take place*, and that there will be no discrimination against the Catholic press”

See *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939. Second Series. Vol. 5*, ed. E.L. Woodward and R. Butler, vol. 5 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1956), 398, no. 234.

⁴⁹⁵ Rhodes, *Vatican*, 179.

⁴⁹⁶ Ronald Rychlak notes that of the fifty-five protests issued by the Vatican to Berlin, forty-five were ignored. See Rychlak, *Hitler, the War and the Pope*, 64.

authority over any matter of contention,⁴⁹⁷ or that the Vatican had failed to accommodate itself to the new security environment in Germany⁴⁹⁸.

Limitations of the Mystical Body of Christ

A lasting extension of the “Peace of Christ” into the territories of the totalitarian states did not eventuate. Tom Truman suggests that Pius’ program of re-Christianisation proved to be a powerful formula, arguing that the Fascist states were so “alarmed” by the *Catholic Action*’s demonstration as a considerable force in extending the political power of the Church, that they saw that only the exertion of brute force could curb its growth.⁴⁹⁹ It is true that there was a spread of *Catholic Action* cells all over Europe. However that alone is not a demonstration of an effective transformative capacity. This section seeks to show that the eventual failure of *Catholic Action* to transform society within the totalitarian states was not because of the exertion of force by the Fascists. Rather, the failure lay in the very foundations of Pius’ ecclesiology, namely Maritain’s bifurcation of the temporal and spiritual realms.

The problematique of Maritain’s splitting of the spiritual and the temporal into two autonomous spheres centres on the recognition of two supreme authorities in the cosmic order, with each one having full direct control of a single sphere. To show how a problem arises from this, attention will be given to the issue of citizenship. One must bear in mind that whilst Pius was indeed intent on winning Europe back to Christ, he was simultaneously trying to defend Catholics against accusations of being subjects of a foreign power, namely the Church, and the attendant dilemmas that would arise. The repressive measures taken against the Church by the newly formed states in the late

⁴⁹⁷ See for example the communiqué from German Foreign Minister Konstantin von Neurath to Orsenigo, 11th March 1937. *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945, Series C, Vol. 6*, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1957), 530, no. 260.

This series of documents will hereinafter be cited as “DGFP”.

⁴⁹⁸ DGFP, Series C, vol. 4, 1010, no. 503.

⁴⁹⁹ Truman, *Catholic Action and Politics*, 71.

eighteenth century, particularly in Italy and Germany, were weighing heavily on Pius' mind. Maritain's splitting the spiritual from the temporal, in Pius' eyes, resolved that tension in citizenship. By asserting the purely spiritual nature of the actions of the Church, Catholicism was not guilty of making double agents of European citizens, for doing so would run against the interests of religion.⁵⁰⁰ Indeed, the interests of religion are tied closely to the welfare of the State, since the state became the most fundamental agent for order. For Pius, the formation given by *Catholic Action* to prepare Catholics for the world would make "better citizen[s]... and loyally submissive to constituted civil authority in every legitimate form of government."⁵⁰¹

The legitimacy of a government does not turn on the issue on the *form* of the government. Rather, it turns on that government's recognition of a division of labour whereby the spiritual realm is afforded solely to the Church.⁵⁰² So long as there is State recognition of the Church's authority over souls, there is ecclesial recognition of the State's supreme authority over the "bodily and material" lives of its citizens.⁵⁰³ This complete corporeal surrender of the Church to the state was not problematic for either Maritain or Pius, since what was being surrendered still had to be subordinate to the spiritual reign of Christ. So long as the spiritual realm fell under the jurisdiction of the Church, temporality could still be transformed by the reorienting of hearts and souls of citizens to Christ. As Pius XII would articulate in 1943, any physical divisions brought about by the acts of states, even in times of war, could be overcome by the "supernatural" bonds of the Mystical Body of Christ.⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰⁰ Address of Pius XI to the Mexican Bishops, 2 February 1926. Cited in Benedictine Monks of Solesmes, ed., *The Lay Apostolate: Papal Teachings* (Boston: St Paul Editions, 1961), 278.

⁵⁰¹ Pius XI, *Divini Illius Magistri* (1929), 85

http://212.77.1.246/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_31121929_divini-illius-magistri_en.html.

⁵⁰² Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 140.

⁵⁰³ *NAB*, 45

⁵⁰⁴ Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis Christi* (1943), 41-44

The problem with the conceptualisation of politics that quarantines the spiritual from the temporal, with the two intersecting only indirectly via the individual is twofold. By giving ultimate political authority to the State, both Maritain and Pius adopted as the Church's own the process of secularisation that was actually designed to domesticate the Church into an invisible, private corner.⁵⁰⁵ The state could be seen to be part of a division of labour in a cosmic order because they were conceptualised by both Maritain and Pius as purely administrative mechanisms. However, as mentioned in the previous chapter this ignores the fact that the consolidation of the nation state required not just the monopolisation of the means of *physical* mobilisation, but also the monopolisation of generating, in the words of Luigi Sturzo "a conception of the world and of life". In other words, the state sought to monopolise the means of spiritual formation, so as to generate a worldview that legitimises that physical mobilisation. The state thus sought to be an all encompassing discipline that incorporated the subjugation of the "mind, will and body".⁵⁰⁶ The State, especially the Totalitarian state, wanted control of the spiritual as well as of temporal realms. This provides a more compelling alternative to Tom Truman in explaining the measures taken by the Fascists and the Nazis to eliminate *Catholic Action*. The organisation was a political obstacle not because of its potential to become another opposition party. Indeed, the formation of good citizens which lay at the heart of *Catholic Action*'s programs eventually led to a more or less neat alignment of *Catholic Action* with state policy,⁵⁰⁷ as exemplified by the formation of *Catholic Action* cells for the purpose of securing finances for the military expansion plans of Italy and Germany.⁵⁰⁸ Rather, the State's intolerance of *Catholic Action* lay in the fact that it was the only obstacle to the State's monopolisation of channels of moral and educational formation.

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_29061943_mystici-corporis-christi_en.html.

⁵⁰⁵ Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 191.

⁵⁰⁶ Cited in *Ibid.*, 136.

⁵⁰⁷ William Teeling, *The Pope in Politics: The Life and Work of Pope Pius XI* (London: Lovat Dickson, 1937), 127.

⁵⁰⁸ Rhodes, *Vatican*, 75.

Another problem pertained to Maritain's and Pius' juxtaposition of morals with prudence. A recurring theme of *Catholic Action* formation programs was that extending the Mystical Body of Christ involved not just a formation of the spirit, but also a building up of technical competence in one's vocational field.⁵⁰⁹ This proceeded from Maritain's understanding that the Gospel as a moral category residing in the spiritual realm had no direct sociopolitical correlate in the temporal sphere. The contours of the Gospel's corporeal manifestations had to obey the dictates of prudence, which more often than not meant obeying the dictates laid down by those that ruled the temporal sphere. In the realm of politics, the prudential means of the person to incarnate the Gospel in the political realm meant conforming to the dictates of the State.⁵¹⁰ Cavanaugh notes that even as Pius sought to limit state omnicompetence through the use of intermediate structures and the principle of subsidiarity, he was unwittingly arguing for a greater concentration of state power. This was because deciding on the terms that determined just what matters were more or less important, and those that determined the associations competent enough to handle those matters, all presupposed a strong state with enough coordinating power over all agents and processes of decision making as to render any notion of autonomy from state power a mere fiction.⁵¹¹

This did not present a problem for Pius, for he still had one card left in his ecclesial deck against an all encompassing State power. This was the assurance that the mind and soul were always directed towards Christ regardless of the physical outcomes. So long as these categories were allowed to operate freely, Christ would be able to invisibly transform the temporal. This betrays an overestimation of the capacities of the soul to invisibly impinge upon corporeal configurations whilst still keeping the latter intact. The inverse of this line of argument is the point of concern here. In

⁵⁰⁹ For a late example of the articulation of this theme, see the 1955 statement to Australian Catholics by Archbishop Carboni, the Apostolic Delegate to Australia, in Truman, *Catholic Action and Politics*, 55.

⁵¹⁰ Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 169.

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*, 195.

granting complete control of those corporeal configurations to the state, both Maritain and Pius also seemed to have overestimated the soul's autonomy from the body's actions. In a rather chilling illustration pertaining to violence, Maritain said it was impossible to "touch the flesh...without staining our fingers". However, "to stain our fingers is not to stain our hearts".⁵¹² This may have been a case of using an extreme example to illustrate a point, but the conception of an autonomous spiritual sphere does not change the substance of Maritain's claim pertaining to the autonomy of the soul from the body. However, the consolidation of the Totalitarian state had more effectively than any other modern political configuration, revived the salience of the medieval idea that no such spiritual autonomy exists.

In his *Genealogies of Religion*, Talal Asad sketched the evolution of social relations that shaped the content of the concept of "religion". Whatever epistemological categories that arose pertaining to the idea of "religion" in each stage of history, arose as part of shifts in patterns of corporeal disciplines.⁵¹³ This is why Asad finds strong parallels in the writings of J C Schmitt. Because "the body and soul are but one", says Schmitt, "movements of the former betray outwardly the...interior of the soul".⁵¹⁴ As the Latin root of the word "religion", *re-ligare* ("to bind again"), suggests, a spiritual category was not understood to stand independently of corporeal disciplines. Rather, it was intimately connected to some kind of corporeal "binding" that made the body act in particular ways. To put this in the context of Maritain's and Pius' conception of the Mystical Body, both ignored the fact that what the State did to the bodies of Catholics ended up affecting their souls as well. When the Church found unproblematic the Nazis enjoining children's membership of the Hitler Youth as a prerequisite for their Catholic civil servant parents to keep their employment, or when the Church allowed Catholic participation in ceremonies where oaths of complete loyalty to the Fatherland were sworn, the Church not only allowed the securing of new party recruits, but also allowed the introduction of a Fascist spirituality to rival Catholicism. Thus, when Carlo Falconi charged the

⁵¹² Maritain, *Integral Humanism*, 249.

⁵¹³ Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, 27-28.

⁵¹⁴ Cited in *Ibid.*, 138.

Church with deliberately refraining from making its contribution to alleviate the effects of the Second World War by making pronouncements to “release the Catholic citizens of Germany and her allies from their national obedience”,⁵¹⁵ he forgets that the Church, with no corporeal counter mobilisation of its own, held no sway even over the souls of the citizens of the Totalitarian states. The Mystical Body that underpinned the “Peace of Christ” was, as Cavanaugh labels it, an ecclesiology of a “disappearing Church”.

Conclusion

The Mystical Body demonstrated its impotence as an ecclesiology as Catholics continued to subject themselves to the disciplines of the Fascist States, disciplines that eventually led to another world war. Despite this, Maritain and New Christendom continued to inform ecclesiological thought up until the 1970s. Pope John XXIII explicitly reminded Catholics that “they are members of the Mystical Body of Christ”.⁵¹⁶ Whilst Christians were indeed called to reverse the devastation of the war and “improve their own temporal institutions and environment”,⁵¹⁷ he reminded Catholics that they could only do so in a manner that continued Maritain’s respect for the autonomy of the temporal. John afforded no temporal competence to the Church and enjoined Catholics to corporeally act “in accordance with the laws...which correspond to their respective natures”.⁵¹⁸ Catholics had to once again individually reorient their intentions and hearts and fulfil their “duty to carry on their

⁵¹⁵ Carlo Falconi, *The Silence of Pius XII* (London: Faber and Faber, 1970), 100.

⁵¹⁶ John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra* (1961), 159

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_15051961_mater_en.html.

This document will hereinafter be cited as “MM”.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid., 179

⁵¹⁸ John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris* (1963), 150

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem_en.html.

This document will hereinafter be cited as “PT”.

economic and social activities in a Christian manner”,⁵¹⁹ bringing only “Christian motives and a Christian spirit” to “slightly affect[t]” the temporal world.⁵²⁰

The Second Vatican Council similarly called for the same bifurcation of the spiritual and temporal that Maritain advocated, even as it called the Church to have the split between faith and actions “be counted among the more serious errors of our age”.⁵²¹ More specifically, even as the Council condemned the “horror and perversity of war”⁵²² and called for a greater solidarity of mankind against new forms of violence, manifest in gross economic inequality⁵²³ and the threat of nuclear war,⁵²⁴ the Council Fathers still affirmed that the Church had to work within the recognition that “the temporal sphere is governed by its own principles”.⁵²⁵ The Council Fathers were clearly extending the influence of New Christendom when they declared that the accomplishment of salvation, and the engendering of solidarity of humankind, enjoined Christians to merely “permeat[e]...the Spirit of Christ”⁵²⁶ by “work[ing] for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven”.⁵²⁷

⁵¹⁹ *MM*, 228

⁵²⁰ *PT*, 151

⁵²¹ Paul VI, *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), 43

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

This document will hereinafter be cited as “*GS*”.

⁵²² *Ibid.*, 80

⁵²³ *Ibid.*, 83-5

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*, 80

⁵²⁵ *LG*, 36

⁵²⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁷ *Ibid.*, 31

At Vatican II, just as in pre-war Europe, Maritain's overestimation of the spiritual realm's authority over the temporal via the alleged power of values continued to hold sway. The following chapter will show how the first major activation of a post-Conciliar Church, Liberation Theology, demonstrated the continuation of Maritain's ecclesiology. Despite its cult status as a radical break from old ways of being Church, Liberation Theology evinced the same kind of limitations faced by Pius XI's Catholic Action.

The “Church of the Poor” at the Economic Periphery

Introduction

The period that followed immediately after the Second Vatican Council was characterised by many attempts to build the Mystical Body. By this time, the political centre of gravity had shifted to the Global South, as the Cold War superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, competed over the expansion of their respective spheres of influence. Nowhere did the political and ecclesiological currents converge as decisively as in South America, where a major shift towards active ecclesial mobilisation against the political status quo was first registered. This was manifested in Liberation Theology and the “Church of the Poor”. Indeed, it was in the immediate post-conciliar period where, according to Jeffrey Kleiber, the Church in Latin America was transformed from a “somewhat dormant and intellectually dependent Church to one which actively contribute[d] to Catholic and Protestant thought throughout the world”.⁵²⁸

Liberation Theology was hailed by many as the paragon of the Church’s instantiating of the Gospel in history, and continues to be an inspiration to many sectors in the Church in its engagement with the world. It is this claim that makes Latin America the focus of this chapter’s analysis. It will look at the practices of developmentalist politics, theology, an ascendant Marxism, entrenched folk piety, as well as a well-established mode of New Christendom ecclesial politics that laid the field for what many would hail as a revolution in theology, a theology of liberation. It will look at Gustavo Gutierrez as the point of convergence for all these practices, and will outline his articulation of what Jon Sobrino would call the “Church of the Poor”. It will finally demonstrate how the wide-spanning pastoral program of the “Church of the Poor” nonetheless could not provide prolonged sustenance to the Church’s engagement with the world. Indeed, it will show that the “Church of the Poor” in many

⁵²⁸ Jeffrey L. Klaiber, "Prophets and Populists: Liberation Theology 1968-1988," *The Americas* 46(1) (1989): 1.

ways proved to be a pale reflection of the New Christendom that went before it, and that far from politically retooling the Church, Liberation Theology actually led to its being stripped of political relevance.

The Latin American Imaginary

The Political Imaginary

Global Economic Reformism

The main cause of the shifting of the political axis to Latin America in the 1960s was the beginning of the so-called “Decade of Development”. The internationalisation of the economic model of gradual industrialisation was being championed at a time when the international priority was the building and securing of the social democratic state. The proliferation of this form of market-oriented economics would have a massive effect on international relations, as countries in the Global South were recruited into reforming their economies into those that followed the export-oriented logic of the industrialised North. This involved the less industrialised Southern economies engaging in import substitution, the import of expensive industrial plant and consumer goods from the wealthy Northern economies in exchange for relatively cheaper agricultural exports from the South. Contrary to predictions, however, unfavourable terms of trade meant that the process of import substitution only led to the generation of huge amounts of national debt in virtually all countries of the Global South.

For policy makers in the North, this presented an opportunity to further cement their economic supremacy in the global trading system. Debt became serviced via the recruitment of Southern land and labour for the production of cheap cash crop exports. However, wildly fluctuating commodity prices, combined with the steadily rising prices of industrial plant, further plunged these economies into uncertainty. International economic imbalances were exacerbated by a growing awareness of an internal misdistribution of what little wealth that was generated within these Southern economies. As the years progressed it became more apparent to academics, politicians and churchmen that the bulk

of the benefits of development were flowing into the hands of a small wealthy elite, driving millions of rural or urban poor into even more grinding poverty.

The whole concept of “development” thus became synonymous with a systemic dislocation of an ever growing population of the poor. In response, many turned their backs on the concept of reform, which fed a groundswell of support for the fast spreading ideology of Marxism, and its Latin American version which advocated national wars of liberation as an alternative to the status quo.⁵²⁹ An era of low intensity warfare thus emerged.⁵³⁰

The Security State

Import substitution was not the only concept exported to the Global South. The intensification of the Cold War had instilled in western policy makers an obsession with countering the spread of Communism. As part of the Truman doctrine, which sought “to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures”, there was a keen interest in protecting western overseas assets and ensuring the security of the homeland.⁵³¹ One aspect of this strategy of “national security” included the protection of the institutions that supervised the reformation of Latin America’s economies from being seized by Communist forces, a highly likely prospect in light of the growth in support for the sometimes violent overthrow of the developmentalist paradigm and the liberal democracy that was often associated with it. The 1959 overthrow of the Batista regime in the Cuban Revolution had become a sign of encouragement for socialist revolutionaries, and also a cause for alarm for policy makers in the West. Latin America was by the 1960s well within the security agenda. With western encouragement, local regimes established

⁵²⁹ Ibid.: 5.

⁵³⁰ Bell Jr, *Liberation Theology*, 52.

⁵³¹ Michael J. Hogan, *A Cross of Iron: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State, 1945-1954* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

“Security State” apparatuses that mimicked the frameworks established in the United States.⁵³² Such measures consolidated the power of military juntas that engaged in frequent coups against popular governments. To handle the insurgencies, the new regimes in Latin America became more autocratic and more repressive.

The Intellectual Imaginary

Dependency Theory

The groundswell of interest in Marxism in Europe, in the face of the repression by the security state in the political imaginary, was being replicated in Latin American intellectual circles. With the failure of the developmentalist model to lift any significant portion of Latin America out of poverty, the kind of modernisation that was practised in the 1950s began to lose favour in Latin American academia. In light of the growing economic integration between the developed and developing worlds, a new form of political theory was slowly taking the intellectual centre-stage.

This was Latin American dependency theory. Pioneered in 1950 by the Argentinean economist Raul Prebisch in his *The Economic Development of Latin America and Its Principal Problems*,⁵³³ researchers in the Economic Commission for Latin America expanded on his thesis and generated a wide spanning critique of the developmentalist aspects of international capitalist relations. This community stressed that development along the lines experienced in the North could never be replicated in the largely agrarian states in the South, so long as capitalist modes of production were maintained. Developmentalists had worked on the assumption that the State was an omniscient institution within its borders, and was able to work independently of larger international structural relations. Dependency theory on the other hand, gave greater determinative power to the structural

⁵³² John R Pottenger, *The Political Theory of Liberation Theology: Toward a Reconvergence of Social Values and Social Science* (New York: SUNY Press, 1989), 110-1.

⁵³³ Raul Prebisch, *The Economic Development of Latin America and Its Principal Problems* (New York: United Nations, 1950).

relations that the state had to operate in, which limited state capacity to develop independently. Chief among these structural determinants was the North's control of investment flows and from that, the economic and political infrastructure of the South, which always ensured to keep them in a dependent relationship with the former.⁵³⁴ Whilst trying to rise above their current subordinate position through trade, such relations were always weighted in favour of the developed nations and entrenched a dependency on such nations for economic betterment. The study of dependency theory as a critique of capitalism meant that the descriptive study of dependency was closely followed by a prescriptive rejection of the institutions that underpinned the modernisation that had demonstratively failed so many.

Paulo Freire & *Conscientisation*

The popular spread of dependency theory and the activation of the Liberation Theology that would soon follow could not be properly understood without brief attention to the work of Paulo Freire, the Brazilian expert in education theory. Though Freire was born of a middle class family, his experience of economic hardship during the Great Depression had instilled a great sympathy for the plight of the poor, particularly in the face of what he perceived as the neo-colonialism inherent in capitalist economic relations. This drove him to become a teacher, dealing with illiteracy among the poor. Freire's pioneering of a method of rapid literacy education soon placed him in the upper echelons of Brazilian education policy making, with the Brazilian government approving the replication of his program across the country, eventually cementing the popularity of the education theorist across the continent.

The content of Freire's form of popular education would be articulated in his landmark publication, *the Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Freire criticised the notion of the student as a passive blank slate on which the wisdom of the teacher is inscribed, as money is deposited into an empty bank account.⁵³⁵

⁵³⁴ See Samir Amin and Brian Pearce, *Unequal Development: An Essay on the Social Formations of Peripheral Capitalism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977), Volker Bornschier and Christopher Chase-Dunn, *Transnational Corporations and Underdevelopment* (New York: Praeger, 1985).

⁵³⁵ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (London: Penguin, 1972), 45-6.

Rather than consolidate a democratic polity, such methods serve to entrench the worldview of the colonial powers who assumed their place as teachers without consultation from subjects. Assuring true freedom required a more proactive involvement in the students' own education, and "participat[ion] in developing the pedagogy of their liberation".⁵³⁶

In place of a unidirectional mode of acquiring knowledge, Friere advocated a more dialogical mode of education which permits firstly "the emergence of the awareness of [one's] full humanity"⁵³⁷ as a prelude to a more active engagement to the world around. This underpinned a project of a working towards the world's transformation.⁵³⁸ Antecedent to this process of transformation is the process of priming the students to greater awareness of their situation, the legitimacy of their aspirations and their agency in manifesting those aspirations.⁵³⁹ This constituted a process of *concientizacion* (conscientisation), making people aware of their dignity in the face of oppression, before leaving it up to their consciences as to how to uphold that dignity in their engagement with the political sphere.⁵⁴⁰ As shall be demonstrated below, the entrenchment of this form of education would have a massive impact on the operationalisation of Liberation Theology.

The Ecclesial Imaginary

Catholic Action and Christian Democracy

The changes in both the political and intellectual imaginaries would also accelerate massive and complex changes that were already underway in the Latin American Church. Many analysts paint a caricature of a socially ignorant church being suddenly awoken by Liberation Theology. This caricature flies in the face of Klaiber's studies, which suggests Latin American Catholic lay

⁵³⁶ Ibid., 48.

⁵³⁷ Ibid., 66.

⁵³⁸ Ibid.

⁵³⁹ Ibid., 71.

⁵⁴⁰ Musto, *The Catholic Peace Tradition*, 221.

involvement in social issues from the mid nineteenth century. Communities of Catholic writers have been involved in the publication of a slew of Catholic newspapers from as early as 1855.⁵⁴¹ This established a foundation for Catholic awareness of, and involvement in, the social question in Latin America, such as the education of women and Indians. Such efforts were sporadic, although there were attempts to consolidate these scattered engagements with the social question into a larger ecclesial program. Exemplary cases include the founding of the Peruvian Catholic Society in 1867 and the Catholic Union in 1888.⁵⁴²

This current of nineteenth-century Catholic lay involvement in the social question sat in tension with the dominant ecclesial agenda of sustaining the conservative side of politics as a means of protecting Church privileges. However, dissemination of *Rerum Novarum* provided the impetus for the founding of Catholic student and worker's groups which sought a more concerted effort to address socioeconomic questions.⁵⁴³ The pressure that this wave of new associations exerted on the rather conservative approach of the earlier Catholic lay associations necessitated a change in the Church's approach to the social question. The introduction and subsequent papal endorsement of *Catholic Action* facilitated this change in direction from the conservative approach of direct party politics to a more progressive social witness. One dividend was the nurturing of important political and intellectual channels, which in turn widened the scope of Catholic lay social involvement in the whole region.⁵⁴⁴

Despite Pius XI's removal of the Church from direct involvement in parliamentary politics, the involvement of Catholics in parliamentary politics did not recede. In Latin America, the combination

⁵⁴¹ Jeffrey L. Klaiber, "The Catholic Lay Movement of Peru: 1867-1959," *The Americas* 40(2) (1983): 151.

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*: 150-1.

⁵⁴³ *Ibid.*: 159.

⁵⁴⁴ Edward L. Cleary, *Crisis and Change: The Church in Latin America Today* (New York: Orbis, 1985), 4.

of *Catholic Action* formation, together with the growing popularity of Jacques Maritain's articulation of New Christendom and his post-war endorsement of a political agenda akin to democratic politics,⁵⁴⁵ had nurtured a blossoming of Christian Democratic parties which enjoyed significant electoral success across the region.⁵⁴⁶ This ushered in a partnership between Church and state, as the Church provided legitimisation of the development initiatives championed by the Christian Democratic parties, including programs in literacy, agricultural reform, and the study of social issues.⁵⁴⁷

However, *Catholic Action's* widening of Catholic involvement in social issues and nurturing of Christian Democracy initiated a process of political radicalisation of Catholics as the 1960s approached. On the one hand, *Catholic Action* had nurtured a whole generation of Catholics, religious and laity, who were attuned to the most pressing social issue in the region: poverty. On the other hand, the Christian Democratic parties had become strong supporters of the very developmentalist paradigm that was failing the poor.⁵⁴⁸ This process of radicalisation was reinforced further by the eventual replacement of the Christian Democratic Parties with more autocratic regimes in the 1960s, which threw their support behind the developmentalist paradigm and backed it up with the use of coercive force. In the minds of many Catholics, a more direct approach was urgently needed to address the misery that was becoming more and more apparent as these modernisation programs progressed. However, they were being held back by a Church that, despite its nurturing of a social conscience, provided little sustenance for more direct political action. At the same time, the use of parliament as a channel for the addressing of grievances was becoming less and less feasible as the national security state consolidated itself across Latin America. The apparent successes of the Marxist insurgencies that sprang up across the region made violent rebellion an

⁵⁴⁵ Maritain visited Latin America in the 1930s and extensively taught his political philosophy, and he cemented his place in the lexicon of political thought in Latin America. See Bell Jr, *Liberation Theology*, 48.

⁵⁴⁶ Klaiber, "Prophets and Populists," 5-6.

⁵⁴⁷ Bell Jr, *Liberation Theology*, 46.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 52.

attractive option to many in the Church. This is exemplified by the popular Colombian priest, academic and student chaplain, Camillo Torres, who joined the Colombian National Liberation Army in the early 1960s as part of his witness to the poor.

Dom Helder Camara

Amidst the frustrations of many in the Church over the inadequacies of New Christendom, the efforts of the Bishop of Recife, Dom Helder Camara, would set the stage for a more decisive shift towards direct pastoral action. Like many bishops in Latin America, Camara's early history was one of intimate connections with political conservatism and privilege. In his youth, the fear of communism even led him to become a member of a fascist movement known as the Integralists.⁵⁴⁹ After his ordination to the priesthood, he rose in the Brazilian bureaucracy and served in many important roles, including that of advisor to the Brazilian Secretariat of Education in 1936. Until the 1960s, he was involved in the implementation of schemes run along the developmentalist model, and was even urged to run for mayor of Sao Paulo.

Freire's growing influence within intellectual and policy circles soon changed Camara's mind on the efficacy of the model, and he soon became instrumental in promoting social justice in Brazil. He began the earliest applications of conscientisation, even before the rise of Gutierrez's influence in Latin America. In 1960 he devised an educational program called the Movement for Basic Education. The program provided a syllabus in political awakening, educating the poor to analyse and criticise political situations, and from that, their own situations of economic dispossession and governmental oppression.⁵⁵⁰ This marked the beginning of the end of his romance with Brazil's ruling elites. In 1964, he was transferred to an isolated episcopal post in Recife, after a meeting with the American Ambassador, during which he vocally criticised a prominent political movement that emphasised developmentalist economics, combined with grandiose state led development projects

⁵⁴⁹ Musto, *The Catholic Peace Tradition*, 225, on the Integralists see Penny Lernoux, *Cry of the People* (New York: Doubleday, 1980), 159.

⁵⁵⁰ Musto, *The Catholic Peace Tradition*, 225.

that were reputed to benefit few except those that implemented the programs. This transfer, however, only brought him closer to the experiences of Brazil's poor and contributed to his radicalisation. Through the issuing of pastorals and a daily broadcasted address, Camara became a stridently vocal critic of the Brazilian regime. He vehemently condemned the developmentalist policies it was implementing as "systematised injustice" against the poor, at one point describing it as an "M (misery)-Bomb", a violence worse than the A-bomb used in great power diplomacy.⁵⁵¹

The influence of dependency theory can be seen in Camara's denunciations of the economic direction taken by his country, and those of the United States and the Soviet Union for using Latin America as a pawn in their political struggle for wealth or political prestige whilst turning a blind eye to the root causes of the suffering of the continent's poor. He condemned the neo-colonial behaviour of multinational corporations and their accumulation of vast wealth at the expense of the welfare of the people they are supposed to be benefitting, and using the most oppressive and violent local warlords to retain the privileged position of the corporation.⁵⁵² The bishop coupled his condemnation with calls for a fundamental structural change in Brazil, even if it came to violent revolution. Indeed, Camara publicly voiced his respect for those who engaged in revolutionary action, and even praised the Cuban revolution for bringing changes where non-violent action had not.⁵⁵³ Such sharp comments, and their frequent dissemination, raised his profile and earned him notoriety amongst elites in Latin America, and made him a hero in the eyes of the poor sectors of the Church around the region.

The Little Tradition

Whilst a good number of Catholic priests and laity followed Torres' call to arms, a vast majority did not. However, Torres continued to remain in the popular imagination among large sections of students, clergy and the public. In addition, those that ministered to the poor through the existing

⁵⁵¹ Ibid., 226.

⁵⁵² Helder Camara, *Revolution through Peace* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 77-135.

⁵⁵³ Musto, *The Catholic Peace Tradition*, 227.

channels of *Catholic Action* had by the 1960s realised that adherence to the “traditional” kind of Catholicism of the upper classes had lost the adherence of the peasants and workers. Torres’ call to “ascend to the people” did succeed in spurring a process where those steeped in the tradition of Catholic Action sought more direct exposure to the plight of the poor.⁵⁵⁴ Many religious and laity left their traditional pastoral roles to live and work among the poor in the slums and in the countryside. It is in these contexts that many of these religious became exposed to what Sharon Nepstead calls “the Little Tradition”.

While the practices of the “Little Tradition” were based on the practice of Christian traditions passed down from the Church, these practices were modified into more localised institutions. Elements of old indigenous belief systems intermingled with Christian practices⁵⁵⁵, and became popularised amongst these communities. In their eyes, these “profaned” practices brought a more direct interface than the received Christian tradition and their experiences of poverty and oppression at the hands of elites.⁵⁵⁶ Examples of such profanations included the group dialogues over the meaning of scripture readings,⁵⁵⁷ hymns that emphasised the self-worth of the poor and the need to organise as a prelude to liberation,⁵⁵⁸ special masses that invoked “the worker Christ” to “be in solidarity with [the poor and]

⁵⁵⁴ Bell Jr, *Liberation Theology*, 52.

⁵⁵⁵ See for example June Nash, "Religious Rituals of Resistance and Class Consciousness in Bolivian Tin-Mining Communities," in *Disruptive Religion: The Force of Faith in Social-Movement Activism*, ed. Christian Smith (New York: Routledge, 1996), 110.

⁵⁵⁶ Sharon Erickson Nepstad, "Popular Religion, Protest and Revolt: The Emergence of Political Insurgency in the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran Churches of the 1960s-80s," in *Disruptive Religion: The Force of Faith in Social-Movement Activism*, ed. Christian Smith (New York: Routledge, 1996).

⁵⁵⁷ Daniel Levine, "From Church and State to Religion and Politics and Back Again," *Social Compass* 37(3) (1990), 336.

⁵⁵⁸ Nepstad, "Popular Religion," 113.

not the oppressor class that squeezes and devours”⁵⁵⁹, or baptisms that sought to cast out sin in the form of “society’s division into classes...selfishness... [and] capitalism”.⁵⁶⁰

To many pastoral workers who lived among the poor, these practices of the “Little Tradition” provided more authentic links between faith and concrete social experiences than more traditional expressions.⁵⁶¹ By adapting rituals into a symbolic economy shorn of any association with the ruling elites’ experience of privilege, the “Little Tradition” was enacted as a channel of “resistance to the class structure”.⁵⁶² Thus it acted as a form of rebellion against both the political elites that were oppressing them, and the Church hierarchy with whom the elites were often associated. The “Little Tradition” provided a toolbox with resources already in place for a more direct form of political mobilisation against their experiences of crushing poverty. It became further entrenched in ecclesial practices within the poorer areas of Latin America, as pastors promoted the “Little Tradition” through workshops, conferences and publications.⁵⁶³ This reinforced the field by widening the scope of active political participation as part of an expression of one’s Christian faith.

What further reinforced this field was the post-Conciliar process of institutional decenetratisation. Whilst previous ecclesiologies encouraged tight organisational discipline centred around the papacy, the acceptance of “collegiality” among bishops led to an institutional innovation: the regional and national episcopal conference. Whilst long existent as informal gatherings of Bishops, Pope Paul VI institutionalised them in 1966. Local bishops were given more autonomy in looking after their

⁵⁵⁹ A line from the *Misa Campesina Nicaraguense* (Nicaraguan peasant Mass). See Dorothee Solle, *Thinking About God* (New York: Orbis Books, 1990), 114-5.

⁵⁶⁰ Margaret Randall, *Christians in the Nicaraguan Revolution* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1983), 32.

⁵⁶¹ Nepstad, “Popular Religion,” 108-9.

⁵⁶² *Ibid.*, 107.

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*, 120.

respective congregations, making decisions in direct response to more local developments rather than being merely extensions of Roman authority, which by and large was concerned with European affairs. That is not to say that ecclesiastical authority instantaneously became unhinged from Rome - the Pope still retained the power to appoint Cardinals which, at least formally, influenced the national conferences. Nevertheless, the introduction of institutional arrangements away from Rome did pave the way for the greater consideration of local factors operating outside of Europe. This, together with a clerical shortage in Latin America and a rapidly growing congregation, encouraged local bishops to adopt a spirit of pastoral experimentation, and a greater willingness to move away from established forms of sacramental practice and accommodate innovative pastoral experiments.⁵⁶⁴ These factors served to accelerate the proliferation of *ad hoc* Christian groupings across the continent which provided the field for many of the later ecclesiological changes to be analysed below.

The Role of Paul VI

While these changes were taking place in Latin America, changes were also taking place in the thought on the post-Conciliar Church's place in the world. Paul VI began this process with his first encyclical, *Ecclesiam Suam*. The document did not intend to be a coherent instruction on ecclesiology, but a set of guidelines for the deliberations of the then ongoing Second Vatican Council. Nonetheless, the document is significant for its reflecting several important ecclesiological trends from Paul's predecessors that would prove influential in the Council. In addition, in trying to guide the Council, Paul also raised in the document a number of vital shifts that would set the stage for the evolution of the Church's conciliar thought, and post-conciliar practice.

Ecclesiam Suam

Whilst the Mystical Body formed the ecclesiological bedrock in the post-Vatican II period, one vital theme that the encyclical emphasised was the Council's recognition of the Church's status as a "pilgrim" on earth, and thus the recognition of the Church's temporal nature. Paul expressed that the

⁵⁶⁴ Klaiber, "Prophets and Populists," 6.

Church was “deeply rooted in the world”.⁵⁶⁵ This short phrase represented a far cry from Leonine triumphalistic formulations of the Perfect Society (where the Church was better than the world) and articulations of the Mystical Body (where the Church is a spiritual entity that hovers over the world). Under the Pauline version, the Church was located squarely within creation. Because it was located in the world and because “its members [were] consequently influenced and guided by the world”, the Church could not “remain indifferent to or unaffected by the changes which take place in the world around”⁵⁶⁶.

The Council’s affirmation of the Church’s pilgrim status required it to reevaluate the world around it. Rather than a fault waiting for ecclesiastical correction, the Church’s mission had to “adapt itself to the forms of thought and living which a temporal environment induces, *one might almost say imposes*”. The Church thus had to undergo “a continual process of self-examination and re-appraisal of its external conduct”.⁵⁶⁷ This renewal entailed several things. It entailed “showing more concern...for those who live close at hand”.⁵⁶⁸ However, the Church also had to respect the integrity of the world. This was especially urgent for the Church, given the acknowledgement that its current context was marked by a growing “pluralism of society”,⁵⁶⁹ as well as the acknowledgement that *all* humanity, Christian or otherwise, participated in the same Mystical Body and the same salvific work of Christ⁵⁷⁰. The Church’s esteem for the world also stemmed from the recognition that the world had

⁵⁶⁵ Paul VI, *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964), 26

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_06081964_ecclesiam_en.html.

This document will hereinafter be cited as “*ES*”.

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 42

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 42. Emphasis added

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 63

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 78

⁵⁷⁰ *GS*, 22

competences of its own that contributed to the unfolding of God's designs. This enjoined the Church to refrain from triumphalism as to its omnicompetence, or from coercing the world into implementing any ecclesial solution.⁵⁷¹ Instead, the Church in carrying out its mission to "make the world share in the divine redemption", also had to "approach [the world] with *reverence*...and love",⁵⁷² so that "the world, and...the Catholic Church...should meet together and get to know and love one another".⁵⁷³ The need to revere the world as it tried to save it, modified the method of the Church's mission; the Church had to shift from a methodology of subordinating the world for the sake of its salvation to what Paul called a "dialogue of salvation", where the Church cooperated with the world in areas where both "converge on the same goal", and in the process even "complete each other" in the formulation of solutions.⁵⁷⁴

In many ways, the ecclesiology indicated by the encyclical was a continuation of Jacques Maritain's influence. This influence on Paul was the function of Maritain's close intellectual ally, the Swiss Cardinal Charles Journet. Journet's frequent consultations at the Pontiff's request made him a *de facto*, if not formally, a member of the pontifical theological fraternity. Like Maritain, Journet conceived of the Church and the world as two autonomous spheres, with the political sphere free from direct interference by the Church. In his *The Theology of the Church*, Journet spoke of the Church's "cosmic character", whose mission is only to bring "the blood of Christ [and] not the benefits of civilisation".⁵⁷⁵ This meant that nature, culture and "the vast temporal flow of history" lay outside the Church's purview,⁵⁷⁶ and "only in the next world" could these elements "reenter fully

⁵⁷¹ *ES*, 75

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*, 69. Emphasis added

⁵⁷³ *Ibid.*, 3

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 83

⁵⁷⁵ Charles Cardinal Journet, *The Theology of the Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 36.

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

into the Church”.⁵⁷⁷ The Church still had to fulfil its role as an agent of the salvation in the world, but it could only do so by “inspiring and endorsing, in the name of the Gospel, the multitude of temporal activities”.⁵⁷⁸ In other words, the Church was a spiritual deposit of values from which the world could draw on to provide inspiration and guidance for political action. This still operated on the basis of Maritain’s neat split between the temporal and the spiritual, or in Journet’s words “the distinction between what immediately belongs to Caesar and what immediately belongs to God...between what belongs to the Church and what belongs to civilisation”.⁵⁷⁹

That the divine/temporal split continued to inform Paul VI’s thought is evident from the earliest paragraphs of *Ecclesiam Suam*. The Mystical Body was the starting point for Paul’s thinking on the Church, and he hoped that greater knowledge of it would increase the Church’s “spiritual strength”.⁵⁸⁰ Further evidence can be gleaned from the fact that Paul reminded the reader that Christ’s called “upon men to receive God’s Kingdom interiorly...[and that] His whole teaching technique concerned with inculcating and fostering the soul’s interior life”.⁵⁸¹ Once again, there is the recognition that the Church had a public role only insofar as it worked in the souls of humanity. The Church’s temporal role lay in “proclaim[ing] principles which represent the highest achievement of human thought”. Any more involved a function could only be undertaken when the Church is “allowed the opportunity” by those in charge of the political sphere.⁵⁸²

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid., 37.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid., 36.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid., 37.

⁵⁸⁰ *ES*, 31

⁵⁸¹ Ibid., 21

⁵⁸² Ibid., 16

One particular area where the autonomy of the secular was highlighted was economics. As a diplomat in the 1960s, Paul travelled to Latin America and Africa, and saw up-close the encounters with crushing poverty that many faced. As Pope, he strove to bring the grievances of “the hungry nations of the world”⁵⁸³ to the attention of the whole Church. However, when it came to spelling out the ecclesial approach to the issue, Paul continued to show the insistence on the autonomy of the secular. In informing the Church’s position on economic issues, Paul noted the necessity of a “zeal for the *spirit* of poverty” as an antidote to a “modern trend [that] set so much store by wealth”.⁵⁸⁴ Nevertheless, he said that such a spirit presented “no obstacle to the proper understanding and rightful application of the important laws of economics...a subject which has made great strides within recent years...[and] has been responsible for the progress of civilisation”.⁵⁸⁵ The spirit of poverty could inform the Church on economic matters, but that did not let the Church interfere with the unshakable laws of economics. The Church could critique the application of those laws when they bring about unjust outcomes and encourage a more just redistribution of the world’s goods, but it could never challenge the laws themselves.

As earlier mentioned, *Ecclesiam Suam* did not seek to be a coherent theological statement. Thus, in spite of Paul’s almost stubborn adherence to Maritain’s New Christendom, Paul would leave in this encyclical a footnote that would underpin a slow ecclesiological shift. This can be found in one of his concluding paragraphs on “assist[ing] the cause of peace”.⁵⁸⁶ In it, Paul regarded peace as more than the absence of violence. He saw the urgent necessity for a “free and honourable peace”. This required more than the absence of violence, and recalled all men to the consideration of supernatural values. It

⁵⁸³ Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio* (1967), 3

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum_en.html.

This document will hereinafter be cited as “*PP*”.

⁵⁸⁴ *ES*, 54. Emphasis added

⁵⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 55

⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 106

required “bring[ing] men together on every level: heads of states, the body of the nation and its foundations, whether social, family, or individual”.⁵⁸⁷ In other words, this required a theme that would underpin a later ecclesiology of Communion, a theme of unity. This line provides the faintest of indications that this is not the vague unity of souls expressed in “New Christendom”, but a substantial unity that took up the entirety of humanity. As shall be demonstrated in the following chapter, this otherwise obscure theme of unity underpinned very important ecclesiological modifications.

Populorum Progressio

Paul’s major encyclical in dealing with the issue of poverty and development, *Populorum Progressio*, followed the precedent set in *Ecclesiam Suam*. Ecclesiologically, the document provided ample evidence of continuing the insistence on the autonomy of the temporal from the spiritual, with the Church indirectly intervening in the former through the injection of abstract values. Paul asserted that the Church had “no desire to be involved in the political activities of any nation”.⁵⁸⁸ Like the Council Fathers and like *Ecclesiam Suam*, *Populorum Progressio* had a heavy pastoral emphasis, and it opened up several avenues of pastoral concern to be addressed in the future by others. These pastoral concerns would be the raw material for subsequent modifications in ecclesiological thought.

Central to these concerns was the theme of ensuring “man’s complete development”. While Paul referred to efforts in economic development as a valid part of improving the worth of those experiencing poverty,⁵⁸⁹ he argued that the worth of the person encompassed more than his economic aspects. Economic betterment alone was an incomplete development. Man had to experience an “authentic development” that encompassed more than just the economic.⁵⁹⁰ It also involved the

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁸ *PP*, 13

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid., 6

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid., 14

removal of what he called the “ties of dependence”⁵⁹¹ between the emerging and wealthier nations, and replacing them with ties of solidarity, in which all would become “artisans of their destiny”.⁵⁹² Because the goal was the complete development of man, Paul argued that the heart of ensuring a “transition from less than human conditions to truly human ones” consisted in the search for a “new humanism”. The Pope hoped to enlist the “deep thought and reflection of wise men in search of a new humanism, one which will enable our contemporaries to enjoy the higher values of love and friendship, of prayer and contemplation, and thus find themselves”.⁵⁹³

Paul opened up another area for ecclesial concern when he spoke of ecclesial measures to affect the progress of peoples. As an extension of New Christendom’s insistence on the autonomy of the secular, ecclesiastical oversight was no longer needed for a Catholic to engage in social witness. Instead, the encyclical encouraged Catholics to “use their own initiative and taking action in [development] without waiting passively for directives and precepts from others”.⁵⁹⁴ The theme on initiative is one that adapted well to the situation in mid twentieth century Latin America. The Church in Latin America by this time was a pale shadow of its grand status during colonial times. Liberal governments had removed many of the privileges that the Church once enjoyed and much of the ecclesial lands had been seized, so not only was it deprived of a privileged political position, it was also severely under resourced.

Gustavo Gutierrez & Liberation Theology

To understand the significance of the above factors in generating the fields that enabled the ecclesiological shifts in Latin America, it is necessary to explore the biography of the person on whom these imaginaries would converge, namely the Peruvian priest, Gustavo Gutierrez.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid., 52

⁵⁹² Ibid., 65

⁵⁹³ Ibid., 20

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid., 81

Gutierrez pre-Vatican II

Prior to his ordination, Gutierrez was steeped in the study of the modern sciences, having immersed himself in the world of medicine in the National University of Peru in 1950. As part of his priestly training, Gutierrez's philosophical study at Louvain University was accompanied by his studies on the psychology of Sigmund Freud. It was there that he also became friends with the priest turned insurgent, Camillo Torres. Gutierrez's theological training was completed at the Catholic University of Lyon, which immersed him in the burgeoning of two major radical shifts in theology. The general atmosphere of intellectual renovation within theology as it sought to dialogue with the secular social sciences, established points of convergence between his theological and medical training.⁵⁹⁵ The Catholic University of Lyon was one of the ringleaders of an "integralist" rebellion in theology. This rebellion sought to overturn the dominant scholastic theological tradition that centred on a "pure nature" that functioned independent of divine grace.⁵⁹⁶

Gutierrez's study put him at close quarters with this revolution, for it was from Lyon that the French Jesuit Henri de Lubac published his daring *Surnaturel*. De Lubac sought to revive a pre-scholastic reading of Aquinas, arguing that all of nature could exist and be held together only with the intervention of grace, and that "every creature is moved by God towards some sort of unity with God".⁵⁹⁷ The significance of this line of argumentation was that there was no pure nature, since all creation had only a supernatural destiny. Gutierrez's private tutorials with de Lubac gave the former a personal encounter with this orientating of nature towards the supernatural. "Integralism" would be credited with transforming Gutierrez's views on theology's relation with the political.⁵⁹⁸ A temporality imbued with grace would render impossible a separation of sociopolitical concerns from

⁵⁹⁵ Klaiber, "Prophets and Populists," 3.

⁵⁹⁶ John Milbank, *The Suspended Middle: Henri De Lubac and the Debate Concerning the Supernatural* (Cambridge: William B Eerdmans, 2005), 15.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid., 25.

⁵⁹⁸ Bell Jr, *Liberation Theology*, 78, no. 73.

concerns of salvation.⁵⁹⁹ This line of thought augmented Gutierrez's exposure to the personalist movement of Emmanuel Mounier, and the larger, ongoing French project of establishing the dialogue between Christianity and Marxism.⁶⁰⁰

Gutierrez's immersion in an intellectual imaginary that sought to reconcile theology with history, modern social theory and Marxism augmented his early formation in the Peruvian *Catholic Action*, in which he was involved as a student. Gutierrez considered the movement a significant factor in his formation, having exposed him to the "social side of the Christian message",⁶⁰¹ which later manifested itself early in his clerical career in three important ways. As a priest, Gutierrez continued to ensconce himself in the world of Catholic lay movements. In 1960 he became chaplain to the National Union of Catholic students, among the vanguard of Catholic lay action for social justice.⁶⁰² As chaplain, he would initially encourage the student's continuation of Maritain's New Christendom approach to ecclesial politics and its commitment to state-led capitalist development. However, he also became privy to the radicalisation of students, as frustration grew with New Christendom's dependence on both state-led capitalist development, and its concomitant proscription of more direct ecclesial solutions to poverty. He would undergo the process of radicalisation himself as he started living in a poor sector of Lima, where he would have encountered close up the wretched experiences of poverty amongst the urban poor.

⁵⁹⁹ John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, Second ed. (Pondicherry: Blackwell, 2006), 207.

⁶⁰⁰ Paul E. Sigmund, "Gustavo Gutierrez: Cometary," in *The Teachings of Modern Roman Catholicism: On Law, Politics & Human Nature*, ed. John Witte Jr and Frank S. Alexander (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 288. For a more detailed analysis on the French Christianity-Marxism dialogue, see John Hellman, "The Opening to the Left in French Catholicism: The Role of the Personalists," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 34(3) (1973).

⁶⁰¹ Gustavo Gutierrez, "Gustavo Gutierrez: Opting for the Poor," *The Other Side* 23 (1987).

⁶⁰² ———, *A Theology of Liberation (15th Anniversary Edition)* (NY: Orbis, 1988), xxix.

This process of radicalisation was further facilitated by Gutierrez's work in the National Organisation for Social Research (ONIS), which he helped establish. The centre became a focal point for priests that were beginning the process of living with the poor, initiating debates on the relationship between the Church and the role of property. As the years wore on, and as the developmental paradigm gradually demonstrated its limitations, and as dependency theory began to take hold of the Latin American intellectual scene, the group in ONIS also began to debate on the need for a social revolution in Latin America.⁶⁰³ Both these experiences reinforced the belief that Catholics were being frustrated by their prevention as Christians to directly effect more radical solutions to assist the poor. As he would later write, a socially conscious Catholicism meant that the religious formation that the Church could do could not be extricated from political formation. But alas, because politics occurred on the temporal plane, and was thus outside the Church's sphere of competence, political formation was the very thing the Church under Maritain's New Christendom could not do.⁶⁰⁴

Gutierrez Post-Vatican II

Gutierrez's key positions within both the intellectual and pastoral imaginaries, against a backdrop of a vibrant yet radicalised lay movement made Gutierrez the voice for a new ecclesiology. He was encouraged by the documents of Vatican II, which proved to be a major shot in the arm for those frustrated with the ecclesial status quo. While the broad thrust of the Conciliar documents continued the ecclesiology of New Christendom, it provided on several fronts an apparent vindication of many intellectual and pastoral experiments. The Council's declaration of the Church's "pilgrim" status was regarded by many in Latin America as a repudiation of the ecclesiastical triumphalism of the past, and its claims for supervision of all aspects of Latin American Church practice.⁶⁰⁵ For Gutierrez, the Church as "pilgrim" was also an affirmation of the collapse of the historical with the eschatological, infusing historical events with divine significance, which he learned under the tutelage of de Lubac. Gutierrez was also encouraged by *Gaudium et Spes*, which extended New Christendom's respect for the "rightful autonomy of earthly affairs" by "calling upon the help of people living in the

⁶⁰³ Sigmund, "Gustavo Gutierrez: Comentary," 289.

⁶⁰⁴ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation (15th Anniversary Edition)*, 36-41.

⁶⁰⁵ Bell Jr, *Liberation Theology*, 53.

world...and who understand its mentality”⁶⁰⁶. It called for a “sincere and prudent dialogue” not just with the sciences of the modern world, but even with atheists for the betterment of the world.⁶⁰⁷

To Gutierrez and others radicalised by their experience of ministering to the poor, the Council provided an important opening to initiate a more direct interface between the faith and the Latin American experience of poverty. *Gaudium et Spes*’ affirmation of the autonomy of the secular, together with *Lumen Gentium*’s emphasis on being a sacrament for divine grace, legitimised the alchemy between Christian pastoral practice and Marxist theory. The Council’s calling upon “the help of people living in the world” legitimated the place of the now entrenched dependency theory in providing this direct interface between theology and social justice.⁶⁰⁸ Dependency theory became the masterframe by which the experience of poverty was analysed theologically. Israel’s slavery in Egypt was being replayed once again, only it was in the form of the structure of dependence between the peripheral poor nations and the core rich nations that characterised international Capitalist relations.⁶⁰⁹ If class domination becomes the contemporary form of slavery, Israel’s liberation from Egypt finds its contemporary parallel in Latin America through the abolition of the causes of class domination, that is, through the building of a “socialist society”.⁶¹⁰

Gutierrez’s ideas became so influential in Latin American theology because even before he wrote *A Theology of Liberation*, his extensive research on the social sciences in *ONIS* and his work in furthering *Catholic Action* as a student chaplain made him a vital node in the trafficking of ideas across pastoral and intellectual circles. Little wonder then, that when the time came to consider

⁶⁰⁶ GS, 44

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid., 21, 43

⁶⁰⁸ Sigmund, "Gustavo Gutierrez: Comentary," 291.

⁶⁰⁹ Klaiber, "Prophets and Populists," 4-5.

⁶¹⁰ Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History Politics and Salvation* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1973), 274-5.

Vatican II in the Latin American context, Gutierrez would prove instrumental in institutionalising these abovementioned currents when he was invited to be an expert advisor in the Medellin General Conference of the Latin American Bishops (*CELAM*) in Columbia, held from August to September 1968.⁶¹¹ In addition, he and Helder Camara would be involved in the drafting of the Conference's major documents.⁶¹² The filtering of *CELAM*'s deliberations through Gutierrez and Camara would prove crucial in getting Liberation Theology into the Latin American ecclesial imagination.

CELAM and Medellin

Whilst the intervention of Gutierrez was an important factor in articulating important strands of Liberation Theology, it would be premature to speak of a unanimous shift in favour of it. Like Vatican II, the Medellin documents evinced no unifying theology or ecclesiology. Elements of the Medellin documents did include the views of a number of conservative bishops, who sought to preserve the New Christendom model and its commitment to developmentalism.⁶¹³ While the totality of the documents were an unsystematic mixture of New Christendom and even Perfect Society ecclesiologies with the new emerging liberationist paradigm,⁶¹⁴ this section seeks to identify the strands of liberationist thought, and the influence of Gutierrez in the articulation of those strands.

The central plank was the fundamental fusion between grace and nature, which de Lubac had taught Gutierrez whilst in Lyon. Whilst this is not explicitly stated in the Medellin documents, the influence of de Lubac's collapsing of the historical with the eschatological was evident. From the earliest paragraphs of the conference's first document, "Justice", the Bishops spoke of the need to cast off a "dualism which separates temporal tasks from the works of sanctification". The Bishops linked temporal concerns to the spiritual, asserting that "temporal progress...to the extent that it can

⁶¹¹ Hanson, *The Catholic Church in World Politics*, 61.

⁶¹² Bell Jr, *Liberation Theology*, 77, no. 55.

⁶¹³ William T. Cavanaugh, "The Ecclesiologies of Medellin and the Lessons of the Base Communities," *Cross Currents* 44, no. 1 (1994): 71.

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid.*: 70-74.

contribute to the better ordering of human society, is of vital concern to the Kingdom of God”. “Temporal progress”, or in the Bishop’s terminology, “authentic liberation”, would thus become a theological category.⁶¹⁵

However, when it came to explaining the exact content of “authentic liberation”, one can see the theological analysis giving way to the masterframe of dependency theory, and from that the Marxist notion of class struggle. In the document entitled “Peace”, the Bishops at Medellin spoke of “realities that constitute[d] a sinful situation”.⁶¹⁶ However, in line with Gutierrez’s appropriation of Vatican II’s call for a dialogue between the social sciences and theology, the terms by which the situation became classified as sinful were framed by Marxist theory. The situation was “sinful” because there are countries that are “characterised by a marked bi-classism”, both domestically and internationally.⁶¹⁷ Domestically, a shrinking yet dominant minority were enjoying the vast bulk of the wealth, often through the use of force, while a growing majority were deprived of even basic necessities. Internationally, uneven terms of trade between favouring wealthy, industrialised economies at the expense of poorer, agricultural economies, were feeding a situation in Latin America, where tensions between classes were feeding an imminent cycle of violence.⁶¹⁸

This supported a theological conclusion: the situation of poverty in Latin America was a form of “slavery”.⁶¹⁹ To this, the Bishops had no choice but to call for a “profound conversion”. This “profound conversion”, as mentioned before, was a hodgepodge of New Christendom ecclesiology

⁶¹⁵ “Justice”, 5. For full texts of the references to the Medellin documents used here, see Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano, *The Church in the Present-Day Transformation of Latin America in the Light of the Council*, ed. Louis M. Colonnese (Secretariat for Latin America, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1970).

⁶¹⁶ “Peace”, 1

⁶¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 3

⁶¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 4-6

⁶¹⁹ “Justice”, 3

and the as yet inchoate liberationist perspective. While both saw a structural change as constitutive of this conversion, the former sought to unite different elements of society under the spiritual tutelage of the Church.⁶²⁰ The Church was in a way an arbiter of society, but only in an indirect, invisible, “moral” way.⁶²¹

This perspective is juxtaposed against the liberationist perspective. As shall be demonstrated below, the theological contours of this perspective of a “profound conversion” is set within the frame of Marxist theory, in particular Friere’s theory of conscientisation. Whilst there were attempts to differentiate themselves from the revolutionary strand of Marxism – the documents provided qualified condemnation of violent insurrection as a greater evil than poverty⁶²² – the scope of *CELAM*’s proposed solutions were still circumscribed by the fundamental assumptions of Marxist theory. In framing an ecclesial program of “authentic liberation”, the Bishops at Medellin not only looked at the need for structural change, but also the need to facilitate that by “form[ing] a social conscience and a realistic perception of the problems of the community and of social structures”,⁶²³ and to realise “each person’s aspiration to be artisan of her or his own destiny”.⁶²⁴

The insurance against violence, said the Bishops “requires the establishment of a just order in which men can fulfil themselves as men”.⁶²⁵ Assuring this in turn required the option for “liberating education...which converts the student into the subject of his own development”⁶²⁶. Structural change

⁶²⁰ Cavanaugh, "Ecclesiologies of Medellin," 73-74.

⁶²¹ "Justice", 23

⁶²² "Peace", 19

⁶²³ "Justice", 17

⁶²⁴ Cavanaugh, "Ecclesiologies of Medellin," 73.

⁶²⁵ "Peace", 14

⁶²⁶ "Education", 8

then lay in the “fitting awakening of conscience, adequate preparation and effective participation of all”.⁶²⁷ The formation of man to ensure that they “know their rights and how to make use of them” thus became the central task of the Bishops at Medellin.⁶²⁸ This process of conscience awakening involved the organisation of courses, study weeks and meeting with various socioprofessional groupings.⁶²⁹ In a telling nod to New Christendom, “Justice” noted the need for “special attention” to be given to directing its conscience awakening efforts to “those persons at a decision making level whose actions effect changes in...national and international life”.⁶³⁰ Yet that same document, the Bishops gave a nod to the new communities that were born out of the spread of the “Little Tradition”. They spoke of the need to develop “small basic communities”, vitalised by “the natural innate elements in their environment”,⁶³¹ to further the process of conscientisation.

The “Church of the Poor”

The drafting of the *CELAM* documents and formulating of its program of ecclesial action forged the field that allowed Gutierrez to consolidate his own ecclesiological thought. This came in the form of his *A Theology of Liberation*, which he published in 1971. Given Gutierrez’s role in the drafting of the *CELAM* documents, it was unsurprising that the bulk of his work on those documents would be reflected in his latest effort. Nevertheless, the book’s significance lies in its attempt to enunciate a cogent ecclesiology that was absent in the *CELAM* documents, which were effectively a pastoral statement. This ecclesiology would be that of what Jon Sobrino would call the “Church of the Poor”.

A Neutral Church?

Gutierrez’s central thesis stems from a pastoral concern for the poor, though it carried an ecclesiological hook. There was a concern over the neutrality of the Church in political issues. To

⁶²⁷ “Peace”, 15

⁶²⁸ “Justice”, 19-20

⁶²⁹ *Ibid.*, 18

⁶³⁰ *Ibid.*, 19

⁶³¹ *Ibid.*, 20

understand how this comes about, it is necessary to start with Gutierrez's explicit outlining of the very notion of theology being the fruit of praxis. Rather than rely on Paul's notion of "the highest achievement of human thought" as the progenitor of the Church's service to the world,⁶³² Gutierrez thought that such models proceeded from a corporatist "Perfect Society" ecclesiology, with different segments working together under the supervision of a neutral referee, being the Church.⁶³³ Gutierrez thought that such a model left Catholic social thought out of touch with new concrete developments as they arose.

For Gutierrez, theology had to be a "critical reflection on Christian praxis in the light of the Word",⁶³⁴ since theology is "inseparable from the concrete conditions in which the vast majority...live".⁶³⁵ Concrete engagement, not platonic speculation, had to provide the material for theology. However, when it came to showing the data that praxis discloses, Gutierrez does not rely on the Church to provide the resources. On the contrary, Gutierrez continues Vatican II's insistence for a dialogue with the secular world by resorting to the fundamentals of secular social theory, in particular Marxist theory. The starting point for theological analysis was Latin America's situation of dependence that could only be understood "within the framework of the worldwide class struggle" and the poor's struggle against domination.⁶³⁶ The starting point for theology was the inescapably conflictual nature of the world.

The uncritical reliance on the Marxist principle of an inescapable class conflict as the ground for social analysis meant that conflict became a primordial reality to which theology must conform. A

⁶³² *ES*, 16

⁶³³ Cavanaugh, "Ecclesiologies of Medellin," 69.

⁶³⁴ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 13.

⁶³⁵ ———, *A Theology of Liberation (15th Anniversary Edition)*, xxxiv.

⁶³⁶ ———, *A Theology of Liberation*, 87.

Church so engaged could not subordinate those concerns relating to temporal conflict to speculative theological enterprises that were disengaged from the lived faith of the Christian people.⁶³⁷ It also meant that ecclesialogically, the Church could not satisfy itself with forging a merely “spiritual” unity through a single conception of God for all people, for all occasions, and for all times and ignore temporal imbalances in favour of some kind of hermetical spiritual equilibrium. This spiritualisation of theology and Christianity, argued Gutierrez, had led to the creation of a neutral Church, and a neutral Church could not understand or provide succour for those whose concrete experiences evince oppression of the poor and weak by the powerful. Indeed, a Church so conceived participated in the oppression, siding with the powerful against the poor.⁶³⁸ While the grace of God was universal, it did not mean that He was a neutral God. Theology had to take a new “God’s eye view”. Gutierrez relied on scripture to justify the notion that far from being neutral, God chose to associate with the outcasts of society. God was one who “took sides” and in light of the “critical reflection of Christian praxis in light of the Word”, it was not possible to do theology in Latin America without taking into account “the situation of the most downtrodden of history”.⁶³⁹ The “God’s-eye-view” of theology then found its locus in the experience of the poor. More specifically, it is a “God’s-eye-view” with a clear commitment to their struggle against domination at the hands of wealthy elites.

A Revolutionary Church?

While Marx laid the field that enabled theology to “take sides” in politics, it did not necessarily make the Church’s commitment to struggle with the poor hark back to the old “Perfect Society” ecclesiology, with the only difference being an alliance with the progressive side of parliament. Gutierrez regarded the period of ecclesiastical supervision of temporal politics to ensure its position of privilege and power as a stain on the reputation of the Church that must not be repeated.⁶⁴⁰ The

⁶³⁷ Roberto S. Goizueta, “Gustavo Gutierrez,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, ed. Peter Scott and William T. Cavanaugh (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 290.

⁶³⁸ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation (15th Anniversary Edition)*, 41.

⁶³⁹ ———, *A Theology of Liberation*, 101.

⁶⁴⁰ ———, *A Theology of Liberation (15th Anniversary Edition)*, 34.

integralist revolution laid the field for Gutierrez's veering away from direct ecclesial political engagement, even as it committed itself to the liberation of the poor.

On the one hand, the infusion of grace into nature provided the necessary wedge between the Church and politics. Like Maritain, Gutierrez affirmed the struggle of the temporal realm to escape ecclesiastical supervision as an unfolding of divine grace, and as part of the "universalisation of the presence of God" initiated by the incarnation of Christ.⁶⁴¹ In the Old Testament, the temple as the site of the presence of God was significant as a privileged distinct place of holiness situated amidst a sea of infidelity. According to Gutierrez, the Christ event signalled a watershed, for when Christ declared himself to be the temple,⁶⁴² the person of the human being became the new site of privilege as the temple of God. Indeed, Christ got rid of the notion of privileged sites altogether. Divine revelation no longer had a necessary correlate with a particular locale or people, but "gradually extend[ed] to all the peoples of the earth" so that "every human being...is the living temple of God".⁶⁴³ Grace spilled over into all historical processes. Seemingly "secular" processes would still be part of Revelation, and thus no longer needed the Church to act as some kind of divine gatekeeper. Therefore, the political, as one of many graced sites, could operate without the intervention of the Church.

On the other hand, the infusion of grace into nature committed the Church ever more to the liberation of the poor. Despite his appreciation of Maritain's New Christendom in "le[ading] many Christians to commit themselves...to the construction of a just society",⁶⁴⁴ Gutierrez thought that it provided an inadequate political platform for the new situation emerging in Latin America. It provided no tools to effect the Church's commitment to the poor, which remained vague beyond asserting the protection

⁶⁴¹ Bell Jr, *Liberation Theology*, 62.

⁶⁴² John 2:19-20

⁶⁴³ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation (15th Anniversary Edition)*, 109.

⁶⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 36.

of every person's dignity, and removed the Church from any direct engagement with the secular world. The Church's engagement remained one of "spiritually" inspiring citizens rather than mobilising the body of Christ in history.⁶⁴⁵ For Gutierrez, Maritain forgot that precisely because grace spilled over into all historical processes, all political analyses and actions became outpourings of grace.⁶⁴⁶ Whilst Maritain spoke of the temporal being outside the Church's competence, Gutierrez argued that the humanity of Christ actually meant that the God of the heavens became "irreversibly committed to human history".⁶⁴⁷ For Christianity, salvation and sin could not remain purely spiritual categories with only an indirect relationship with political issues, but had become inextricably steeped in historical processes. The liberation of Latin America's poor constituted part of the process of the building of the Kingdom of God and bringing salvation from sin.⁶⁴⁸ Conversely, political questions become extensions of the question of salvation and sin. Sin could not help but manifest itself in temporal forms, and became synonymous with temporal injustice. To put it more accurately, injustice was not the *result of* sin. Injustice *was* sin. Salvation from sin, far from being an exclusively other-worldly phenomenon, thus assumed a clear political dimension. If sin consisted of domination of one class over another, salvation had its centre in liberation from domination in favour of "communion of human being in God *and* among themselves".⁶⁴⁹ The substance of this communion, according to Gutierrez, was a condition where mankind can fulfil a

broad and deep aspiration for liberation...from all that limits or keeps human beings from self-fulfilment...[and] all impediments to the exercise of freedom⁶⁵⁰

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid., 37, 39.

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid., 44.

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid., 109.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid., 104.

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid., 85, 146.

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid., 17-8.

It would appear that the ecclesiological strand that seemingly ran counter to the liberationists at Medellin, namely New Christendom's insistence on seeing the corporate unity of all elements of society,⁶⁵¹ had actually laid the field for Gutierrez's ecclesiological endgame, namely the "call to communion with God and to the unity of all humankind".⁶⁵² Gutierrez also explicitly relied on *Lumen Gentium*'s conception of the Church as a sacrament of "saving unity".⁶⁵³ Also, the Council's positing of the Church as a sacrament, a tangible effective sign of an intangible spiritual reality, meant that the communion that was occurring spiritually also had to be an "intrahistorical reality".⁶⁵⁴ Spiritual communion with God had to be imbricated with temporal communion with men. Indeed, spiritual communion would not be possible without temporal communion with men. Lest anyone think that Gutierrez spoke of a return to pre-war ecclesiologies that collapsed the spiritual exhaustively into the juridical, Gutierrez said that communion would not be through a return to ecclesiastical supervision, but via the liberation of the poor from the structural barriers that marginalised the poor, and dehumanised the oppressor.⁶⁵⁵

How then does the Church participate in the process of liberation? For Gutierrez, liberation encompassed three interdependent aspects. At the deepest level, a person had to be liberated from sin, since lives of oppression were the physical manifestations of spiritual maladies. At another level, liberation had to take place via the transformation of oppressive social structures. At the third level, liberation had to take place at a personal level by having that person realise and affirm his role in his own liberation from oppression. Liberation thus involved making the poor realise that, far from being passive recipients of history's blows, they actually were legitimate agents in their own development

⁶⁵¹ This was mentioned in *Justice*, 5

⁶⁵² Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation (15th Anniversary Edition)*, 146.

⁶⁵³ *LG*, 9

⁶⁵⁴ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation (15th Anniversary Edition)*, 147.

⁶⁵⁵ Goizueta, "Gustavo Gutierrez," 291.

and transformation, free from the supervision of the Church.⁶⁵⁶ In so engaging the world in such an autonomous fashion, humankind is given the chance to become more fully human, and thus more in the image of God.⁶⁵⁷

The ecclesiological significance of these levels of liberation is their taking place within an array of dimensions of human life, with the religious and political being but two of such dimensions.⁶⁵⁸ Each dimension of life had its own laws of operation, and thus each realm has its own integrity that must be respected by all the others.⁶⁵⁹ Most importantly, the Church, as the authority of its own sphere, had to respect the autonomy of the other spheres, especially the political realm (which had the state as its own legitimate authority). Because each dimension was already infused with divine grace, Gutierrez was able to conceive of each dimension as participating in its own way in the unfolding of the glory of God whilst still remaining free from Church scrutiny. Salvation was being effected in all of these spheres, even without the intervention of the Church. Under this conception, the religious sphere no longer had any position of privilege *vis a vis* the temporal, and by extension the Church no longer had a privileged position as the only agent of salvation. And because the Church no longer enjoyed any privileged position with respect to the world, it meant that the Church could no longer stand in judgement of the world. This lack of omniscience in salvific affairs was why, according to Gutierrez, the Second Vatican Council encouraged cooperation with the secular world in the building of the Kingdom of God.

Does the Church then cease to be political? Remember that the Church was one autonomous dimension of historical reality, and had to recognise the autonomy and legitimacy of the political

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid., 293.

⁶⁵⁷ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation (15th Anniversary Edition)*, 22.

⁶⁵⁸ Bell Jr, *Liberation Theology*, 60.

⁶⁵⁹ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation (15th Anniversary Edition)*, 138.

from the theological. But for Gutierrez, autonomy only meant the absence of *direct* intervention of another sphere. To the extent that the Church is part of historical processes, it was still a political actor. Its intervention in the political realm, however, was an indirect one, via a process that Gutierrez called a “social appropriation of the Gospel”.⁶⁶⁰ The Church in its own sphere enunciated the values that must be translated into the political sphere.⁶⁶¹ These values were then given content in the political world in accordance with its own expertise, the secular sciences. The Church was political insofar as it orientated its believer to political concerns with its values. Thus, when acting in solidarity with the poor, the Church needed to recognise also that it had to be so not on the Church’s terms, but on the terms of those that experience oppression, since true liberation from oppression had to be carried out by “by the oppressed themselves and ...from the values proper to them”.⁶⁶² As a part of history, the Church shared in the same pilgrimage as the secular world. Gutierrez thus argued that the Church had to redefine itself in terms of the political sphere. The Church had to “allow itself to be inhabited and evangelised by the world”.⁶⁶³ What Gutierrez meant by this stands as the most logical conclusion to the Vatican Council’s exhortation for the Church to learn from the fruits borne by its partners in the secular world, namely the secular sciences. Because of the autonomy of the religious and political spheres, the sources of the faith could not be the sources of political programs. Instead, the sources of faith provided the values whose exact content was determined by a “social scientific analysis of reality”.⁶⁶⁴

The Church in Latin America joined in the liberation of the poor by playing an important prophetic role. It had to use its voice to expose sin and condemn it wherever it emerged. In Latin America, the religious value of sin correlated with the social scientific analysis of economic disparities, the

⁶⁶⁰ Gustavo Gutierrez, *The Power of the Poor in History*, trans. Robert R Barr (New York: Orbis Books, 1983), 101.

⁶⁶¹ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation (15th Anniversary Edition)*, xxxiii.

⁶⁶² *Ibid.*, 57.

⁶⁶³ *Ibid.*, 147.

⁶⁶⁴ Bell Jr, *Liberation Theology*, 61.

relations of domination borne by those disparities and violence used to maintain those relations.⁶⁶⁵ It also had an educational role in the process of liberation. In giving form to this educational role, the field bore the clear tracks of Paulo Freire. According to Gutierrez, a student's passive appropriation of teaching leaves the learner in a state of perpetual dependence, thereby locking him to a perpetual state of oppression.⁶⁶⁶ The process of liberation required a mode of education that permits "the emergence of the awareness of [one's] full humanity" as a prelude to a more active engagement with, and transformation of the world around them.⁶⁶⁷ *Concientizacion* was what made people aware of their dignity in the face of oppression, and made the poor "less dependent and freer, and commit themselves to the transformation and building up of society".⁶⁶⁸ The Church played a prophetic role in "convert[ing] the student into the subject of his own development", imparting its values to the student who then correlated them to its own concrete situation with the aid of the social sciences. Having engaged in this process of reflection, the subject then devised his own course of action.

Activating the "Church of the Poor"

The post-Medallin period, in particular the period after the publication of *A Theology of Liberation*, saw more comprehensive efforts to bring about the "Church of the poor" in Latin America. This took on two main forms. The bishops played a vital role in modifying their teaching role and playing a more prophetic stance in the face of any kind of injustice, while at the grassroots, the Church dispensed its educational role through massive citizenship building efforts facilitated by the base communities.

Prophetic Atmospherics

The key role the bishops played in Latin America was the transformation of political climate through what is known as "atmospherics". By making use of the channels of mass communications, such as the newspaper, radio, television and other publications, the bishops could inundate the rhetorical field

⁶⁶⁵ Musto, *The Catholic Peace Tradition*, 221.

⁶⁶⁶ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation (15th Anniversary Edition)*, 57.

⁶⁶⁷ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 66.

⁶⁶⁸ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation (15th Anniversary Edition)*, 57.

with the rhetoric of the Church. Creating this kind of backdrop performed an educational function through the dissemination of the Church's values, drawing attention to a particular issue and encourage reflection towards a particular direction on an issue in light of the Church's values. In this case, the Bishops of Latin America sought to make use of atmospherics to draw attention to and condemn the actions responsible for the plight of Latin America's poor, and assist in their liberation by asserting the dignity of the poor, forwarding of the Church's values and the proposals of the sciences. With the trail blazed by Helder Camara, many other bishops used their episcopal positions to voice the support of the Church for the poor. Among the most prominent prophetic voices in this period were Bishop Paulo Arns of Sao Paulo and Oscar Romero of San Salvador.

Paulo Arns

The Bishop of Sao Paulo's campaign began shortly after being ordained into the episcopate in 1970. In 1972, Arns distributed a statement entitled the *Testimony of Peace*. In that statement, he condemned the use of torture against political prisoners. These statements were also accompanied by his actions which forged strong ties with Brazilian political prisoners. He personally met such prisoners, as well as lobbied government officials on their behalf. The diocesan newspaper and radio station were used extensively, as Arns and his fellow bishops maintained a constant flow of public statements, bringing to light the corruption and acts of injustice perpetrated by officials of Brazil's military government. In line with the Church of the poor's reliance on dependency theory, the broadcasts highlighted the developmentalist policies of the government as the root cause for the suffering of the poorest sectors of Brazil. The broadcasts also condemned the government's use of torture and assassinations to stifle criticism and remain in power.⁶⁶⁹ In 1973, the bishops of Sao Paolo issued the pastoral *I have Heard the Cries of My People*, in which the Church denounced its association with those in power and shifted its allegiance instead to Brazil's poor.⁶⁷⁰ Importantly, Arns' rhetorical initiatives proved important in nurturing the growth of the Base Communities in his diocese. Describing the communities as a "breeze of evangelical renovation within the Church", the

⁶⁶⁹ Musto, *The Catholic Peace Tradition*, 227.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid.

Bishop noted their importance in making “possible increased critical consciousness in the face of reality...[and] contributing to the betterment of living conditions”⁶⁷¹

His rhetorical initiatives were paralleled by his institutional measures, which were a clear nod to Freire’s conscientisation that was built into Gutierrez’s ecclesiology. Arns set up specialised permanent human-rights related commissions as official diocesan organs. The most important of these, the Human Rights Pastoral and the Justice and Peace Commission, were involved in the publication of instances governmental abuse. The Commission also published educational material to increase the human-rights awareness of the public, as well as providing legal assistance when such rights became violated. The Bishops of Sao Paul also contributed to the establishment of ad hoc advocacy bodies. The most significant of these was the Workers’ Pastoral, established during a metalworker’s strike in 1980. Whilst the strike was declared illegal, the Pastoral provided assistance to the Workers which included the provision of venues, the publication of statements and homilies by Arns and other senior members of the clergy.⁶⁷²

The performing of this aspect of the Church’s prophetic role extended to electoral politics. The 1982 general election saw the coordination of all the pastorals and agencies of the diocese to produce an educational booklet, *Faith and Politics*, which covered areas like political history and emphasised involvement in the democratic process. The pastoral was also instrumental in maintaining a political consciousness among the poor by keeping “election talk” alive in the Churches, and in particular, among the Base communities. In the 1984 presidential election, the pastorals organised activities

⁶⁷¹ Cited in W. E. Hewitt, *Base Christian Communities and Social Change in Brazil* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 37.

⁶⁷² Ibid., 33.

which ranged from petitions to abolish the electoral college system, promotion of political rallies and the holding of their own political debates.⁶⁷³

Oscar Romero

One of the most unlikely figures of the “Church of the Poor” was Bishop Oscar Romero of San Salvador. Born in a family of coffee planters and immersed in the middle class, Romero’s early pre-episcopal ecclesiastical career was ensconced firmly on the side that wanted to retain the socio-political status quo in Latin America, and the Church’s close relationship with the ruling elites. He advocated an order where “each one [was] in the place where the hand of Providence has put him”, and where the Church was led by “the government and the shepherds of the Church”.⁶⁷⁴ Although he was friends with many in many clergy involved with the base communities – indeed he regarded one of the most active organisers of these communities, Fr Rutilio Grande, as a mentor - Romero was a fierce critic of the ascendancy of Liberation Theology, programs of conscientisation and what he called “Marxist priests”.⁶⁷⁵ Little surprise then that his episcopal ordination in 1977 was a source of consternation for many. Romero made a rapid about-face when General Carlos Humberto Romero became president. His presidency was gained through elections that many thought were fraudulent, and his regime did not hesitate to use death squads to quell any opposition to his rule. In one incident, government troops killed over one hundred protesters in San Salvador in what was dubbed the “Monday Massacre”.⁶⁷⁶ That same year, Rutilio Grande was killed by government agents, and this decisively turned Romero against the regime.

Romero made use of the pulpit and the airwaves to voice his opposition to the regime. He spoke at so called “protest masses”, and broadcasted weekly sermons as well as pastoral letters on the diocesan radio station, YSAX, which Musto said attracted an audience in the hundreds of thousands. In these

⁶⁷³ Ibid., 31-34.

⁶⁷⁴ Sermon on El Salvador’s National Day, 6 August 1976. Cited in Musto, *The Catholic Peace Tradition*, 234.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁶ Lernoux, *Cry of the People*, 71-3.

broadcasts, he would reject outright any “individualistic piety and disincarnate sacramentalism”, and condemned the corruption of the government and the judiciary, as well as the use of violence both by the government and by insurgents. When the government declared martial law, he called for public disobedience to the statute. He even went to Rome to bring to the attention of both Paul VI and John Paul II the government’s systematic use of violence and the resultant suffering of the people.⁶⁷⁷ These measures served not only to embolden the Salvadoran Church’s opposition to the regime, but also exposed the situation of El Salvador to an international audience.⁶⁷⁸

Citizen Building: the Base Ecclesial Communities

The other pillar of the “Church of the Poor” was the massive network of Base Ecclesial Communities. *CELAM*’s endorsement of these communities as “the most important source of human advancement and development”⁶⁷⁹ in Latin America had turned the scattered mass of small communities into a cohesive movement in their own right, encompassing the entire continent.⁶⁸⁰ Their central position in the “Church of the Poor” and their celebrated status, exemplified by Margaret Hebblethwaite as one of the “most innovative and pervasive form of this-worldly intervention” by the Church,⁶⁸¹ makes consideration of their activities necessary for this thesis.

Although their exact forms differed in accordance with local cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic conditions, these communities shared a number of important commonalities. Rather than a formal organisation under the tight supervision of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, as *Catholic Action* was, the base communities were a manifestation of what Margaret Hebblethwaite called “grass roots, bottom-up development”,⁶⁸² growing out of the initiative of the lay residents of the local area or local

⁶⁷⁷ Musto, *The Catholic Peace Tradition*, 234-35.

⁶⁷⁸ Nepstad, “Popular Religion,” 120.

⁶⁷⁹ Cited in Cavanaugh, “Ecclesiologies of Medellin,” 74.

⁶⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸¹ Margaret Hebblethwaite, *Base Communities: An Introduction* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1994), 1.

⁶⁸² *Ibid.*

religious, although the communities did make efforts to maintain longstanding relationships with institutional authorities.⁶⁸³ The communities were also united in their reliance on Freire's pedagogy in both their worship and social action.⁶⁸⁴ Bible study groups were attuned to the study of contemporary socioeconomic developments both locally and internationally.⁶⁸⁵ Liturgies encouraged participants to look for parallels between their concrete experiences and scriptural readings or acts of worship.⁶⁸⁶ Through the communities, many learned about giving greater social relevance to their reflections of the Gospel. Put conversely, through the studies of the scriptures, many in their communities came to see parallels between the struggles of biblical figures and linked them to their present realities. Christianity thus became a source of inspiration not just in the enduring of their conditions, but their changing as well.

At the same time, these communities continued the legacy of Freire by acting as bases for political education. While courses in literacy and vocational training became the stock of the base communities,⁶⁸⁷ they also acted as bases for the training of politically aware and active citizens. The communities organised political seminars,⁶⁸⁸ in which themes such as human rights and workshops on nonviolent protest were facilitated. These communities also organised an extensive network of training centers in which so called "delegates" would be formed in leading bible studies, public speaking and facilitating Freire's form of consciousness-raising among community members. These centres generated armies of delegates who would then go and work among these communities to

⁶⁸³ Scott Mainwaring, "Grassroots Catholic Groups and Politics in Brazil," in *The Progressive Church in Latin America*, ed. Scott Mainwaring and Alexander Wilde (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 155.

⁶⁸⁴ Hebblethwaite, *Base Communities: An Introduction*, 3.

⁶⁸⁵ Musto, *The Catholic Peace Tradition*, 226.

⁶⁸⁶ Nepstad, "Popular Religion," 118.

⁶⁸⁷ Hewitt, *Base Christian Communities and Social Change in Brazil*, 43.

⁶⁸⁸ Nepstad, "Popular Religion," 119.

disseminate the knowledge gained from their training. In El Salvador alone, over 15000 such delegates received such training.⁶⁸⁹

The knowledge, skills and methods learned through these communities had a massive impact in the politicisation of the poor in Latin America. The base communities became nodes in a network from which many trained in the conscientisation process branched out to directly grapple the political challenges facing the poor, forming grassroots movements dedicated to a range of issues focussing on the poor,⁶⁹⁰ in particular labour and human rights advocacy groups.⁶⁹¹ In keeping with the divisions between the religious and political dimensions, these communities *qua* communities stopped short of direct political action and faded into the political background as the movements they spawned soon acquired a life of their own. Hewitt lists a wide range of small scale, grassroots political campaigns that were organised as a result of community activities. These include the publications of campaign materials, letter-writing drives, the organisation of rallies and petition signings. Larger campaigns directed at state officials were also organised in the urban centres to obtain services such as sewerage, buses, roads and amenities.⁶⁹²

Even larger campaigns were organised, of which two examples stand out. In 1974, delegates trained in the base communities in El Salvador were instrumental in the organisation of students, teachers and workers into one of the earliest forms of Latin American mass popular movements, the United

⁶⁸⁹ Tommie Sue Montgomery, "Liberation and Revolution: Christianity as a Subversive Activity in Central America," in *Trouble in Our Backyard*, ed. Martin Diskin (New York: Pantheon, 1983), 220.

⁶⁹⁰ Klaiber, "Prophets and Populists," 8.

⁶⁹¹ Madaleine Adriance, "Agents of Change: The Role of Priests, Sisters, and Law Workers in the Grassroots Catholic Church in Brazil," *The Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 30(3) (1991).

⁶⁹² W. E. Hewitt, "Strategies for Social Change Employed by Comunidades Eclesiais De Base (Cebs) in the Archdiocese of Sao Paulo," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 25 (1986).

Popular Action Front.⁶⁹³ In Argentina, the famous sculptor Aldolfo Perez Esquivel used his coordination skills learned in the communities to set up *El Servicio de Paz y Justicia* in Buenos Aires, which became the nerve centre for numerous human rights advocacy initiatives in the whole region in the late 1970s. The most famous of these was the demonstration of the “Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo”, where with the coordination of *Paz y Justicia*, hundreds of women demonstrated silently in Buenos Aires’ *Plaza de Mayo*, in protest of the loss of family members to government sponsored “disappearances” following a military coup in 1976.⁶⁹⁴

Not all the communities embraced the path of nonviolence as a result of the conscientisation process. Nepstad notes that guerrilla organisations that did not have proper party structures found in the communities convenient bases of operations, and a significant minority of base community members ended up joining these militant groupings. The Sandinistas in Nicaragua, for example, recruited many insurgents through the base communities.⁶⁹⁵ Similarly in El Salvador, FAPU members linked up with the left-wing National Resistance, eventually joining their armed wing.⁶⁹⁶

The Inadequacy of the “Church of the Poor”

It is impossible to deny the political impact of the liberationist turn in the Latin American Church. The Churches in Latin America had taken a pastoral orientation towards radical political transformation for the sake of the betterment of the poor, an orientation that was unheard of in any antecedent period in the 20th century. Despite the Vatican’s initial opposition to some of the

⁶⁹³ Montgomery, "Liberation and Revolution."

⁶⁹⁴ Musto, *The Catholic Peace Tradition*, 228-31.

⁶⁹⁵ Nepstad, "Popular Religion," 118.

⁶⁹⁶ Brian Loveman and Thomas Davies, *Che Guevara: Guerilla Warfare* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002), 400.

liberationist's "concepts [that were] uncritically borrowed from Marxist ideology"⁶⁹⁷ which were incompatible with Christian doctrine, the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith subsequently considered "her [the Church's] own" the "aspirations of liberation" from "obstacles which hinder [freedom's] development and which offend human dignity"⁶⁹⁸, and the "love of preference for the poor".⁶⁹⁹ By 1980 the "Church of the Poor" developed such a prominent international political profile and a level of notoriety that they were regarded in many countries, including the United States, as a national security threat.⁷⁰⁰ However, was the "Church of the Poor" as destabilising a force as they were perceived to be both within and without the Church?

As the framing of the question suggests, a more comprehensive answer can be gleaned more from looking at just how radical the ecclesiological shift of the "Church of the Poor" was, rather than looking at its pastoral reorientation. By the self-admission of Gutierrez, the "Church of the Poor" did not seek to *break* from New Christendom. Rather they hoped to *complete* it by overcoming its one weakness: its insistence on the superiority of the spiritual sphere over the temporal, which betrayed a residual "ecclesiastical narcissism" by an implied assertion of the Church as the sole agent of salvation,⁷⁰¹ and thus inadequately recognised the autonomy of the temporal. Apart from that,

⁶⁹⁷ Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instructions on Certain Aspects of The "Theology of Liberation"* (1984), VI/10

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19840806_theology-liberation_en.html.

⁶⁹⁸ ———, *Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation* (1986), 1

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19860322_freedom-liberation_en.html.

This document will hereinafter be cited as "*ICFL*".

⁶⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 68

⁷⁰⁰ Philip Zwerling and Connie Martin, *Nicaragua: A New Kind of Revolution* (Westport: Lawrence Hill & Co., 1985), 31.

⁷⁰¹ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation (15th Anniversary Edition)*, 36.

however, as Daniel Bell notes, despite the seeming rejection of Maritain's New Christendom, it continued to "remain the backdrop of [liberationist] thought".⁷⁰²

The lingering of an apolitical New Christendom ecclesiology even within the politically charged "Church of the Poor" impacted on the central aspect of liberationist thought: the Church's relationship to the world. At first glance, liberationists appear to make a fundamental ecclesiological shift. Maritain's lingering "ecclesiastical narcissism" of seeing the world through the eyes of the Church seems to have been reversed by the unfolding of grace through the process of secularisation, together with the realisation that the Church was a historical player like any other. As part of the world, the Church can only be objectively judged when seen in terms of the world. However, this reversal did not fundamentally alter the arrangement of the ecclesial imaginary with secular counterparts, because the goal of the liberationists was the same as Maritain's, the removal of the Church from direct involvement with the political sphere. In this sense, Gutierrez rightly observed that the "Church of the Poor" was a more mature form of an apolitical Church than that of Maritain's New Christendom. Because all nature was infused with grace, there was no need for the Church's involvement in any dimension of life other than its own religious sphere.

This breaking down of the dimensions of life thus left the "political" sphere as the only real site where the historical was transformed.⁷⁰³ What was more, the shearing of the Church of any political competence, continued Maritain's assumption that "people have a special need of the state". Indeed,

⁷⁰² Bell Jr, *Liberation Theology*, 62.

⁷⁰³ William Cavanaugh and Daniel Bell identify in segments of the base communities embryonic exceptions to liberation theology's penchant for statecraft. These manifestations see the real sphere of social transformation not exclusively in the commanding of the levers of state, but also in being a new kind of public unto themselves, circumventing the avenues of statecraft by being themselves the facilitators of the economy they sought the state to unfold, including the sharing of child care, tending to the sick or elderly, or engaging in joint infrastructure or food projects. However, the communities that circumvent the public institutions of the state to form "a public in their own right" either remain the minority or do not occupy the foreground of the liberationist's imagination. See Cavanaugh, "Ecclesiologies of Medellin," 79-81, Bell Jr, *Liberation Theology*, 73-74.

there was an exclusive reliance on state control of the temporal realm.⁷⁰⁴ This view was buttressed by the praise the liberationists afforded to the arrival of the secular state, and the liberationists' reliance on the combination of both dependency theory and conscientisation to determine the secular correlates to the Gospel. Conscientisation in and of itself may not necessarily make one gravitate towards statecraft as the means of realising his agency in history. However, setting one's agency in protecting one's personal dignity against the backdrop of dependency theory, where the state was deemed the primary agent for social betterment, ensured that such a penchant for statecraft was inevitable.⁷⁰⁵ This impression of the institutions of state as the sole site for revolutionary change was intensified even further from the liberationists' insistence that the "Church of the Poor" should have no political program of its own. Because the Church was now seen in terms of the world, the Church must rely on the secular sciences to determine the terms of the Church's concrete temporal actions. The Church only acted as an avenue for the engendering a vague form of "greater social sensitivity and objectivity",⁷⁰⁶ However, just how that sensitivity was to be concretely applied had to be correlated in terms acceptable by the secular sciences, which largely correlated with the program of statecraft.⁷⁰⁷

The completion of the political evacuation of the Church, the identification of the institutions of state as the only true pole of temporal betterment, and the naive positing of the secular sciences as being beyond criticism in the determination of the terms of political engagement – which in this case lay in the building up of active citizens of the state⁷⁰⁸ - conspired to generate a massive problematique for the liberationists as the 1970s unfolded in Latin America. Central to this problematique was the

⁷⁰⁴ Bell Jr, *Liberation Theology*, 63.

⁷⁰⁵ Jorge Larraín, *Theories of Development: Capitalism, Colonialism and Dependency* (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 206.

⁷⁰⁶ "Justice", 17

⁷⁰⁷ Cavanaugh, "Ecclesiologies of Medellín," 77.

⁷⁰⁸ Hewitt, *Base Christian Communities and Social Change in Brazil*, 102.

failure of the imminent arrival of the Marx's social revolution, a principle that underpinned both dependency theory and conscientisation. This problematique stemmed from two key developments. The most pressing one was the violent closing off of all access to the levers of state as the National Security States in Latin America implemented more repressive measures against all forms of opposition, whether they be insurgents, supporters of previous regimes, the institutional Church, the base communities, or their sympathisers, often with overseas backing from wealthy nations like the United States.⁷⁰⁹ Many of these Latin American regimes became more systematised in the use of torture, summary executions by death squads, arbitrary arrests, prolonged detention or permanent disappearances right across their respective countries, leading to the deaths or disappearances of thousands of men and women across the continent.⁷¹⁰ According to William Cavanaugh, this systematisation of inflicting pain or fear on the populace had the effect of fragmenting any existing notion of community or society. Through the threatened or actual infliction of pain, the victim is made to turn on friends, family, and associates within any social grouping that stood between the individual and the state.⁷¹¹ Such an atomising social context, where any real social compact ceases to exist except the state, dashed any hopes of organising for resistance against the state, never mind seizing its instruments for beneficent ends. Whilst criticism by the reactionary segments of the Latin American episcopate and the early criticism of Liberation Theology by the Vatican did play a part in undermining the base communities,⁷¹² the internationally orchestrated closing off of any avenues for political action via statecraft had an even bigger effect, that made a new generation of liberation

⁷⁰⁹ Arthur Jones and Dorothy Vidulich, "Pentagon Admits Use of Torture Manuals: Training Books Used for Latin Americans at Ft. Benning School," *National Catholic Reporter*, 4 October 1996 1996.

⁷¹⁰ For a sample of first-hand accounts of such torture, see Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 21-30.

⁷¹¹ *Ibid.*, 36-38.

⁷¹² W. E. Hewitt, "From Defenders of the People to Defenders of the Faith: A 1984-1993 Retrospective of Ceb Activity in Sao Paulo," *Latin American Perspectives* 25(1) (1998): 183-84.

theologians speak of the 1980s onwards as “work[ing] liberatively within a pervasive system of captivity”⁷¹³

The sense of captivity intensified as the 1980s rolled into the 1990s. The liberationists’ uncritical appropriation of Marxist theory had blinded many theologians to the theory’s lack of appreciation of the nuances of emerging economic practices,⁷¹⁴ which led to the complete disarmament of the Church’s analytical arsenal. By this time, there were clear signs that socialism was struggling to survive, let alone become a viable alternative to capitalism. This was demonstrated most dramatically by the slow economic decay and eventual collapse of the Soviet Union. As the economic basis of legitimising of the world’s second superpower was disappearing, there emerged a new mutation of Capitalism that was slowly but surely taking hold in the economic imagination of many nations. Central to this neo-liberal mode of production was a shift away from industrial output to financial input as the pole of economic progress. With this evolution, the dictates of finance overrode any political power that the logic of labour driven production wielded in state policy making. This is significant because liberation theologians had placed their hopes almost exclusively in the labour and peasant movements as the vehicle for liberation in the political sphere.⁷¹⁵ Secondly, the liberationists’ assumption that the levers of State were a neutral site that can potentially be harnessed for protection against the Capitalist order became severely undermined. As Kenichi Ohmae observed, the new economic paradigm neutered the state of any independence in formulating domestic policy, and reduced it to a facilitating agent for business.⁷¹⁶ The deregulation of financial markets following the 1970s oil shocks had undermined state sovereignty by depriving them of control over domestic levels

⁷¹³ Leonardo Boff, "Christ's Liberation Via Oppression: An Attempt at Theological Construction from the Standpoint of Latin America," in *Frontiers of Theology in Latin America*, ed. Rosino Gibellini (New York: Orbis Books, 1979), 129-30.

⁷¹⁴ Claudio de Oliveira Ribeiro, "Has Liberation Theology Died? Reflections on the Relationship between Community Life and the Globalization of the Economic System," *The Ecumenical Review* 51(3) (1999): 309.

⁷¹⁵ Ibid.: 305-06.

⁷¹⁶ Kenichi Ohmae, *The End of the Nation State: The Rise of Regional Economies* (New York: Free Press, 1996).

of liquidity. The weakening of the State was demonstrated most clearly when it engaged in fierce competition with other states for foreign investment, which led to concomitant pressures to provide incentives to attract such investment, often to the detriment of both labour protection and the peasant's ability to hold on to land. The institutions of State, deemed by liberation theologians as the great bulwark against the ravages of capitalism when used correctly, gradually became instrumentalised by a highly centralised financial order. The liberationists, in counting on the inevitability of a socialist social revolution as the lynchpin of the Church's political involvement, severely underestimated the immense power of this new mutation in Capitalism into irreversibly turning the sole hope for the poor's salvation, the levers of state, into their very enemy.

In the 1990s, civil society as a seeming neutral space where competing elements of society are given a voice with a view to influence the institutions of state, became deemed by liberation theologians as the "new site of solidarity" to create "a logic distinct from the market" and "fight to reconstruct the state."⁷¹⁷ However, this ignored a growing body of analysts (including some Marxists) who critiqued this naive assumption of neutrality of civil society *vis a vis* the state. Michael Hardt, for instance, spoke of a "withering of civil society" just as it emerged, as civil society slowly became absorbed into the state in the context of neo-liberal Capitalism.⁷¹⁸ Civil society, instead of being a great avenue for liberation, actually became the site for the "modification and neutralisation...of the efforts of resistance on the part of social subjects". What was more, the instrumentalisation of the state by the market mentioned above actually made civil society become a site that "subserve[d] the process of accumulation by representing the whole world of social production...as an inevitability".⁷¹⁹ The free space of civil society actually became the extension of state rule, and from that, the rule of the market.

⁷¹⁷ Translated from the Spanish, cited in Bell Jr, *Liberation Theology*, 69.

⁷¹⁸ Michael Hardt, "The Withering of Civil Society," *Social Text* 45 (1995): 27-44.

⁷¹⁹ Kenneth Surin, "Marxism(S) and the 'the Withering Away of the State'," *Social Text* 27 (1990): 45.

The liberationists had also underestimated the power of this new form of Capitalism in seducing the very people who regarded it as their adversary. The institutional shifts occurring worldwide had also initiated an almost all encompassing cultural shift, which swept up even the urban and rural poor. Daniel Bell's analysis of "justice" in the lexicon of the liberationists is powerful in explaining the massive "buying into" the ideology of neo-liberal capitalism. Very perceptively, Bell noted that the notion of "justice" within Catholic Social Teaching had shifted from the traditional Thomistic notion of justice acted out within a complex web of material, social and spiritual practices practiced by a particular, united, shared communal life.⁷²⁰ As the nineteenth and twentieth centuries unfolded, what counted for the shared social life became absorbed into the calculus of the liberal state which eschewed any notion of a common *telos*. Within this context, the Catholic notion of "justice" had given way to the discourse on the assertion of an individual's right for self-maximisation, without the emphasis on any shared communal life.⁷²¹ Indeed, from John XXIII onwards, what was known as "the common good" bore great resemblance to the liberal right of self-maximisation *at the expense of* any shared communal life.

In accepting conflict between interest-seeking classes as the primordial grounding of Liberation Theology, and the collapsing of the Kingdom of God into the seizing of the reigns of power, and redistributing of resources away from the wealthy elite, "the Church of the Poor" implicitly continued adhering to the notion of justice that was shorn of a common communal praxis, and rooted instead in the maximisation of individual rights. Seen this way, "justice" framed in terms of individual rights in the absence of any overriding communal entanglements, became easily absorbed into the neo-liberal cultural framework. The protection of rights by individuals actually supported the capitalist order that the liberationists were trying to resist.⁷²² Justice, rooted in the preservation of one's rights, collapsed into the economic imperative to consume. It made people "forget

⁷²⁰ Bell Jr, *Liberation Theology*, 103.

⁷²¹ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁷²² *Ibid.*, 126.

solidarity...ma[de] them more individualistic and strengthened prejudices against the poor”.⁷²³ The seductive power generated by neo-liberalism was played out in the apparent power base of the liberationists, the base communities, where the acquisition of consumer goods soon went into full swing even when the means were unavailable or leaving the communities once access to urban centres, where consumerism was most intense, was made available. A telling example is borne out in Hewitt’s research in the diocese of Sao Paulo, where communities engaged in more “devotional” activities and decreased or even ceased conscientisation or community action programs by 1993.⁷²⁴ Rather than bring a just peace, the liberationists could only helplessly watch on as the central elements of the Church’s program of engendering communion between God and man, the base communities, rights discourse and the state, became extensions of violence through the mechanism of the market.

⁷²³ de Oliveira Ribeiro, "Has Liberation Theology Died", 306.

⁷²⁴ Hewitt, "From Defenders of the People to Defenders of the Faith: A 1984-1993 Retrospective of Ceb Activity in Sao Paulo," 179. Hewitt, however, lays the blame more on the intervention of more conservative elements of the Church hierarchy, and largely ignores the cultural shifts brought out by the onset of neo-liberalism.

Nuptial Communion and Polish Communism

Introduction

Liberation Theology presented a challenge to the Church to acknowledge its necessarily political nature, and captured the imagination of a wide segment of Catholics. Nevertheless, its insistence on confining ecclesial action to the apolitical realm of “values” ultimately failed to materialise into an effective form of ecclesial resistance, as the state was allowed to subject the entire temporal realm to its purview. As the 1980s approached the rivalry between two states in particular, the United States and the Soviet Union, formed the backdrop against which events in virtually all political sites were considered. The site of interest in this chapter is Poland, which generated arguably the most significant ecclesiological developments as the twentieth century drew to a close. The events outlined in this chapter were significant for several reasons. First, unlike the case in Liberation Theology, the events below marked the first twentieth century instance of ecclesial involvement in radical political change. At the same time it marked the final decisive ecclesiological shift of the twentieth century, that away from the Mystical Body of Maritain and Liberation Theology, to a distinct Communion ecclesiology of John Paul II.

This chapter will outline the role of Poland in informing this ecclesiological shift. It will look at the formative role of some key contextual imaginaries that emerged in Poland that eventually converged on the person of Karol Wojtyla. It will show how this convergence generated an ecclesiology of Nuptial Communion, and highlight some of its themes reflected in the Church’s involvement in what Timothy Garton Ash calls the “Polish Revolution”. It would outline the Church’s generation of what George Weigel would call “moral extraterritoriality”, and from that the cultural site of ecclesial action. Finally, this chapter will explore how, despite some decisive ecclesiological breaks conceptually, the practice still evinced faint echoes of ecclesial practice whose limitations were

highlighted in the previous chapter. It would highlight how these limitations become compounded by the insufficient thought given to the ascendancy of Capitalism, as well as the emerging vulnerability of culture to Capitalism's logic of production and consumption.

The Polish Imaginary

Polish Identity and Roman Catholicism

The Polish Nation and the Catholic Church

Poland's history, as well as its prime positioning in the power struggles of Europe during the 1980s, made it ripe for the conditioning of a new ecclesiology. One salient element to consider was the conflation between the Catholic Church and the Polish identity. To start unpacking this, one must note that "Polish-ness" did not neatly correlate with Poland conceived as a sovereign territorial entity. Whilst it did retain some recognisable territorial contours, the Polish commonwealth underwent a series of three "Great Partitions" between 1772 and 1795. Poland as a state entity became carved up by its neighbours and wiped off the political map. The Polish state would reappear, only to have it carved up by the other powers of Europe. The 1815 Congress of Vienna saw its absorption into Russia and Austria, and when the Polish state reappeared at the end of the First World War, it again became a political bargaining chip of the regional powers, being swallowed up this time in 1939 by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. The Nazis regarded all Slavs as sub-human, which justified a policy of killing "without pity or mercy all men, women, and children of Polish descent or language" to "obtain the living space [Germans] need".⁷²⁵ Parts of Poland came under direct rule from Berlin, while the rest of what was not absorbed into the Soviet Union became known as a "General Gouvernement" under Hans Frank. In line with the Nazi platform of ensuring that the Slavic people fulfill their destiny as a slave race, Frank was quoted as saying that the Pole

⁷²⁵ Hitler's words in a speech dated 22nd August 1939. See Richard Lukas, *The Forgotten Holocaust: The Poles under German Occupation 1939-1944* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1986), 3.

had “no rights whatsoever”, with their only purpose under Nazi rule being just to “work...eat little [a]nd in the end...die out”, so that “[t]here will never again be a Poland⁷²⁶”.

After losing a million Poles in Nazi death camps, Poland underwent another phase of humiliation when the Allied Powers at the Yalta conference agreed to the further carving up of the country. This fragmentation was made worse by the Red Army’s entrance into Polish territory, which was followed by a less than subtle imposition of Stalinism in the country, and the attempt to exploit the strategic significance of Poland by transforming it into a military bulwark against the West. This transformation included not just the deployment of a swathe of arbitrary security measures against non-communist opponents, but also a crude program of cultural reengineering designed to rid the Polish imagination of its rich culture and historical memory. Such programs aimed to reduce Polish culture into an instrument that glorified conformity, slavish industrial production, and a patriotism centring on either the Party or the Army⁷²⁷. In short, Polish history was being re-written by the communists, from a “vulgar Marxist perspective”.⁷²⁸

To fully to understand the significance of the Soviet persecution of the Church in the latter half of the twentieth century, one must understand the effect that these partitions and wartime atrocities had on the Polish psyche. They generated a very defiant Polish national identity, underpinned by deliberate assertions of cultural autonomy and of opposition to foreign oppression. However, because of the frequent territorial incursions and fragmentations, it was an identity that could not be sustained by reference to the Polish state. The state’s institutional capacity to generate and sustain that imaginary amongst a large national populace over any period of time was constantly disrupted by the frequent

⁷²⁶James Michener, *Poland* (New York: Fawcett Crest, 1983), 451.

⁷²⁷ Norman Davies, *Heart of Europe: A Short History of Poland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 8-9.

⁷²⁸ Maryjane Osa, "Pastoral Mobilization and Contention: The Religious Foundations of the Solidarity Movement in Poland," in *Disruptive Religion: The Force of Faith in Social-Movement Activism*, ed. Christian Smith (New York: Routledge, 1996), 76.

dismantling and radical reconfiguration of its institutions, whether voluntarily or at the hands of the European powers. Polish culture and national identity therefore had to be sustained by reference to another non-state imaginary. Because of the long presence of the Church in Poland, the Polish imaginary slowly amalgamated with a Catholic ecclesiastical one. Indeed, from the time of St. Stanislaw at the turn of the second millennium, a consistent pattern was established whereby loyalties shifted from State to Church in times when Poland as a state-polity was under threat.⁷²⁹ This cemented the Church's role as an active defender of a Polish nation, and gave rise to the notion of the *Polak-katolik*, a term that made participation in the life of the Catholic Church simultaneously a patriotic act.⁷³⁰ Any attack on the Church would thus be construed as an attack on the Polish identity. In turn, the most outspoken clerics in the Church often commanded such respect as to have a status worthy of a national hero.⁷³¹

Stefan Wyszinski and the Great Novena

While the main focus of this chapter is the papacy of John Paul II, consideration of Polish ecclesial politics at the end of the twentieth century would be incomplete without any thought given to Cardinal Stefan Wyszinski, a key episcopal figure who became one of Poland's great heroes thirty years before Karol Wojtyła assumed the Papacy. Wyszinski is significant because he was instrumental in creating an embryonic Polish post-war ecclesial imaginary that would be further honed by John Paul II, an imaginary would that prove instrumental in initiating the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe.

Born in 1901, Wyszynski was a first hand witness to Russian hostility to the Poles. He would have been old enough to be aware of the incorporation of parts of Poland into the Tsar's empire, which

⁷²⁹ Wladyslaw Piwowarski, "Continuity and Change of Ritual in Polish Folk Piety," *Social Compass* 29, no. 2-3 (1982): 127.

⁷³⁰ R. C. Monticone, *The Catholic Church in Communist Poland 1945-1985* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 3.

⁷³¹ Mirella W. Eberts, "The Roman Catholic Church and Democracy in Poland," *Europe Asia Studies* 50(5) (1998).

was followed by clumsy programs that sought to expunge Polish traditions and national identity. When the Nazis invaded Poland, Wyszynski served as the chaplain to the Partisans operating in Warsaw,⁷³² and was intimately acquainted with the Nazis' programs of systematised extermination. When he became Bishop of Lublin in 1946, he would have witnessed a second attempt, this time by Russia, to subjugate the Polish nation politically and culturally. Given the conflation of Catholicism with Polish identity, the Polish Church became an obvious target. Measures taken by the state included, among other things, the establishment of an Office for Religious Affairs to supervise and bureaucratically impede the Church's activities. Church agencies were closed, including the offices of Caritas. Parallel "Patriotic Catholic" associations were created to shore up a pro-communist Catholic faction in Poland. Attacks were also made on the information front. The Polish press was suppressed, in particular its Catholic press outlets. An "Association of the Friends of Children" was created, designed to inculcate the "spirit of socialism" into a new generation of Poles. Such formative programs were coupled with threats of expulsion from work if parents did not enroll their children with the Association.⁷³³

Wyszynski has been criticised, even by Vatican authorities, for entering into an "accord" with the Communist regime in 1950, which ostensibly gave the Polish Church a degree of freedom from persecution and even some state financial assistance. However, this must be set against a considerable body of documentary evidence attesting to Wyszynski's reputation as a fierce Polish patriot. He has been credited with devising a so-called "Theology of the Nation", which was an appropriation of both Polish Romanticism and Neo-Thomist philosophy. This theology claimed that a natural ethnic community linked a person "in its entirety", touching that person's biological, historical and spiritual aspects in such a way that experiences in those aspects coalesce to disclose the

⁷³² Rocco Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyla: The Thought of the Man Who Became Pope John Paul II* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 15.

⁷³³ George Weigel, *The Final Revolution: The Resistance Church and the Collapse of Communism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 110.

most important values.⁷³⁴ Therefore, Wyszynski could not regard the Sovietisation of Polish identity as anything other than an obscene attack on the dignity of Poles. Little wonder then that Wyszynski continued to be the most vocal critic of the Polish Workers State. In 1953, the state enjoined all clergy to swear an oath that effectively made the Church a department of the ruling Polish United Workers Party. Wyszynski headed the Polish episcopate in publicly refusing to “place things of God on the Altar of Caesar”. The Party declared it “an attack on the Constitution”, and arrested Wyszynski, 8 bishops and 900 priests.⁷³⁵ His prison notes bear accounts of many instances of torture of the detainees.⁷³⁶

But from his prison cell, Wyszynski would achieve the status of a national hero to Poles. Despite his internment in prison, Wyszynski was aware of the effect that the cultural onslaught by the Communists had on Poland’s national and religious identity. During his confinement, Wyszynski devised the blueprint for a major pastoral initiative that was designed to form the souls of the Polish clergy and laity, and assert the independence of the Polish nation. This was to be the “Great Novena”, which sought to rededicate Poland to Mary, who was not only the Mother of God but also the Queen of Poland. The timing of this initiative was centred on the millennial anniversary of the Baptism of King Mieszko I in 966, incorporating Poland into Christendom and cementing its official Christian status.

Wyszynski designed the Great Novena around a Marian theme that was virtually guaranteed a wide reception. As a pastor, Wyszynski had nurtured a deeply entrenched and age old folk-piety that centred on a very keen cult of the Virgin Mary, in particular the Black Madonna of Jasna Gora,

⁷³⁴ Jerzy Lewandowski, *Narod W Nauczaniu Kardynala Stefana Wyszy'nskiego* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Archidiecezji Warszawskiej, 1989), 20.

⁷³⁵ Weigel, *Final Revolution*, 109-11.

⁷³⁶ Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski, *A Freedom Within: The Prison Notes of Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski* (New York: Harcourt, 1984).

which bore the unofficial title of the “Queen of Poland”.⁷³⁷ Because of the vibrant folk piety, the icon of the Black Madonna was regarded more as a living manifestation of the Virgin herself, rather than a mere image. Around this theme of the Virgin, between 1957 and 1966, the Polish episcopate would implement catechetical programs around themes such as faith, scripture, family life and social justice. Alongside these programs, the episcopate encouraged pilgrimages to Poland’s many shrines, in particular the Pauline monastery of Jasna Gora, where the icon was housed. Once released, Wyszynski set out to put Polish national identity back onto a Mariological axis.⁷³⁸ He travelled across Poland, calling on the nation to rededicate itself to the Queen of Poland. In calling on Poles to renew their spiritual lives, Wyszynski had effectively called on them to also cast their votes in an unofficial referendum on the authority of the Polish Workers Party. At the centre of this was the pilgrimage of the icon of the Virgin of Jasna Gora, where it would travel from church to church in every diocese over nine years. This was capped off by the millennial celebrations in 1966, which would have included a papal mass, had it not been for the refusal by the Polish state to grant Paul VI a visa.

While the Great Novena was undoubtedly an effective means of spiritual revival, there were also great political dividends yielded from this nine year exercise of concerted catechesis and pilgrimage. Over those years, the Church successfully created a field of communications to rival that of the state. In the words of Maryjane Osa, the Church successfully claimed for itself a “rhetorical field”, where the discourse and its carrier would both enjoy widespread credibility and reach. This had the short term effect of depriving the Communist authorities of the means of defining the Polish millennium in secular terms.⁷³⁹ But the securing of this “rhetorical field” also had the more enduring effect of once again conflating the Catholic Church and the Polish nation into a single imaginary. Through the assertion not just of Catholic spirituality but also the Polish cultural identity that was under attack by first the Nazis and now the Soviets, the Church set itself as basis of collective identity rather than the

⁷³⁷ Sabrina M. Ramet, *Social Currents in Eastern Europe: The Sources and Consequences of the Great Transformation* (New York: Duke University Press, 1994), 160.

⁷³⁸ Lewandowski, *Stefana Wyszy'nskiego*, 130-32.

⁷³⁹ Osa, "Pastoral Mobilization," 77.

state.⁷⁴⁰ Also, as Osa observed, it would provide a nonviolent vocabulary for the Solidarity Movement that would become the focal point of Polish opposition to Communist rule in the 1980s.

The Great Novena also laid the foundations for a major shift in Polish ecclesiology. A juridical, bureaucratic church that served as an extension of Roman central authorities was slowly being replaced by something organised as a more dynamic “temporal and spatial” organisation.⁷⁴¹ This allowed the Church to retain the political space it carved out for itself even as the political centre of gravity for the Polish opposition shifted away from the Church to the Solidarity movement.

The Polish Intellectual Imaginary

The intellectual ferment in Poland deserves particular attention, since there are intimate links between the maintenance of the Polish intellectual elites with that of Polish identity. So intimate was this link that the decapitation of Polish culture included not just the Polish Church, but its intellectual class as well. Partly because of this, Polish intellectuals are an integral part of the social fabric of Polish political life, which means that changes in Polish intellectual trends would have a political impact which is more perceptible than in other countries. This chapter’s consideration of the Polish intellectual imaginary would look at the communities that formed around two important intellectual trends: the Personalist movement, the school of the self-governing Republic and Polish Catholic press, in particular the weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* (TP). Finally, this section would show how these currents would converge on the Polish interpretive authority, in the person of John Paul II.

“The Self-Governing Republic”

Polish intellectual ferment in the 1980s centred on the project to create what Piotr Gliniski called the “Self-governing Republic”. Originating in France, it was a program to create

⁷⁴⁰ Ibid., 75.

⁷⁴¹ Ibid., 77.

“independent, self-governing associations and publications alongside the party-controlled institutional framework, through which...social pressure could be...exercised⁷⁴²

This program defined the intellectual environment that nurtured the discourse of the Polish opposition in the 1970s, and became an integral component of the Solidarity movement’s intellectual architecture. According to this concept, any opposition in Poland would not take place on the understanding that the agent would simply be a player in civil society that sought control of state institutions.⁷⁴³ The movement also sought to shift Poland towards democracy, which ultimately meant an attempt to seize control of the institutions of state. However, it could not do so whilst working within the framework of the political status quo, in which the conflation of the ruling party with the state apparatus provided no space for political activity outside the framework of the ruling party. There was a realisation that in the short term, any opposition to the regime could only operate on the basis of creating for itself institutions that paralleled those of the state which were independent of state control. Going further, Solidarity’s program purported these parallel institutions to encompass “almost every walk of social life”. It sought to carve out a zone of activity within Poland whereby the movement had its *own* jurisdiction whilst still spatially located within Poland. In short, for a time Solidarity had to operate as a state within a state. Little surprise then that in the course of discussions for the creation of Solidarity, it would style itself as a “self-governing republic”.

French Personalism and *Tygodnik Powszechny*

While the intellectuals of the “self-governing republic” were carving a new space of political action, the French Personalist movement, mentioned in Chapter 5, was also making inroads in Poland and furnished a philosophical grounding for the Polish opposition. The 1937 *Esprit* Congress established contact between members of *Esprit* with the Polish intelligentsia. Among this number was the leader

⁷⁴² Piotr Glinski, "The Self-Governing Republic in the Third Republic," *Polish Sociological Review* 1(153) (2006): 56 n2.

⁷⁴³ This runs contrary to Piotr Glinski’s assertion, which understood Solidarity as part and parcel of civil society. The author believes that Glinski too easily classifies Solidarity as another example of the broad based opposition movement, and misses certain nuances that are pertinent to the consideration of Communon ecclesiology.

of the Polish Catholic Students Federation, Jerzy Turowicz. The cementing of contact between *Esprit* and the Polish “Christian Socialists” cemented Personalism’s place in Polish intellectual circles.

During the war, Personalism served as a “handy Resistance ideology” to the face of Nazi programs of Polish extermination.⁷⁴⁴ But its place in post-war Poland was assured when Turowicz established the journals *Tygodnik Powszechny* and *Znak*. The frequent (weekly and monthly respectively) publication and circulation of these journals enabled the production of a community of scholars that kept the influence of Personalism alive when, with the ebb of Nazism, Communism became the ascendant political force in Poland. The community of *TP* and *Znak* scholars also became the site in which the Church played a decisive political role, providing Polish intellectuals with a space in which intellectually rigorous work could be disseminated in defiance of Communist authorities. Their publication also became a site of resistance to the regime by its provision of an alternative stream of data to counter the circulation of journals by regime-sympathetic Catholics.

The publication and circulation of *TP* and *Znak* and the emergence of the community around them, was influential to the conditioning of a new embryonic ecclesiology in the 1970s and 80s. The papers, in particular *TP*, were significant because of the close cooperation between Polish intellectuals and the Polish Church. Whilst it did not determine editorial content, the Church hierarchy provided “ecclesiastical assistants” to act as staffers for the papers. The papers’ editors and many of its contributors were members of the Catholic laity. Despite the close cooperation, however, it never became a channel for the Catholic hierarchy. Indeed, it was not even exhaustively a channel for the Church or a forum for purely ecclesiastical issues. Instead, it became a hub for intellectual discussion for intellectuals of all political persuasions, touching on virtually any kind of socio-political issue. It linked up Catholic intellectuals with non-Catholic and even agnostic ones, drawn to its independence of Communist control and its reputation as a focal point for dissent.⁷⁴⁵ In this

⁷⁴⁴ Hellman, “John Paul II and the Personalist Movement,” 413-14.

⁷⁴⁵ Ramet, *Social Currents in Eastern Europe*, 181.

respect, *TP* became an important ecclesial gathering point for Polish intelligentsia, with its reputation as “the most reliable source of unfiltered information, and the most open, interesting forum for social commentary” in Communist Poland.⁷⁴⁶

John Paul II and his Embodied Theology

Despite the appeal of the Personalist movement, there seemed to be more cohesion on what the movement stood *against* than on what it stood for. It was woefully unclear in the articulation of an alternative political program.⁷⁴⁷ Multiple visions on Personalism were circulated via *TP* and *Znak*, but contributions to the work of Personalism that was specific to the Polish situation that at the same time got ensconced in Catholic ecclesiology, had become the task of Karol Wojtyla. To understand Wojtyla’s intellectual vision, it is necessary first to understand the imaginaries into which he was immersed, and how their convergence on his person, influenced his ecclesiology, and resultant political ethics.

One cannot overstate the connection between his political writings and his encounters with manual labour. In 1938, the young Wojtyla dispensed with his national service obligations by building roads as part of a construction team.⁷⁴⁸ For four years of the Nazi occupation of Poland, Wojtyla became a manual labourer once more. However, unlike his time as a citizen of the Second Republic, this role was carried out as a prisoner in an occupied territory, and in facilitation of a Nazi project of extermination of the Slavs. Wojtyla saw both sides of work, both as a means of building up a community, and as a means of the comprehensive physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual destruction of the human person. According to Weigel, the experience of physical labour, often in sub-zero temperatures, servicing a program with the aim of exterminating those that were working in

⁷⁴⁶ George Weigel, *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II* (New York: Cliff Street Books, 1999), 109.

⁷⁴⁷ Hellman, "John Paul II and the Personalist Movement," 414.

⁷⁴⁸ Robert P. George and Gerard V. Bradley, "Pope John Paul II (1920-2005): Commentary," in *The Teachings of Modern Roman Catholicism: On Law Politics & Human Nature*, ed. John Witte Jr and Frank S. Alexander (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 393.

it, became fertile ground for his theology of work.⁷⁴⁹ Seeing through the lens of the Polish worker, Wojtyla would learn of the innate dignity that the worker possessed. This innate dignity in the worker would become a prominent theme in his social doctrine.

Wojtyla also came under the immense wartime influence was Jan Tyranowski, a tailor that also led the small “Living Rosary” movement as a means to continue the Church’s ministry to the youth, should the Nazis arrest all the clergy in the local parish. This movement was significant to the young Wojtyla, who would be among the first generation of youth leaders to work under Tyranowski’s direction. Under Tyranowski’s leadership, the “Living Rosary” became a space for prayer and spiritual formation. However, Tyranowski believed that shaping the “interior life had an apostolic dimension”.⁷⁵⁰ But what he counted as “apostolic” seemed to blur the distinction between religion and politics, a fact that became embodied in his *praxis* as head the “Living Rosary”. He ran weekly clandestine meetings in his apartment, which served not just as places for spiritual formation. In keeping with Tyranowski’s apostolic worldview, they also became places for discussion on the consolidation and even rebuilding of Poland after the war. At the same time, Tyranowski’s meetings became open to participation by all male Poles. Weigel notes that even partisan leaders would partake in these meetings, although their advocacy to violent resistance to the Germans did not receive much support from members, and certainly not from Tyranowski.⁷⁵¹

Wojtyla’s wartime experiences would inform much of his sojourn in the academic imaginary. Indeed his studies would prove the most decisive influence on his conception of the human person, work and ultimately of the Church as the Body of Christ. These wartime experiences were crucial in driving Wojtyla the philosopher to ask questions not concerning the rights of man, but the nature of man that

⁷⁴⁹ Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 56.

⁷⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁷⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 59-60.

makes those rights worth protecting. These questions would drive his doctoral study following the war, and by this period, philosophy had taken a “post-Cartesian turn to subjectivity”.⁷⁵² The turn away from universal propositions as the basis of knowledge, and of the subject with the “God’s eye view”, presented the perfect opportunity to engage his interest in John of the Cross, of which he learned under Tyranowski. Wojtyla looked at the problem of faith in St. John of the Cross, and it was through his studies that he constructed a seeming contradiction that was to be the centrepiece of his theology, an embodied theology.

Wojtyla sought to provide a response to the Modern philosophies that spawned both Nazism and Communism, philosophies that sought omniscience in all things and omnicompetence over all things, including the human person. For Wojtyla, both aspirations ended up distorting the human person by reducing the person to a mere instrument for another goal, rather than a goal in itself. In response, Wojtyla utilised John of the Cross as an entry point to consider how, in light of the finiteness of human knowledge, the Modern human person with its utilisation of Modern science, still could not have the totality of the data of that person disclosed by human knowledge. Using John’s “deeply mystical sense of humanity”, Wojtyla opined that the embodied person in its physicality was still a site of mystery “normally predicated of God himself”.⁷⁵³

This led Wojtyla to make two very important conclusions. On the one hand, man, like God, cannot be fully known, and thus cannot be made an object of knowledge. As such man, like God, was “irreducible to instrumental reason” and “cannot be spoken of as if they were things”.⁷⁵⁴ Because there was no object to be grasped in both God and Man, knowledge arose not by acceptance of propositions but through a personal experience, in the same way that one knew another person

⁷⁵² Fergus Kerr, *Twentieth Century Catholic Theologians: From Neoscholasticism to Nuptial Mysticism* (New York: Blackwell, 2007), 166.

⁷⁵³ George and Bradley, "John Paul II," 394.

⁷⁵⁴ Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyla*, 52.

through personal experience. This also constituted the only avenue by which the infinite is known.⁷⁵⁵ The corollary to both these claims was that in the knowing of oneself, communities played an important role, since it was relations in communities within which the individual realised himself.⁷⁵⁶ Such views were augmented further in his subsequent studies in the ethical writings of Max Scheler, whom Wojtyla credited with opening up “a whole new world... of values and...mankind”.⁷⁵⁷ While Scheler saw values as universal and transcending what a person thinks, such values nonetheless could only be made known via the experience of a personal encounter. The content of social ethics reflecting such values was then found in the social relationship with that person. For Wojtyla then, “the main experience of value...[was] that of the value of the person”.⁷⁵⁸ Knowledge of persons did not arise from a grasping of a mere cognitive object, but rather through acts of mutual self-giving between one and another, so that an indwelling existed in one another.⁷⁵⁹

Subjectivity was thus bound up in the person’s immersion in social relations. It also meant that the subject was able to know his/herself in those social relations. However, Wojtyla was mindful of his very personal encounters with both Nazism and Communism. Both were sets of relationships, and yet they imprinted dehumanising notions of subjectivity. Wojtyla thus took care not to allow the determinative role of social relations to descend into relativism, where all kinds of social relations imprinted equally valid notions of personhood. The fact that, as Scheler argued, values transcended the contingencies of particular social relations, means that the person could be at risk of receiving distorted data about him/herself within particular sets of encounters, as was done under the Nazis before the war, and the Communists after. Addressing this problem thus required universal criteria of

⁷⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid., 171.

⁷⁵⁷ Johnathan Kwitny, *Man of the Century: The Life and Times of Pope John Paul II* (London: Little, Brown and Company, 1997), 125.

⁷⁵⁸ Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyla*, 56.

⁷⁵⁹ Ibid., 47.

personhood, but bearing in mind the inherently social nature of personal encounters that imprint such data of personhood, that criteria can be set only by another set of relationships. The question thus arose: what relationship set the *true* standard of personhood against which all other relationships are judged?

Wojtyla's answer was a radical Christocentrism as the grounding of all truth, since Christ was the focal point of all historical dynamics. Truth was not to be found solely in disembodied, metaphysical appeals to the intellect that have no reference to their contexts. Rather, "the way the truth and the life"⁷⁶⁰ was to be found in the encounter with the person of Christ. One can see the fusion of both St John of the Cross and Scheler when Wojtyla argued that an appreciation of truth could only be effected if a personal encounter with Christ was effected. It was this Christic encounter whereby the data of true subjectivity was imprinted on man. It was the social relations exemplified by the communion of the Christic encounter that imprinted the truth of what it meant to be human and "Man bec[ame] the image of God...in the moment of communion".⁷⁶¹ It is this self-giving communion that set the gold standard of personhood by which all other relationships are judged.

This encounter with Christ as the focal point in history also provided correctives to the secular tendencies of Maritain's New Christendom and its most prominent contemporary manifestation, "the Church of the Poor". It corrected Maritain's ecclesiology because Christ as the focal point of history left no room for a secular sphere that was separate from the divine. Rather, John Paul's Christocentrism framed a secular sphere irreversibly oriented to the Divine. It also corrected Gutierrez's ecclesiology because it did not automatically infuse grace into the entire secular sphere, a framework which depicted the Church as "one of a number of service agencies working to bring about the 'Kingdom of God'", with the Kingdom of God framed "without reference to [the definitive

⁷⁶⁰ John 14:6

⁷⁶¹ John Paul II, *Original Unity of Man and Woman* (Boston: St Paul's, 1981), 73-74.

role] of Christ and the Church”.⁷⁶² Because the Kingdom of God “is before all else a person with the face and name of Jesus of Nazareth”,⁷⁶³ Wojtyla’s ecclesiology accorded Christ with a *unique* role in imparting the true dignity of the human person. Furthermore, there were *privileged* sites by which such dignity can be known and realised, a fact that gave the Church a distinctive function as the privileged abode of Christ.⁷⁶⁴

Wojtyla’s assertion of the need for a concrete personal encounter to impart the proper data of personhood enjoined not a separation from the Church *from* secular life, but rather its penetration *into* secular life. At the same time, the necessity of an encounter that took up the whole person, created bonds that went beyond a vague union of souls (as in Pius XII’s Mystical Body), or a loose federation of informed consciences (as in Gutierrez’s liberationist variant of New Christendom). Rather, the social and all encompassing nature of the encounter with Christ meant the Church could not just form souls and leave bodies locked into the social relations of the status quo. Rather, the Church had a legitimate role to play in generating social formations that were distinct from secular counterparts.

An Ecclesiology of Nuptial Communion

The various strands concerning subjectivity in communal relationships converge on a theme that arguably formed the central tenet of Wojtyla’s communion ecclesiology, namely nuptiality. Marriage was given a prominent place in John Paul’s philosophy precisely because it was in the act of love-making between husband and wife where a person was at the highest state of his/her dignity,

⁷⁶² Avery Dulles, "The Ecclesiology of John Paul II," in *The Gift of the Church: A Textbook on Ecclesiology*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2000), 109.

⁷⁶³ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* (1990), 18

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio_en.html.

⁷⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 19-20

precisely because “Man bec[ame] the image of God”. The marital act became the privileged analogue for the kind of self-giving communion between Man and God.

What was more, the spouses’ “belonging to each other is the real representation...of the very relationship of Christ with the Church.”⁷⁶⁵ Wojtyla’s themes of nuptiality and ecclesiology were heavily influenced by his colleagues in the *Communio* school of theology, in particular Hans Urs von Balthasar. The Swiss theologian spoke of a “primordial marriage union, that of God with the whole of mankind”, reiterating the theme from the early Church Fathers. In his writings on ecclesiology, von Balthasar also stressed that it was precisely the nuptial encounter between God and mankind that determined the “real core of the Church”.⁷⁶⁶ Because the Church was the primary site of the encounter between Man and God,⁷⁶⁷ the Church had to reflect that analogy by becoming “a humanity formed as a bride to [Christ]”.⁷⁶⁸ Evidence of this influence and the conflation between ecclesiology and nuptiality can be found in one of John Paul’s earliest documents, *Familiaris Consortio*, which was written in 1981. In it, he reiterated the theme of communion, but framed it in nuptial terms, speaking of

Communion between God and His people find[ing] its definitive fulfilment in Jesus Christ the Bridegroom who loves and gives himself⁷⁶⁹

⁷⁶⁵ John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio* (1981), 13

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio_en.html.

This document will hereinafter be cited as “FC”.

⁷⁶⁶ Hans Urs von Balthasar, “Who Is the Church,” in *Explorations in Theology* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), 181.

⁷⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 171.

⁷⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 158.

⁷⁶⁹ FC, 13

For Wojtyla, the implication of the Church in a nuptial relationship with Christ impacted on the way the Church related to the world and lived out its mission. While previous ecclesiologies sought to protect the integrity of the secular by distancing the Church from temporal affairs, a nuptial ecclesiology enjoined a much greater level of intrusion into such affairs. In the nuptial relationship between Christ and mankind, the data of what constitutes a person is obtained not through disembodied transmission, but rather through a thoroughgoing interpenetration or *conubium* between the Church and material life forms. This gives rise to a paradox that David Schindler called a “union-coincident-with-distinct-integrity”. The integrity and distinctive identity of the temporal sphere was not compromised by the involvement of the Church in temporal affairs. Rather, it could only be defended to the extent that the Church was involved and integrated into those affairs.⁷⁷⁰

This also altered the dominant view of the *rapprochement* between the Church and the world, which till then was commonly interpreted to mean a judging of the Church from a secular standpoint. This approach uncritically incorporated the secular sciences to determine theological credibility and evangelical possibilities. The Gospel was thus subject to the tribunal of modern science before it was proclaimed, which had the effect of shorning the Gospel of the uniqueness of Christ. John Paul’s radical Christocentrism enjoined instead the proclamation of Christ as found in the Gospels rather than elicited from the sciences. This did not mark a retreat into an old ecclesiology characterised by the protection of the institutional and juridical imperatives of the Church. These two points were made clear in 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, which proclaimed that “the Church makes herself more credible...if she speaks less of herself and ever more Christ crucified”.⁷⁷¹ Thus, the one who “wishe[d] to understand himself thoroughly” was not the person that made the world the

⁷⁷⁰ David L. Schindler, *Heart of the World, Centre of the Church: Communio Ecclesiology, Liberalism, and Liberation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2007), 18-19.

⁷⁷¹ “*The Church, in the Word of God, Celebrates the Mysteries of Christ for the Salvation of the World*”: *The Final Report of the 1985 Extraordinary Synod*. Part II, Section A, Paragraph 2 (The Mystery of God through Jesus in the Holy Spirit).

primary font of knowledge. Instead, knowledge of oneself was derived by not just “draw[ing] near to Christ”, but also “enter[ing] into him with all his own self”. It is through this penetration into Christ that the data of the Incarnation and redemption could be assimilated into the person.⁷⁷² Paradoxically, it was precisely because Christ had so pervaded the living fiber of man in the personal encounter, that the personhood of the man or woman is realised and maintained.

This *conubium* between the Church and the world also became part of the dynamic of establishing ultimate union between God and mankind. *Familiaris Consortio* explicitly referred to marriage as the “Communion of Persons”, with the “first communion” being the dynamic of the marriage gathering up a man and a woman into a union of “one flesh”.⁷⁷³ Because this conjugal communion was “the specific revelation and realisation of ecclesial communion”⁷⁷⁴ the Church, built up by this communion of persons at a domestic level (the family home) also had a mission to replicate that in all levels of society. The main difference here was that unlike in Liberation Theology, there is not any conflation of “society” with state, nor is there a confining of such relations to merely within the borders of a nation state. The nuptial mysticism of John Paul II thus underpinned a kind of internationalism that formed the backbone of Wojtyla’s interpretation of the Second Vatican Council, which framed the Church as the sacrament of the “intimate union with God” and also “the unity of all mankind”.⁷⁷⁵

⁷⁷² John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis* (1979), 10

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_04031979_redemptor-hominis_en.html.

This document will hereinafter be cited as “RH”.

⁷⁷³ FC, 19

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid., 21

⁷⁷⁵ RH, 7

This unity would be operationalised in several ways. At a basic level, there was great importance placed on the provision of concrete “meeting points”, with the visible aspects of the Church being the primary sites for that meeting point. Indeed, references to the importance of ecclesiastical offices were mentioned only to the extent that they were meant to physically demonstrate this act of gathering into communion. This placed a lot of emphasis on the hierarchy, who now had a much more active temporal role to play. He spoke of the responsibility of Bishops to “become men of creative coordination because they are the ‘meeting point’ of Christ and the Church”.⁷⁷⁶ Also, the physical sites and practices of the Church played an important role in carrying out this function of gathering. As shall be demonstrated below, this role of the clergy, liturgies and parishes would play a great part in John Paul’s activation of his peace ethics.

The church also played an important role in acting as the exemplar of the social relations that reflected that Christic encounter. Framed in these terms, the vocation of the Church in the world was given a much wider scope that was accorded it in Maritain’s or even Gutierrez’s variant of New Christendom ecclesiology. Because John Paul’s anthropology was one where personhood was realised in social relations, cultural practices that configure those social relations received a lot of attention in a way that was unparalleled in previous papal writings. One can see Wojtyla’s background in using culture as a means of protecting the Polish (and Catholic) identity from annihilation by the Nazis, when he spoke of the Church’s need for “the help of all the cultures [to make]... it...possible for the riches [of Christ] to be manifested ever more clearly”.⁷⁷⁷ The Church’s dedication to being that site where that network of relations that developed the human person was nourished, meant that the Church also had a role to play as a site within which cultures were preserved.

⁷⁷⁶ Dulles, "The Ecclesiology of John Paul II," 98.

⁷⁷⁷ *FC*, 10

The Political Ethics of John Paul II

Focus on Subjectivity and Human Rights

Given his wartime experiences, the questions they raised, and the studies through which he sought to answer those questions, it comes as little surprise that papal social ethics under John Paul II, while placing an emphasis on human rights like Paul VI and John XXIII before him, did so on a basis that was different from other popes. His philosophical background, combined with the personal encounters with totalitarian systems that sought either complete subjugation or total annihilation of a whole population on the basis of race or ideology, meant that the central concern was not so much deontological, focusing on the rights that man had.

Rather the focus would be on protecting a particular kind of man, of whom those rights were secondary extensions. Such a man was neither the self-sufficient rational entity of the Enlightenment (since subjectivity was inextricably caught up in social relations), nor the materially determined “socialist man” of Marxism (since it relativised subjectivity, to be determined purely on the basis of raw bureaucratic power). The kind of subject that emerged from the relationships in which s/he was immersed became a focal point for his ethics, and yet this was not relativistic because man’s personal encounter with Christ laid the definitive blueprint of what constituted the human person.

In the operationalisation of the social ethics of John Paul II, there was not a primary concern with rights or the protection of bureaucratic institutions that in turn protect those rights. These came secondary to what John Paul regarded as the more pressing concern, namely the concern as to the kinds of social relationships that were established at every level of society, and whether these encounters imprinted the kind of subjectivity that reflected the Christic imprint. It was this that made John Paul reiterate the Second Vatican Council’s exhortation that “the world should conform more to man’s surpassing dignity” and so as to become “ever more human”.⁷⁷⁸ Given his Christocentric

⁷⁷⁸ RH, 13

anthropology, the gold standard of personhood was one that was rooted in a person that realised him/herself by mimicking Christ. The operationalisation of this subjectivity lay in the following of Christ's example, characterised not by the modern grasping of "equality with God"⁷⁷⁹ through omniscience or omnicompetence, but in "emptying himself" in self-giving to the point of "laying down his life for his friends".⁷⁸⁰ It was *this* kind of personhood that must be defended against any kind of distortion, and it was this kind of personhood around which the discourses of human rights revolved. In a sense, the core of papal social ethics under John Paul comprised of two layers, a discourse of human rights wrapped around a notion of personhood imprinted on man by Christ.

A particular focal point for papal conceptions of subjectivity and human rights related to the area of work. More accurately, as the Pope would write in *Laborem Exercens*, he was looking at "*man* in the vast context of the reality of work".⁷⁸¹ Work was not seen just as an economic function, but also a site where conglomerates of communities are formed that both effected personal encounters and the formation of the person. While the traditional view regarded work as the effect of sin, John Paul saw the dignity of work arising out of its "participation in God's creativity". This was "because work touched the very essence of the human being as the creature to whom God had given dominion over the earth".⁷⁸² Through work, "man not only transform[ed] nature...but... also achieve[d] fulfillment as a human being and...bec[ame] 'more a human being'".⁷⁸³ At the same time, however, it was possible for work to become a channel for violence. John Paul spoke of the threat of

⁷⁷⁹ Philipians 2:6

⁷⁸⁰ John 15:13. See also *RH*, 21

⁷⁸¹ John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens* (1981), 1

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens_en.html.

This document will hereinafter be cited as "*LE*".

⁷⁸² Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 57-8.

⁷⁸³ *LE*, 9

“proleterianisation”,⁷⁸⁴ where man was made into an “instrument of production”. Relationships in these contexts were no longer those of mutual self-giving, but a “commodification” which eschews full participation in communities. This ran contrary to the papal notion that the person is the ends of work.

Truth and Freedom

John Paul also placed great political capital on the issue of freedom. Because knowledge was grounded in a personal encounter with Christ, and because all personal relationships required a degree of freedom in order for that relationship to be established and nourished, so the knowledge of the dignity of man through an encounter with Christ enjoined “a deep esteem for man, for his intellect, his will, his conscience and his freedom.”⁷⁸⁵ Indeed, John Paul went as far to say that these elements “bec[a]me part of the content of that proclamation, being included not necessarily in words but by an attitude towards it”.⁷⁸⁶ However, the kind of freedom the Gospel proclaimed was not the liberal program of individual autonomy to pursue whatever s/he chose. The fact that the Christic encounter provided the definitive content of personhood meant that what was to be observed was not merely liberty. Rather, the kind of freedom John Paul defended was a freedom from what “fail[ed] to enter into the whole truth about man and the world”.⁷⁸⁷

Freedom was thus connected to the realisation of one’s humanity in the truth, with the truth consisting of the personal encounter with Christ and with others. It was precisely because of the need for the encounter with Christ to reveal to man his true nature and for the need of religious spaces and practices to effect that encounter, that John Paul stressed the centrality of religious freedom, since an attack on that freedom attacked the very means by which the truth concerning the dignity of man was

⁷⁸⁴ Ibid., 8

⁷⁸⁵ RH, 12

⁷⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁷ Ibid.

revealed, namely the possibility of a fully Christic encounter. Any infringement of religious freedom then constituted an attack on the very font of the dignity of man.⁷⁸⁸

At another level, when seen in the light of John Paul's rejection of the reduction of persons to mere instruments for other ends, there was also a strong concern for the kinds of systems that configured social relations in such a way as to imprint a kind of materialist personhood, which legitimated the person's reduction into an instrument of materialist systems. While both his experiences under the Nazis and Communists gave form to much of his emphasis on freedom, it is also clear that his articulation of freedom was a critique to *any* materialist culture. This included the consumerist culture of the West, a point he explicitly made in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*. John Paul spoke of the dangers that such cultures posed in reducing a person to a "slave of 'possession' and immediate gratification...with no other horizon than the multiplication or continual replacement for the things already owned with others still better".⁷⁸⁹

The social antidote to this kind of instrumentalisation of man was the promotion and defence of cultural communities. It was cultures that defined the "specific mode of a truly human existence" by developing one's "capacities, moral virtues...and talents".⁷⁹⁰ Cultures were important because they were directly responsible for the forming of the human person. Thus, any ideological distortion of man would be an essentially cultural problem, manifested in the social relations that the person was

⁷⁸⁸ Ibid., 17

⁷⁸⁹ John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987), 28

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis_en.html.

This document will hereinafter be cited as "SRS".

⁷⁹⁰ ICFL, 92

situated in.⁷⁹¹ The defense of the human person was thus imbricated in the defense of a truly human culture. However, this protection did not amount to a steering of culture for political purposes, for cultures must be allowed to develop in freedom from the coercion of ideologies and political instrumentalisation.⁷⁹²

This gave an even greater impetus for the Church not to sit outside the political order. Indeed, the Church's identity was dependent on a very active role in the political order. This was because the Church was the bearer of the Gospel, which contributed to the political order by making clear the proper "vision of the dignity of the person revealed in all its fullness in the mystery of the Incarnate Word".⁷⁹³ Precisely because of this crucial role, there was also concern for the ability for the Church to make that opportunity for that encounter with Christ available to the world. This brought John Paul to the oft-mentioned assertion about the Church's freedom to proclaim the Gospel. However, the fact that the Gospel bore the full blueprint of personhood also meant that all members of the Church bore an unavoidable evangelical responsibility. At another level, the fact that Christ as the Incarnate Word could only be made known through a personal, embodied encounter demanded the members of the Church to make *themselves* available corporeally, as sites by which that encounter could take place.

⁷⁹¹ John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor* (1993), 98

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_06081993_veritatis-splendor_en.html.

This document will hereinafter be cited as "VS".

⁷⁹² *ICFL*, 93

⁷⁹³ John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus* (1991), 47

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus_en.html.

This document will hereinafter be cited as "CA".

Solidarity in Self-Giving

Because only the encounter with Christ imparted the truth of personhood, there was an implicit necessity that all things be gathered together to that site where that encounter took place. Such encounters were meant to engender communion between persons in their entirety. This meant that any communion must involve more than a cognitive sense of togetherness. A substantial, social communion had to underpin any meaningful encounter. This was especially true for the Church as the vehicle for such an encounter, particularly at a time when the Polish church was trapped by totalitarian political structures and cut off from the rest of the universal Church, and was threatened with disintegration just as it had during the Second World War. The vision of unity also applied to all levels of political community that surrounded the Church. However, John Paul stressed that when it came to explaining solidarity, “economic and political reasons alone cannot do it. We must go deeper: to ethical reasons”.⁷⁹⁴ The social compact had to be underpinned by something else, and this was where solidarity overlaps with the Personalist theme of protecting the dignity of the person.

To understand the content of such ethics, one had to revisit an earlier point about a person being formed in his encounters with Christ and with others, namely the point concerning the attaining of knowledge of self in proportion to the extent s/he participated in other persons. This enjoined a responsibility of the highest order for the good of all and for each individual.⁷⁹⁵ A person acquired the fullest extent of knowledge of his or her personhood when completely divested in acts of self-giving, just as Christ completely divested himself to imprint the data of Christological personhood in man. The recovery of man’s knowledge of oneself and with that his dignity, came about through service.⁷⁹⁶ In the same way that Christ’s kingship was fulfilled only in his “being a servant”, so was man’s dignity fulfilled not just by membership in the Church, but also in the living out of that vocation that membership enjoined. This constituted the “persevering readiness for ‘kingly

⁷⁹⁴ Cited in Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 312.

⁷⁹⁵ *SRS*, 38

⁷⁹⁶ *RH*, 21

service””.⁷⁹⁷ All members of the Body Christ, whether religious or laity, were thus charged with effecting solidarity via these relations of self-giving. In the same way as the Church, all levels of political community should become characterised by a unity underpinned by relations of self-giving.

Authentic Development

John Paul’s focus on human subjectivity and from that, human rights, culture and solidarity provided important modifications to notions on development adopted in previous ecclesiologies. Subjectivity built on the emphasis on economic development as a counterpoint to the violence of material deprivation and its destruction of social relations. As he outlined in an address to the United Nations General Assembly, material deprivation touched on subjectivity because it threatened forms of “social life [and]...condemn[ed] man...to become a second class or third class citizen, to see compromised...his professional career or...to lose even...the possibility of educating his children freely”.⁷⁹⁸

Economic welfare was a point of concern because it was a site whereby subjects were formed. However, the focus on Christological subjectivity would make economic redress alone an inadequate kind of “development”. In *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, John Paul said that development as a purely economic category was insufficient, since “the mere accumulation of goods and services...[was] not enough for the realisation of human happiness”.⁷⁹⁹ As he would later state in his 1979 address to the United Nations, progress also included the “primacy given to spiritual values and by the progress of the moral life”.⁸⁰⁰ Development meant “enabling man to have full access to truth, to moral development, and to the complete possibility of enjoying the goods of culture...and increasing them by his own creativity”.⁸⁰¹ Hindrances to the realisation of these goods, he argued, could be the

⁷⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁹⁸ Cited in Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 349.

⁷⁹⁹ *SRS*, 28

⁸⁰⁰ Cited in Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 347-8.

⁸⁰¹ Ibid., 348.

function of economic structures. They could also emerge from the “structures of sin”, since sin subsisted in “concrete acts of individuals”⁸⁰² and could accumulate into structures that were difficult to remove even in temporal terms.⁸⁰³

John Paul’s notion of development avoided its being framed in exclusively economic terms. It was possible therefore to categorise countries in the industrialised zones as “underdeveloped”. In light of his anthropology, John Paul regarded “superdevelopment” as a form of underdevelopment, since the “excessive availability of every kind of material goods” to only a select few reduced man to a consumer, a “slave of ‘possession’...with no other horizon than the multiplication or continual replacement for the things already owned with others still better”. At the same time, the reduction of such horizons meant no thought was given to others who were poorer either in terms of possession, or are made poorer by the processes of consumption.⁸⁰⁴ The anthropological focus of John Paul’s ecclesiology meant a concern for the development not just of economic systems, but also of the kind of subject being formed. This topic covered economics as well as “cultural, political and simply human” categories.⁸⁰⁵ Development had to be “oriented according to the reality and vocation of man seen in his totality”.⁸⁰⁶ This explains why a paragraph of the encyclical gave attention to inequalities in “social communications”, a realm where the affluent countries became centres of power and “impose[d] a distorted vision of life and of man” and “d[id] not always give due consideration to the priorities and problems of [other] countries or respect their cultural make-up”.⁸⁰⁷ The site of these distortions was primarily a cultural one. This explained why, in elaborating a program of “authentic

⁸⁰² *SRS*, 36

⁸⁰³ George and Bradley, "John Paul II," 409.

⁸⁰⁴ *SRS*, 28

⁸⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 15

⁸⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 29

⁸⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 22

development”, a primary concern for John Paul pertained to the types of social relations put in place as a result of programs of development.

This concern translated into a rigorous defence of cultural communities. From the earliest days of his papacy, John Paul stressed the “objective rights of the nation [to]...the formation of its own culture and civilisation”.⁸⁰⁸ This defence of the nation, however, did not mean the easy conflation of such communities with the “organic unity” of the structures of states. There seemed to be a greater recognition than in other papal writings that the integrity of the state did not serve as an end in itself. Rather “the *raison d’être of the State* [was] *the sovereignty of society...of the nation*”.⁸⁰⁹ The relationship between a cultural community and a state therefore, was one of freedom that favoured the community over the state. This paints a more complex political map than those in previous papal writings, since such cultural communities would not necessarily be in a hierarchical relationship with state structures overlooking them from the top of that hierarchy. Rather, it would appear that John Paul recognises the concept of the nation having a legitimate right to exist, even independently of a state structure.⁸¹⁰

Nonviolence and Martyrdom

The emphasis on service, presence, culture and freedom meant that in making the encounter with Christ possible in the secular world, violence had to be proscribed. There were tactical considerations that informed the insistence on nonviolent action. An advisor to Solidarity, Bronislaw Geremek, said in an interview that on many occasions, violent resistance to Soviet authority failed because “the Communist regime was able to marshal more force than civil society”.⁸¹¹ However, the insistence on nonviolence for John Paul went well beyond strategic concerns and was the natural extension of his

⁸⁰⁸ Cited in Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 307.

⁸⁰⁹ Ibid. Italics in the original

⁸¹⁰ John Paul would eventually point this out in his 1995 address to the UN. See Bernard J O'Connor, *Papal Diplomacy: John Paul II and the Culture of Peace* (South Bend: St. Augustine's Press, 2005), 330.

⁸¹¹ Cited in Weigel, *Final Revolution*, 53.

ecclesiology. Recall that all personal encounters, including the encounter with Christ, would be authentic if it were only be entered into freely. To rush that encounter, or worse violently force it, rendered a truly human encounter impossible. Indeed, the use of violence would bring about the antithesis to a Christic encounter. This is because it would lead to the reduction of a human subject to an object.⁸¹² This made the concern for the person only *secondary* to the concern for political change, when indeed the Christocentric anthropology reversed those priorities. The only morally acceptable response to the violence of the Soviets, therefore, was a non-violent one of the Church and civil society.

But non-violence was not merely an abstention from the use of force. For John Paul, the inbreaking of the divine to effect the Christic encounter in history, enabled and even enjoined a living out of life as if s/he has been liberated by that encounter. In the context of Poland, it meant a living out as if one was already liberated from Communism.⁸¹³ This of course set the practioner on a collision course with the violence of coercion. A nonviolent response was thus an active participation in Martyrdom. While this was not explicitly stated in any statement, it was a logical extension of John Paul's nuptial ecclesiology. Relations of self-giving of one to another, and being personally present to effect these relations, always required acceptance of the risk to the integrity of the person, even to the point of death. Indeed, this experience of suffering, as John Paul would state in a 1991 address in Jasna Gora, was deemed necessary for this century since it actually becomes an encounter with Christ, and an "experience of God's activity in Man".⁸¹⁴

Martyrdom was frequently touched upon in a political manner that was unmistakable to Catholic listeners, at least in Poland. Arguably the most prominent example of this was the reference made to

⁸¹² Ibid., 140.

⁸¹³ Timothy Garton Ash, *The Uses of Adversity: Essays on the Fate of Central Europe* (New York: Vintage, 1990), 106.

⁸¹⁴ Cited in *L'Osservatore Romano*, 2nd September 1991, 10.

St. Stanislaw Szczepanowski, the Bishop of Krakow who was martyred in 1079 under the orders of King Boleslaw, after the Bishop Initiated the first political confrontation between Polish Church and State, challenging the legitimacy of the unjust reign of the King. This Saint had through the centuries been a focal point of Polish patriotism, since his life was characterised by his confrontation with state power. In addition, his death through dismemberment served as an analogue to the many fragmentations that plagued the Polish nation. Wojtyla had a special veneration of the Saint, whose confrontation with arbitrary state force and eventual martyrdom, as he wrote in a poem entitled “Stanislaw”, nourished “the soil of human freedom”.⁸¹⁵ John Paul’s 1979 visit to Poland had massive political implications, since it marked the 900th anniversary of St. Stanislaw’s death, a point not lost on the Pontiff, or any Pole. He regarded this Saint and his martyrdom to be “a special sign of the pilgrimage that...Poles are making down through the history of the Church”.⁸¹⁶ The announcement of his impending visit made a point to mention that it was imperative that the Pope “visit his native country in the year of dedicated to the ninth centenary of the martyrdom of St. Stanislaw”.⁸¹⁷ During the visit itself, John Paul made frequent use of St. Stanislaw as example of leading the Christian life, not just because of his acceptance of suffering, but doing so whilst resisting state power.⁸¹⁸ The martyr thus would become one of many political rallying points for the people of Poland, as well as a model for the nonviolent mode of political action that had to be taken.

The Resistance Church

If secular integrity was dependent on ecclesial intervention, so as to enable the encounter that discloses the truth of the human person, then it would be unsurprising that the Church under the papacy of John Paul II ranked among the most politically active in modern ecclesiastical history. The pope’s wartime experiences, his nuptial mysticism and personalism, *Communio*’s theme of “union-coincident-with-distinct-integrity” and the conflation of the Church with Polish identity, converged

⁸¹⁵ Cited in Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 248.

⁸¹⁶ Cited in *Ibid.*, 293.

⁸¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 305.

⁸¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 311.

to create what George Weigel called the “Resistance Church”. Here was the emergence of a new kind of ecclesial politics, as existing techniques of ecclesial action evolved to include a concert of papal advocacy fused with local actions, and incorporating actors both within and outside the Church.

Atmospherics

The emergence of the Resistance Church coincided with an evolution in the use of political atmospherics. While the technologies and channels of communication that were at the disposal of John Paul II were not necessarily revolutionary, the scale of the reach that the use of these technologies attained was unprecedented. While the Latin American bishops set the precedent of using atmospherics to mobilise their respective dioceses, the Polish Church sought to influence the political atmosphere both internationally as well as domestically. The frequent use of this mode of ecclesial action not only influenced the moral atmosphere, but also generated an image of ecclesial unity despite great distances and political isolation. The utilisation of the newly available mass communication channels, especially with the global availability of television, served to shape public perceptions of particular political situations, and in so doing helped redefine the nature of a political problem.

The task of generating atmospherics had several dimensions under John Paul’s papacy. The Pope had a direct involvement through the channels of traditional papal diplomacy. Despite the evolution in ecclesiological thought, traditional papal diplomacy still had an important role to play. This is because at one level, John Paul regarded the state as “the expression of the sovereign self-determination of peoples and nations” and “a normal realisation of social order”.⁸¹⁹ At another level, he saw in state diplomacy a vital channel in generating political atmospherics, since diplomats “actually influenc[d] the outlook of their respective countries”.⁸²⁰ The pope maintained close contacts with the Vatican diplomatic corps, ensuring that the Personalist agenda outlined above remained central to his diplomatic agenda. From the beginning of his pontificate, virtually all of his annual

⁸¹⁹ Address to the Diplomatic Corps, 12th January 1979. Cited in O'Connor, *Papal Diplomacy*, 10.

⁸²⁰ Ibid., 327-8.

addresses to the corps touched on the dignity of the human person,⁸²¹ and flowing from that the themes of religious freedom⁸²², cultural and national rights,⁸²³ solidarity,⁸²⁴ and the proper place of the Church in political life.⁸²⁵ The same themes were repeated in his addresses in a variety of international fora, such as the United Nations and the venues of his many papal visits, which were widely covered in international media and thus assured a global audience.⁸²⁶

The pope also generated a political atmosphere amenable to Personalism through the use of media channels. This was especially important in controlling micro-level atmospherics, especially in Poland, where state control of the local media ensured only a steady flow of state propaganda or heavily filtered information. Efforts were made to ensure and Papal statement made it into *TP*, which by the 1980s had become the only source of reliable information inside Poland. Apart from the themes of his pontificate generally, the Pope would also make statements specific to Poland, which included his declarations of Support for the striking workers of Solidarity.⁸²⁷ At the same time, he tried to influence the activities of the movement, or curb any resort to violence by the workers.⁸²⁸ Papal efforts were augmented on the ground by the Polish episcopate, who issued frequent pastoral

⁸²¹ See for example his 1978, 1979, 1980 and 1981 addresses, cited in *Ibid.*, 8, 12, 17.

⁸²² See for example his 1979, cited in *Ibid.*, 12, 18.

⁸²³ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁸²⁴ This was often framed in other terms, such as the lack of an “alien people”. See for example his 1982 address, cited in *Ibid.*, 29.

⁸²⁵ See for example his 1981 address, cited in *Ibid.*, 21-2.

⁸²⁶ The generation of the global field of media coverage was to some extent facilitated by a close working relationship between John Paul and US President Ronald Reagan. Intelligence and contacts were shared between the Vatican delegate to Washington, Pio Cardinal Laghi and US government officials, which included CIA personnel such as William Casey and Vernon Walters, as well as National Security Advisors Richard Allen and William Clark. On this see Carl Bernstein, “The Holy Alliance,” *Time*, 24 February 1992, 28-35.

⁸²⁷ Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 401.

⁸²⁸ Timothy Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity* (NY: Yale University Press, 2002), 280.

messages expressing support for the opposition, and criticising the government's responsibility in creating a "lingering disease afflicting the socio-political system".⁸²⁹

Beyond the Airwaves: Embodied Witness

John Paul knew that the generation of rhetoric was not going to be enough. In his "Theology of the Body" discourses, the Pope spoke of the life of God needing to be a *sacramental* and thus tactile reality. In the same way, the human body became a visible deposit of a divinely infused dignity. It was thus not enough to merely *speak* of human dignity, but also to *embody* and make available an encounter with an exemplar of that dignity. Such concrete encounters enhanced the transferability of that message to one's audience by enhancing the credibility of the message. According to Karlyn Campbell and Kathleen Jamieson, these examples of "personal 'enactment'" of the message, the bodily presentation of the speaker, becomes proof of the message itself.⁸³⁰ The personalist ethic and the Church's teaching on the dignity of the human person were thus augmented by the physical presence of its main exponent, the pope.

Little surprise then that his messages were often accompanied by papal presence, especially if these messages related to an area of particular ecclesiastical concern. He vigorously employed this technique in Poland, making three visits to the country whilst constantly throwing his enthusiastic support behind opposition to the Communist regime. During his visits he constantly touched upon the themes of his social ethics that were relevant to the situation in Poland, namely the dignity of work and the freedom of religion.⁸³¹ He also touched on the Polish right to "national self determination", a

⁸²⁹ Ramet, *Social Currents in Eastern Europe*, 191-92.

⁸³⁰ Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, "Form and Genre in Rhetorical Criticism: An Introduction," in *Form and Genre: Shaping Rhetorical Action*, ed. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson (Falls Church: Speech Communication Association), 1.

⁸³¹ Tensions between the government and opposition had long been simmering around the issue of labour. Since 1956, the Polish economy had experience increasing economic difficulty. In the 1970s, the governments simultaneously froze wages and initiated dramatic spikes in food prices to stave off an economic crisis. When strikes became more and more frequent, and the government's attempts to keep the workers on the factory floors

reference to the efforts of the Polish Worker's State to erase Poland's cultural memory. He also claimed that his person confirmed the special place of the Polish nation in the unfolding of God's design in the history.⁸³² At a time when nations were being divided along ideological lines, John Paul referred to the providential timing of God's choice of a Polish pope "manifest[ing] the spiritual unity of Christian Europe".⁸³³ Making this claim at the time when Poland was experiencing humiliation and oppression hands of the Soviet authorities framed the experiences of the Poles as something more than just another experience of injustice. It became part of a "particularly responsible witness",⁸³⁴ Poland's facilitation of the unfolding of God's work in the salvation of Europe. Moreover, the significance of the sufferings of the present moment had eschatological significance, "lead[ing] finally to freedom in both this world and the next".⁸³⁵

More than the Pontiff's words, "his very presence in Poland... 'enacted' protest against oppression and injustice".⁸³⁶ At the same time, it conveyed a message that the Poles were participating in a divinely ordained community, the Body of Christ, which was at work in the political field.⁸³⁷ And because this new political entity was the Body of Christ, there would necessarily be more martyrological suffering to be borne before freedom from oppression could be won.⁸³⁸ The papal

became more severe, the issue of work became the central rallying point for the opposition, and main foil to critique the competence and even legitimacy of the government. See Ash, *Polish Revolution*, 11-19.

⁸³² Kenneth S. Zagacki, "Pope John Paul II and the Crusade against Communism: A Case Study in Secular and Sacred Time," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 4(4) (2001): 704.

⁸³³ Cited in *Ibid.*

⁸³⁴ Cited in Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 322.

⁸³⁵ Zagacki, "John Paul II," 701-2.

⁸³⁶ *Ibid.*: 705.

⁸³⁷ *Ibid.*: 692.

⁸³⁸ *Ibid.*: 705. Adam Michnik spoke of the papal presence reviving "the ethos of sacrifice, in whose name our grandfathers and fathers never stopped fighting for national and human dignity". See Adam Michnik, "A Lesson in

presence in Poland garnered the Polish nation into a cohesive political unit around the Church. A local political scientist, Bogdan Szajkowski, described the papal presence as a “psychological earthquake [and] an opportunity for mass political catharsis”.⁸³⁹ The papal presence, according to Timothy Ash took an “intense unity...which previously had been confined to small circles of friends” and had it “multiplied by the millions”.⁸⁴⁰ The visits marked “the point at which the subjective reality of social/national unity overtook the ‘objective reality of social division...the unity of Polish society was transformed from the Potential to the Actual’”.⁸⁴¹ By making public this sense of unity, the papal presence provided a model that affirmed what many thought but never expressed until then, which emboldened the resolve of the opposition, which was marked by a significant change in outward behaviour. A non-Catholic dissident, Adam Michnik, noted that “those very people who are ordinarily frustrated and aggressive...were metamorphosed into a cheerful and happy collectivity, a people filled with dignity...exemplary order reigned everywhere”.⁸⁴²

The Church as a Parallel Society

John Paul’s ecclesiology did not shy away from involvement in the political sphere. However, one significant aspect of nonviolent Polish ecclesial resistance was its deliberate attempt to distance itself from the techniques of statecraft, by extending the program of the “self-governing republic” and opening up areas of what Weigel called “moral extraterritoriality”.⁸⁴³ This underpinned the creation of a “parallel society”. Like the “self-governing republic”, the “parallel society” involved the creation of spaces outside the public institutions, removing the authority and leverage that such official

Dignity," in *Letters from Prison and Other Essays*, ed. Adam Michnik (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 164.

⁸³⁹ Bogdan Szajkowski, *Next to God...Poland: Politics and Religion in Contemporary Poland* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 72.

⁸⁴⁰ Ash, *Polish Revolution*, 32.

⁸⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁸⁴² Michnik, "A Lesson in Dignity," 160.

⁸⁴³ Weigel, *Final Revolution*, 151.

institutions had over the political activity.⁸⁴⁴ Outside the confines of state control, these political spaces become staging areas from which other non-state political actors could enter and challenge the status quo, without being beholden to the levers of controlling state bureaucracies. This became especially urgent with the implementation of martial law in 1981, combined with the proliferation of regime-friendly associations in all areas of civil society, including those associated with labour and the Church, which sought to subjugate civil society and for the purposes of state.

While external pressures exerted by the government created a sense of urgency, the foundations of this extraterritoriality had already been laid through the convergence of several internal factors. In the first instance, the shifting identification of Polish nationhood away from the state was already ingrained in the Polish imaginary for centuries. The programs of pastoral mobilisation implemented during the Great Novena had firmly located the twentieth century Polish imaginary outside State purview by providing the repertoire of creating a sense of alternative community.⁸⁴⁵ As Poland entered the 1980s, John Paul's ecclesiology provided further intellectual resources to inform this mode of action. Whilst the Mystical Body's attempt to create a parallel entity resulted in a highly spiritualised gloss over the machinations of secular political forms, John Paul's emphasis on the need for an embodied encounter with Christ enjoined the Church to enact not just than a "spiritual" bond, but also the embodied communities to make such encounters possible.

The creation of these communities took place at three levels. The most fundamental of these involved atmospherics. The pope repeatedly spoke of a profound unity that the Church as the Body of Christ affected in both individuals and nations throughout all generations.⁸⁴⁶ This was augmented by his assertions that the experiences of Poles were "participation in an ancient, universal and 'mystical'

⁸⁴⁴ Ramet, *Social Currents in Eastern Europe*, 84.

⁸⁴⁵ Osa, "Pastoral Mobilization," 76-78.

⁸⁴⁶ 1979 address in Poland, cited in Zagacki, "John Paul II," 698.

order”.⁸⁴⁷ His talk on the Church as a distinct social order was buttressed by his reconceptualisation of secular time. According to Scott Bader-Saye, “the ways we experience, name and interpret time contribute to the kinds of communities we imagine and inhabit”.⁸⁴⁸ In the case of the Catholic Church in Poland, the sense of becoming a “parallel society” began with recalibrating the perceptions of the temporal experiences of the Poles by inserting “sacred time” into historical experience. In this way, temporal experience became part of “a complicated but ever-ongoing process that move[d] slowly towards God’s purpose”.⁸⁴⁹ The pope and his ecclesiology rooted in an inbreaking of the divine with the secular played decisive roles. In his Polish addresses, the pope framed the experiences of oppression at the hands of the Soviets as contemporaneous with a host of Slavic saints who played a role in the Christianisation of Europe, from St. Stanislaw to Maximillian Kolbe,⁸⁵⁰ and reminded Poles of the special contribution of Poles in salvation history.

At another level, the Church contributed to the creation of the “parallel society” by making use of its own physical spaces to become a virtual embassy of a foreign political unit.⁸⁵¹ The Church utilised its own physical spaces, such as parish halls and local shrines, to enact political territories external to the spaces of the Polish state and underpin a parallel society. This strategy was pioneered by Father Jerzy Popieluszko, who rose to fame as chaplain to Solidarity from 1980 till his death in 1982. Through the local Parish services, Popieluszko turned his Warsaw church into a focal point for opposition to the regime. In 1982, he initiated what became known as a monthly “Mass for the Fatherland”, in which the Eucharistic Liturgy drew thousands of different sectors of Polish society, bringing together students and intellectuals, aristocrats and peasants, workers and even Communist

⁸⁴⁷ Ibid.: 699.

⁸⁴⁸ Scott Bader-Saye, "Figuring Time: Providence and Politics," in *Liturgy, Time and the Politics of Redemption*, ed. Randi Rashkover Pecknold and C.C (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006), 98.

⁸⁴⁹ Zagacki, "John Paul II," 701.

⁸⁵⁰ Ibid.: 702.

⁸⁵¹ Weigel, *Final Revolution*, 151.

Party members.⁸⁵² During these masses, the pulpit became a platform for resistance, as Popieluszko gave sermons that both criticised the regime and extended many strands of John Paul's thought, including the themes of non-violence and solidarity.⁸⁵³

This initial strategy of resistance was given greater impetus by John Paul's visit, during which time he often incorporated the sites of martyrs and shrines into his rhetoric on Poland's struggle against the Communists. The combination of his presence and his affirmation of these sites was, in Zagacki's words "equivalent to found a new world that was at least temporarily free from evil and chaotic experiences".⁸⁵⁴ This provided the impetus to expand the mobilisation of ecclesiastical spaces to underpin a parallel society. They became sites for the installing of a social infrastructure to parallel those of the Polish state, including day care centres, medical installations and relief agencies for the care of the sick and elderly.⁸⁵⁵ Churches even cemented its place in the opposition's corner by its assistance in the establishment of Solidarity's political infrastructure. This partnership was most apparent when the local parish in Gdansk, St. Brygida's, was offered to Solidarity for use as its headquarters.⁸⁵⁶ Another example was in Nowa Huta, where St. Maximilian Kolbe's became the site for the establishment of the first independent television station in Poland run by former state-TV personnel who lost their jobs due to their opposition to the regime.⁸⁵⁷

However, the deployment of the police, the army and other coercive arms of the Worker's state ensured that any extraterritoriality based on physical spaces alone would soon be erased as such

⁸⁵² — — —, *Witness to Hope*, 460.

⁸⁵³ Ibid.

⁸⁵⁴ Zagacki, "John Paul II," 706.

⁸⁵⁵ Ramet, *Social Currents in Eastern Europe*, 182.

⁸⁵⁶ Adam Michnik, *The Church and the Left* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 21.

⁸⁵⁷ Weigel, *Final Revolution*, 152.

territories were reclaimed by the Communist Party. This created a need for another level of creating an ambassadorial space, one that reclaimed political space for the Church even when the physical territory it was claiming was well within the control of the Polish State. The Great Novena had proven that, even whilst squarely within the “enemy territory” of the Polish state, the Church’s ambassadorial spaces still be carved out through the enactment of ritual. Whilst rhetoric contributed to the redefining of political spaces, ritual also played an important role in helping participants reimagine the physical space of one community, thereby transforming it into that of another distinct community.⁸⁵⁸ The gathering of participants into a series of corporate behaviours, such as liturgies, interrupted the practices that underpinned the public space controlled by the state. Ritual drew participants into a common temporal space and became a form of corporate line drawing, separating its participants from citizens subject to state disciplines. Participants thus had a clear sense that in participating in these rituals, they were declaring themselves to be outside the control of the ruling power and were claiming citizenship of another. The fact that the Church was dealing with a militantly atheist regime helped to make the demarcations much clearer.

The Eucharistic liturgy created the platform to situate an extraterritoriality outside the context of the parish. A Eucharistic liturgy at a Gdansk Shipyard in 1980 was one example. Through the liturgy, what was the showpiece of Soviet productivity became a focal point for a protest against a 1970 shooting of shipyard workers. Daily masses and confession soon formed the focal point around which workers of the Solidarity movement gathered, and became the platform to launch the movement’s strike actions.⁸⁵⁹ Whilst it may be too bold a claim to say that the Eucharist founded the Solidarity Movement, it is difficult to ignore the role of the liturgy in providing opportunities for such spaces to be carved out that could be used by Solidarity, and ground Solidarity not as another civil actor within Soviet society, but rather as a part of a “parallel society”.

⁸⁵⁸ Bader-Saye, “Figuring Time,” 95.

⁸⁵⁹ Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 401, Ash, *Polish Revolution*, 49.

Though the political centre of gravity would eventually shift to Solidarity as the 1980's unfolded, the Church's role as the foundation of a parallel society could be evinced by its retaining an important mediatory role. As Solidarity became larger and became more diversified, it became crucial that intellectual support be enlisted as a vital means of steering the movement tactically. The Church became a focal point for consultation for Solidarity, covering a range of issues from political philosophies to the appointment of editors of Solidarity's journals.⁸⁶⁰ Solidarity itself was advised by Father Joseph Tischner, a political philosopher and a long standing member of Poland's intellectual elite who also acted as the movement's chaplain. His essays on *The Ethics of Solidarity* became integral to the shaping of the movement, and his role as chaplain meant that he was able to provide guidance as well as motivation to the movement's leaders. So influential was he that at one point it was proposed that his sermons be included in the official foundational documents of the Solidarity movement.⁸⁶¹ In these and other respects outlined above, the Church played an undeniable role in "shift[ing] the arena of political confrontation".⁸⁶²

The Church & Cultural Resistance

The generation of "extraterritorial" space underpinned the most noteworthy strategy of nonviolent ecclesial peacemaking, which involved the Church acting as a platform for cultural resistance to the Soviets. Crucial to informing this mode of action was John Paul's affirmation of the role of culture in providing the ecologies which made possible the personal encounters that imprinted a true sense of the person. Because of the central role of cultures in nourishing notions of personhood, John Paul consistently spoke of a people's ability to maintain national cultures as a fundamental right (an example being at his 2nd June 1979 address at Warsaw).⁸⁶³ That culture would become the preferred site of resistance could be evinced by the statements of Solidarity chaplain, Joseph Tischner. In an interview, Tischner remarked that in protecting the dignity of the person, it was not enough to merely condemn the oppressor. The victims also needed to renew their understanding of themselves, an

⁸⁶⁰ Ramet, *Social Currents in Eastern Europe*, 185.

⁸⁶¹ Ash, *Polish Revolution*, 235.

⁸⁶² Osa, "Pastoral Mobilization," 73.

⁸⁶³ Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 307.

understanding which had been blunted by decades of Soviet propaganda.⁸⁶⁴ The thought of both these men affirmed the harnessing of Poland's traditional cultural resources that sustained the Polish identity when it became under attack by the Nazis in the 1940s, and making it one of the favoured sites of ecclesial resistance for the Church in Poland against the Communists in the 1980s.

The Church collaborated in efforts to re-establish an independent Polish cultural scene. Under the Communists, as with the Nazis, exponents of many cultural forms such as music, art, theatre and film had fallen out of official favour for being deemed unnecessary to the real task of industrial production, for failing to glorify the crass materialism of Soviet ideology, or for being generally critical of the authorities. Maintaining the vibrancy of these art forms became an act of political defiance, and many artists were determined to facilitate an underground circulation of music and art.⁸⁶⁵ The Church's ambassadorial function proved key when it stepped in to become a major sponsor of so-called "evenings of independent Polish culture". Church grounds became havens for such artists to showcase their craft. Graphics exhibits, theatre, and music concerts became regular occurrences on Parish grounds, attracting between 700 to 1000 people per session in the case of the Kolbe Church in Nowa Huta.⁸⁶⁶

Another form of cultural resistance took place at an educational level. The parish became not just a concert hall but also a classroom. The Church established schools that taught a wide array of subjects from the humanities, sciences and agriculture.⁸⁶⁷ In major metropolitan Parishes such as Warsaw, Krakow and Poznan, the Church's role in education included the running of student centres that not

⁸⁶⁴ Ibid., 321.

⁸⁶⁵ Marta Toch, *Reinventing Civil Society: Poland's Quiet Revolution 1981-1986* (New York: Helsinki Watch, 1986), 27.

⁸⁶⁶ Weigel, *Final Revolution*, 151-2.

⁸⁶⁷ Ramet, *Social Currents in Eastern Europe*, 180.

only organised pilgrimages, but also facilitated public discussion.⁸⁶⁸ Every week in the 1980s, the Kolbe Parish in Nowa Huta would hold education programs after mass, which included political debates or lectures in Polish history, a highly subversive act given Soviet attempts to create an atheist, proletarian version of Polish historical memory. For four years, the parish even organised an informal “Christian University”, which issued certificates in areas vital to the resistance to the soviets, including economics, sociology, history and public relations.⁸⁶⁹ Churches also became hosts to symposia, particularly on political and human rights issues. In this educational role, the Church became the focal point for the airing of dissent. Dissident journalists, for example, would meet regularly in a local parish in Konin, to provide views on current affairs that differed from those aired in official state media channels, including the US presidential election and Middle Eastern affairs.⁸⁷⁰

The Church also created a focal point for dissidents through its contribution to the world of underground publishing, particularly via *TP*. Although many other journals enjoyed widespread circulation in Poland, the clandestine circulation of *TP* not only provided the most reliable independent source of information, but also kept a vital core of Polish intellectuals, Christian or otherwise, in contact with one another and with members of Solidarity and other dissidents, who previously would have had nothing to do with each other due to conflicting political divisions. A Solidarity activist, Casimir Woycicki, argued that *TP* played a crucial role⁸⁷¹ in facilitating a

fruitful coming together of intellectuals from traditions that just twenty years before were bitterly opposed: Jewish socialists sat down with Christian Democrats, former Stanlinists with Home Army veterans, hardened ex-revisionists with inspissated Thomists⁸⁷²

⁸⁶⁸ Ibid., 182.

⁸⁶⁹ Weigel, *Final Revolution*, 151.

⁸⁷⁰ Ramet, *Social Currents in Eastern Europe*, 181.

⁸⁷¹ Weigel, *Final Revolution*, 128.

⁸⁷² Ash, *The Uses of Adversity: Essays on the Fate of Central Europe*, 149.

In creating the Church as a focal point for a parallel society, the Church also created channels of information that broke the government's monopoly over information, history and cultural life.⁸⁷³

Conclusion: Lessons and Limitations

The debate continues over the cause of the downfall of Communism in Eastern Europe, and the Church's contribution to that downfall. What is clear is that the Polish case marks one of the earliest cases outside of Latin America where the Church sought a decisive political confrontation with the instruments of injustice. Whilst continuing on a trajectory set in Latin America, the ecclesiology that informed the Church's political actions in Poland provided four important correctives to the New Christendom ecclesiology of Liberation Theology.

The ecclesiology that emerged from the Polish case, like the liberationist variant of New Christendom, continued to work on the basis of an inbreaking of the divine into the temporal. However, "the Church of the Poor" universalised the infusion of grace into the temporal, which led an insistence on the autonomy of the secular sphere from the Church. This in turn restricted the Church's political possibilities to the confines set by secular politics. Combined with the fact that the Church now acted as an agency at the service of secular politics, Liberation Theology denied the Church any distinct role or contribution. However, the ecclesiology of John Paul II was grounded in a Personalist ethic and bound up in the encounter with the particular person of Christ and his body (the church). Both of these enjoined ecclesial intervention in the secular sphere. They also afforded a distinctive political role for the Church. An ecclesiology rooted in the nuptial communion of persons went further than Liberation Theology in its attention to bodies as well as consciences in the process of Christian formation. Finally, with its attention to culture as a site of the formation of the person, John Paul's ecclesiology was able to go further in identifying concrete sites outside state purview, by which the violence of instrumentalisation could be resisted.

⁸⁷³ Weigel, *Final Revolution*, 153.

Nevertheless, as the twentieth century drew to a close, several areas of the ecclesiology that emerged in Poland showed signs of limitations as to its continued applicability. It is true that the new ecclesiology went further than its predecessors in opening up the possibilities of political spaces outside the purview of state institutions. However, such spaces were eventually surrendered to the state with the fall of Communism, as the institutions of the parallel society that was solidarity slowly made the transition towards assuming power in the Polish state. According to Sabrina Ramet, the strategy of the “parallel society” suggests that the space created could not remain fully independent of the official channels of the state.⁸⁷⁴ This is because the concept of the “self-governing republic” dealt more with the level of democracy implemented rather than the independence of the space that was created by such practices.⁸⁷⁵ Indeed, the concept itself was associated primarily in forming an actor in civil society.⁸⁷⁶ As a civil society actor, the self-governing republic still had as its primary referent the institutions of state. The independence of civil society was defined by the absence of state supervision. At the same time, the aim of the self-governing republic was either a merger with or swallowing up of the official institutions it was trying to avoid.⁸⁷⁷ This mode of action mimicked the liberationists’ privileging of the institutions of state as the most mature political expression. In light of John Paul’s remarks of the state as a natural expression of nationhood, his support of Solidarity’s transition to power should not come as a surprise.

However, his support for this transition was being expressed at the time when, with the decline of Communism, political relations were being melded into the hyper-expansion of free-market capitalism. This created a twofold subjugation. At one level, there was the subordination of the state

⁸⁷⁴ Ramet, *Social Currents in Eastern Europe*, 84.

⁸⁷⁵ Glinski, "The Self-Governing Republic," 57.

⁸⁷⁶ Dariusz Gawin, *Discussions Concerning the Concept of Self-Governing Republic in 1980-1981* (Warsaw: Zakład Społeczeństwa Obywatelskiego IFiS PAN, 2000), 18.

⁸⁷⁷ Ramet, *Social Currents in Eastern Europe*, 85.

by the market outlined in the previous chapter. At the same time however, as Michael Hardt would later observe, the independence of civil society would prove illusory since “civil society” being clearly defined stemmed from the fact that its fences were set up by the state. Civil society’s “freedom” was thus built on the shaky foundations of the state’s “goodwill”,⁸⁷⁸ or the State’s willingness to refrain from exercising its sole function, which as Max Weber argued, consists of exercising “legitimate” violence. This made civil society immensely vulnerable since such goodwill could be retracted by that state at any time and on the state’s terms.

This attention to civil society is important because it touches on an ancillary concern about the ultimate political independence of the Church itself. Weigel is right in identifying the Church’s distinct contribution in Poland, through its creating a sphere of “moral extraterritoriality”. However, he was also right in his identification of the Church playing an ambassadorial role, acting as an agent for another political actor. More specifically, while the Church did successfully carve out a separate political space, particularly during the period of martial law, the Church’s politics was one of willing surrender of those spaces to be used by civil society. The emphasis on freedom in John Paul’s ecclesiology meant in practice a too easily conceded collapse of the Christic encounter with the activities of civil society, as if the practice of ecclesiology collapsed into *any* practice outside the realm of state coercion. True, the church did in practice become a focal point of “unification, in which men draw together”,⁸⁷⁹ but it is debatable as to whether “the point of convergence of this new people [was] Christ”,⁸⁸⁰ since the parallel society that gathered round the Church did not subsequently engage in a distinct political practice of its own. There was little indication from the Polish case that the Church itself constituted its own society, but rather a staging ground for other political actors.

⁸⁷⁸ Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 71.

⁸⁷⁹ Joseph Ratzinger, *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), 23.

⁸⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

To be fair, the content of just what constituted distinct mode of ecclesial practice had up to this point been ill defined.⁸⁸¹ The identification of culture as a site of political resistance was indeed a valid strategy that grew out of the ecclesiology outlined by John Paul II. However, the Polish case suggests that the strategy seemed to be confined to the protection of cultural expressions from manipulation by the state. Whilst a valid strategy within the context of martial law under a totalitarian regime, there is little scope of using culture as a site of political resistance in the same manner as in Poland, given the collapse of communism and the concomitant proliferation of free-market capitalism and liberal-democratic state governance. It is particularly important to make this point, since John Paul is on record for giving support to free-market capitalism as an excellent distributor of economic resources, in spite of his critique of capitalism as a potential form of totalitarianism.⁸⁸²

However, Daniel Bell observes that Capitalism constituted more than an economic system, but an amorphous framework for the manipulation of desire that worked its way into any cultural form.⁸⁸³ There thus seemed to be insufficient consideration within the ecclesiology of John Paul II on just how culture could become vulnerable to being coopted by the forces of the market, so that cultural expressions, as Zygmunt Baumann observed, obeyed Capitalism's logic of production and consumption.⁸⁸⁴ Despite appearances, this is highly relevant for the purposes of peace analysis, since the proliferation of capitalist modes of relations becomes coterminous with the cooption of cultural

⁸⁸¹ It probably was not until John Paul's 1998 encyclical, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, when the Church even began to hint at a form of ecclesial political action that had no referent to either the institutions of state or civil society. See John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (1998)

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/special_features/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_20030417_ecclesia_eucharistia_en.html.

⁸⁸² CA, 33

⁸⁸³ Bell Jr, *Liberation Theology*, 12-19.

⁸⁸⁴ Zygmunt Bauman, *Intimations of Postmodernity* (London: Routledge, 1992), 51-52, See also——, *Globalization: The Human Consequences* (Cambridge: Polity, 1998), 81-85.

forms to a violent logic. The market, according to Bell, operates on a cultural logic based on fulfilment via “capture and possession – combat and sheer assertion”.⁸⁸⁵ With the post-Cold War intensification of the logic of production and with the global proliferation of the capitalist modes of production,⁸⁸⁶ the forces of capitalism have become increasingly dispersed, impersonal and volatile. This intensifies a subject’s lack of control that in turn oozes a culture of pessimism and fear. Escape from fear becomes dependent on the accumulation of material goods and with them the assurance of physical, psychological and emotional integrity. Ironically this process only serves to unveil the fleeting nature of any security such stockpiling provides, thereby either intensifying this nihilistic behaviour or resulting in lashing out in acts of violence in a desperate attempt to regain control over one’s circumstances.⁸⁸⁷ Left alone, the proliferation and intensification of such relations can only degenerate into “violence of conflict and conquests”, whilst still leaving capitalism’s calculus of scarcity and self preservation intact.⁸⁸⁸

⁸⁸⁵ Daniel M. Bell Jr, "Only Jesus Saves: Towards a Theopolitical Ontology of Judgement," in *Theology and the Political: The New Debate*, ed. Creston Davis, John Milbank, and Slavoj Zizek (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 202.

⁸⁸⁶ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (NY: Free Press, 2006).

⁸⁸⁷ Pickstock, "Liturgy, Art and Politics," 169.

⁸⁸⁸ Bell Jr, "Only Jesus Saves: Towards a Theopolitical Ontology of Judgement," 208, Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 120.

Conclusion: Constants and Prospects

Using the lens of Ward's cultural hermeneutics, the four historical episodes in the preceding chapters have identified social, political and intellectual sites that have conditioned the conceptualisations of the Body of Christ, which in turn formed the lenses for the judging of and engaging with other social bodies. This thesis has mapped out a schema whereby such communal sites of practice and their influences on ecclesiology have subsequently influenced the Church's responses to violence and how each of those ecclesiologies eventually desiccated in the face of new configurations of social imaginaries. In the course outlining this schema, a number of thematic constants emerged in each of the historical episodes, but remained implicit in the narrative threads. The constancy of these themes points to valuable lessons for any future discernment pertaining to the contours of ecclesial responses to political phenomena, and ultimately for the Church's evangelical mission.

This concluding chapter will be dedicated to explicating these thematic constants. It will look at how the situatedness of the Church, and thus the situatedness of the Church's knowledge claims, should shape the degree of the Church's involvement in and with other social imaginaries. This section will then look at how its situation within such imaginaries makes the discernment of the Church's own ecclesial image an indispensable project, however unstable and fragile the corporeal configurations that maintain such images may be. This section will also draw attention to the need for, and the implications of, ecclesial self-awareness of its *own* instability and fragility as a corporeal configuration. The necessity of the generation of those images, and embeddedness of the faithful within both ecclesial and non-ecclesial imaginaries, make the concept of Church authority a hotly contested and still highly salient element that requires attention in this section. The final theme that requires particular attention concerns the danger of the allure of statecraft and its cultural logics, and

how the Church's protection from such an allure requires a reshaping of the concept of "public-ness" away from forms dictated by the dominant state paradigm.

This thesis will then conclude by drawing attention to two contours of what Castoriadis calls the contemporary "magma of imaginary significations"⁸⁸⁹ that present promising entry points for theology to assert a more a more public role for the Church, in a way that remains faithful to its evangelical task. It will draw on the Post Cold War acceleration of what Peter Berger calls "desecularisation" and the intensification of hypermobile forms of relations underpinned by the mutations of neoliberal Capitalism spelled out in previous chapters. Greater attention, however, will be given to the more fundamental drivers of the study of these phenomena, namely the rehabilitation of affectivity and ritual consciousness. It will conclude by looking at how these avenues of study could lay the foundations of a new form of Church politics, in which Christian desire, hope and liturgy play a key role.

Lessons for Evangelisation

The Church and the Social Imaginaries

In *Christ and Culture*, Richard Niebuhr discussed the possibilities concerning Christ's relationship with the culture he found himself in, and presented five possible broad premises of engagement. Niebuhr's Christ either sought to pit itself against that prevalent milieu, accommodate itself to it, isolate himself from it, integrate it or transform it, though such approaches were not hermetically sealed from one another.⁸⁹⁰ These possibilities in a way provide useful reference points for discussion with Christian cultural engagement. However, as Ward reminds us, Niebuhr's proposals begin from an artificial dichotomy between Christ on the one hand and culture on the other, and thus ignore the

⁸⁸⁹ Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), 210.

⁸⁹⁰ H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1956).

notion that “there is no access to Christ who has not already been encultured”.⁸⁹¹ That is, there is no Christian encounter that is not immersed in some kind of sociality.

Ward’s observation and the episodes above demonstrate that the Church cannot stand above the social imaginaries it critiques. Whilst many are right to point out the Church is not of the world, the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council are right to assert that as the Body of the Incarnate Christ, the Church reads the signs of the times as “a community composed of men”.⁸⁹² In other words, the Church reads the signs of the times as a community *in* the world, and to the extent that it is a communal project that takes place in social terrain, the Church is itself a social imaginary. And to the extent that the Church is a social imaginary, it cannot help but be situated amongst and negotiate with a plethora of other non-ecclesial imaginaries. In these interactions between ecclesial and non-ecclesial imaginaries, the former cannot escape being shaped in some way by the latter, even as the former tries to reject the encroachments made by the latter. The first episode demonstrates that even as the Church as the Perfect Society was fundamentally opposed to the ascendancy of the modern secular states, the contours of its resistance were unmistakably conditioned by the Modern milieu, even to the extent of an ecclesial donning of the guise of a modern secular state.

This is to an extent unavoidable. Theology qua theology has no social discourse of its own and thus needs its social neighbours as a way to make the Christian standpoint translatable and representable to those surrounding imaginaries.⁸⁹³ This means that the task of Christian cultural engagement is highly precarious, for it can lead to two possible outcomes. On the one hand, the shaping of the ecclesial by the secular can mean that Christian encounters will end up making the ecclesial standpoint either a pale reflection of or subservient to the non-ecclesial counterpart. This was

⁸⁹¹ Ward, *Christ and Culture*, 21.

⁸⁹² GS, 1

⁸⁹³ Ward, *Cities of God*, 117

particularly the case in the first three episodes, where the Church was conceived as either a secular state in a state-centric environment, or a mere private spiritual force that had to be quarantined from political realities. In either case the Church left the secular intact and to the extent that this happened, it detracted from another dimension of being the Body of Christ, who came to *redeem* and *perfect* creation, to “make all things new”.⁸⁹⁴ The Church shows that Christ is a social site that “eats and drinks” with other social sites, but the Church also shows that like Christ, its *telos* lies in the transformation of other social sites.⁸⁹⁵ In this sense, the Polish episode, at least up until the fall of the Soviet Union, fulfilled that *telos* by transforming the raw social material into its own ecclesial imaginary and unabashedly confronting the very foundations of the non-ecclesial imaginary.

The Need and Instability of Ecclesiology

Before the process of transformation can begin, there must be a theological critique. But as mentioned before, theological critique proceeds from interpretation in concrete spaces. Where then does Christian interpretation take place? One of the most apparent recurring themes in all four episodes is that in reading of the signs of the times, Christians do not interpret alone. It is easy to say that the Spirit or Christ guides the interpreter. But it is much harder to admit with Ward that these transcendent categories, in order to be any guide at all, still work within temporal categories and form contextually specific standpoints. These standpoints are not the product of a self-constituted individual, who negotiates the sea of interpretations by reference to one’s own original interpretive techniques. Identities, as Mark Taylor remarks, cannot exist independently of any prior “inevitable relationships with others”,⁸⁹⁶ so any act of interpretation is necessarily an act of immersion into a series of communal social webs. This immersion in turn constitutes a pre-rational subjection to the communal grammars that exist in that web. One then cannot read the signs of the times without reference to a prior interpretive community.⁸⁹⁷

⁸⁹⁴ Revelations 21:5

⁸⁹⁵ Ward, *Christ and Culture*, 19.

⁸⁹⁶ Mark C. Taylor, *Erring: A Postmodern a/Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 132.

⁸⁹⁷ For a concise explanation of this, see Fish, “God Talk, Part 2.”

What is more, there is a need for a deliberate effort for that community to be brought to the forefront of consciousness, since one's belonging in any community is not a stable independent category that can remain sealed within the interpreter's mind. As was mentioned in chapter three, all interpreters will eventually forget purely cognitive categories, including categories pertaining to the communal contexts within which their interpretive strategies are generated. In order for interpreters to effectively decipher the signs of the times, it is necessary for that communal image to be constantly brought to the forefront of the minds of interpreters as a point of juxtaposition with that sign of the times. In the context of a Christian act of interpretation, ecclesiology as the art of projecting ecclesial images to the community becomes an indispensable aspect of negotiating the signs of the times in a Christian manner.

However, the importance of ecclesial images should not obscure the Church's awareness to the eventual obsolescence of those images. The Church as an interpretive community provides an important service in aiding the task of Christian interpretation via the production of ecclesial standpoints. However, part of that service must also involve the recognition that all communities cannot afford to be complacent with regard to the durability of those standpoints, and that the Church as an interpretive community is not exempt. In each of the episodes outlined in this thesis, all the ecclesial images articulated showed signs of coming under strain in the face of constant reconfiguration of the imaginaries that surround it. In some cases, particularly in instances of a rapidly consolidating nation state, these signs of strain came very early on. Even those that proved key in providing a serious challenge to the political status quo eventually showed signs of obsolescence. This should not come as a surprise, given Ward's reflections on how the transformative capacity of the articulated imaginary turns on the *habitus* to believe in the ecclesial image. As was demonstrated in each of the episodes in this thesis, the *habitus* to rely on the ecclesial image to inform engagement with the signs of the times is generated by a particular combination of social fields acting upon and within the ecclesial imaginary. Because one cannot stop the emergence

of new configurations of imaginaries, all articulated ecclesial images, however highly regarded, will not be able to maintain the necessary field that in turn maintains the *habitus*.

Bodies of Evidence

Habitus turns on the generation of fields, and fields are not pure mental categories. Rather, they are the function of social action by embodied subjects. From the reflections above, it should become apparent that social action cannot emerge abstractly, but rather from corporeal interlinkage. Even the intellectual generation of images does not occur outside this bodily generation of social imaginaries. A corporeally grounded epistemology, outlined in chapter three, should give the Church pause in considering a strategy of the spread of the Gospel based purely on cognitive ideas. Talal Asad has reminded us in *Genealogies of Religion* that while ideas are important in informing how bodies act, the shape of these cognitive categories are intimately intertwined with the practices that the body is engaged in.⁸⁹⁸ In a similar fashion this thesis does not discount the importance of ideas. Rather it asserts that the credence of such ideas can only make sense alongside concrete spatial and corporeal considerations. Key to these spatial considerations is the maintenance of spaces, generated by communal webs of corporeal practices, within which ecclesial images can be “executed”⁸⁹⁹ – the field. Because such fields are never self-apparent givens, attention must be given to their production and maintenance in order to sustain the believability of any project attempting to transform knowledge categories.

This too, must be the task of the Church. Despite the irruption of His gospel, Jesus still spoke of the possibility of his message being heard and not heard, and signs seen and unseen.⁹⁰⁰ Having “ears to hear”⁹⁰¹ were not givens but rather the result of a carving out of a field, a mode of temporality enacted in the corporeal life the disciples and later, the *ecclesia*. John Yoder reminds us that Jesus

⁸⁹⁸ Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*.

⁸⁹⁹ Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, 77.

⁹⁰⁰ Matthew 13:17

⁹⁰¹ Mark 4:23

reproached his disciples, not for their expecting the enacting of *a* social order, but rather for misunderstanding the *type* of social order that Jesus sought to enact.⁹⁰² To produce ears capable of listening, the Church must pay attention to where the bodies of its members are placed within the imaginary of the Church. It must also review its relationship to non-ecclesial imaginaries and the positioning of its members within those imaginaries, for they can no longer be viewed as ethically neutral spaces. Though this should not be confined specifically to any one episode, the Church's relations with the totalitarian state backs up Walter Wink's argument that any set of corporeal relations is endowed with a built in spirituality with a concomitant claim on the whole person, including the soul.⁹⁰³ Because of this, it would be naïve for the Church to regard not just the totalitarian state, but *any* modern set of social relations as innocent of steering bodies towards behaviours that estrange and impute evil intent.⁹⁰⁴

This also means that the Church must also review the nature of its own evangelical task. If corporeal positioning determines the “social possibles” that in turn influence the believability of ecclesial propositions or actions, one can no longer view the task of evangelisation as merely the production of rhetoric, while leaving the non-ecclesial imaginaries with the monopoly on the production of fields. Such an approach would do little to advance the Church's evangelical mission, since the disposition for belief in the Church's gospel would be exclusively determined by the fields subsisting in the secular imaginary. The horizons of the Church's evangelical task must be widened, so as to encompass the production of its own, ecclesial versions of Bourdieuan fields, in order to make the imperatives of the Gospel believable. To begin embracing this task, the Church must wean itself of its reliance of non-ecclesial technologies as the privileged conduits of the Gospel, and give attention its own corporeal technologies. It must realise that within these technologies lie the Church's own capacities to position bodies in concrete spaces the Church can call its own. “Making disciples of all

⁹⁰² John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: WB B. Eerdmans, 1972), 46.

⁹⁰³ Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 5-9.

⁹⁰⁴ Colossians 1:21

peoples”⁹⁰⁵ would encompass more than achieving agreement in the minds of those disciples to a corpus of belief. It would involve training the bodies of those disciples into becoming ecclesial “fields” and generators of new ecclesial conceptions of the self, so as to nourish in turn the necessary *habitus* to make believable ecclesial knowledge categories.

Evangelical Authority

Another area of interest pertains to the necessity of submission to authority in every act of interpretation. This thesis has demonstrated how the articulation with one imaginary will in varying degrees be set in terms of another. This intersects very closely with the ubiquity of relations of authority identified by Michel Foucault, where every act, including acts of interpretation, draws one into participating in structures of authority. When one imaginary is defined in terms of another, there is a necessary acceptance of the authority of those that define the latter imaginary. The necessity of participation in structures of authority also becomes apparent when one notes how easily many forget that in every act, one unconsciously expects that the act would result in a better future. Also, recall that with each movement, all parties are called to suspend independent judgment and presuppose some stable reality already set by someone else. Because that kind of stability is not self-evident, one must necessarily rely on someone else's assurance of stability. There is thus in every act a submission, conscious or otherwise, to an “accredited authority who stands as guarantors for the truth”.⁹⁰⁶

This convergence between community, interpretive overlap and authority has significant ramifications for all members of the Church as an interpretive community. There are implications for those who exercise interpretive and magisterial authority within the Church. Whilst many rightfully claim the work of the Spirit in guiding such offices, it does not necessarily exclude the possibility of its guidance operating within the framework of a relationship between that office and other social imaginaries both within and outside the Church. In all of the episodes above, interpretive authority

⁹⁰⁵ Matthew 28:19

⁹⁰⁶ Ward, *Cities of God*, 71.

formally subsisted within an individual office, but such offices did not operate exclusively within the context of individual offices or even persons. Rather, acts of interpretation carried out by such authorities in varying degrees are conditioned by the imaginaries that act on those persons, making the ecclesial image conform to a masterframe set by someone else residing in another imaginary. This in a way should qualify any pretensions to omniscience of the Church's teaching offices.

At the same time, there are also implications for those tempted to see the eventual desiccation of images generated by less than omniscient ecclesial magisters as justification for advocating more autonomous modes of Christian cultural engagement. Such claims are normally forwarded under the ambit of enabling Christians to engage in more "critical reflection", or breaking the institutional limitations on the freedom of the spirit. Such claims can be responded to at two levels. At a simplistic level, as Ward reminds us, the Christian standpoint does not have at its heart the promotion of "personal sovereignty".⁹⁰⁷ At another level, it should be noted that such sovereignty in reflection assumes that there are spaces between social imaginaries characterised by an absence of any authority. The episodes demonstrate that any reflection, however critical, emanates from communal and social spaces with some form of authority structure. As Stanley Fish, Michael Budde and Robert Brimlow note, it is difficult to gauge just how free one is when the current political and economic institutions are pre-determining assumptions, values and webs of faith.⁹⁰⁸ They remind us that all modes of reflection begin with deference to some kind of authority structure. The implication of this is that any interpretation that does not gravitate around the authority of one standpoint will eventually conform to the terms set by authorities in another. In the same fashion, all Christian interpreters seeking to distance themselves from their respective ecclesial authorities in the act of Christian interpretation will eventually submit themselves to non-ecclesial counterparts, to the point where the terms of Christian engagement become defined by terms set by non-Christian imaginaries. Whilst this is in a sense unavoidable, both the second and third episodes show how the ecclesial image and

⁹⁰⁷ ———, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*, 166.

⁹⁰⁸ Michael Budde and Robert Brimlow, *Christianity Incorporated: How Big Business Is Buying the Church* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2002), 135, Fish, "God Talk, Part 2."

mission can become almost *completely* defined by non-ecclesial imaginaries. This can also mean that the Church can potentially subject itself to the authority of these imaginaries through the acceptance of post-enlightenment epistemological categories laid down either by liberalism on the one hand and socialism on the other. Every interpreter is more subject to authority than s/he would like to admit, simply because of the unavoidable overlap between social imaginaries and the ubiquity of complex authority structures that reside therein. The rejection of church authority by invoking either “critical reflection” or the freedom of the Spirit can actually equate to an appeal to the authority of the autonomous liberal individual. This in turn appeals to the modern epistemologies and narratives and those that create these categories, ultimately giving false theological succor to non-ecclesial conceptions of authority, such as the modern state.

The importance of proximity to ecclesial authority whilst engaged in the act of interpretation and evangelization returns us to the notion that the Christian standpoint operates within a *telos* of critique of the world.⁹⁰⁹ The spirit’s work in renewing the face of the earth⁹¹⁰ should mean that the Church’s formulation of the ecclesial imaginary should play a part in a resistance to the status quo. There is the danger that, in being enthralled by the transformative potential of the non-ecclesial imaginary for the Church’s evangelical capacities, the latter may end up forgetting its task of perfecting the former *in Christo* by drawing it back into a Christic orbit,⁹¹¹ or more specifically, that of the Church as the Body of Christ. Although the fluidity of borders between social imaginaries would mean that there is no “purely ecclesial” authority, it does not detract from John Milbank’s argument that the Church is still the site of true sociality. The Church’s immersion and incorporation of secular social imaginaries does not detract from the fact, as the site of Christ, the one that pre-exists and holds all of creation together,⁹¹² the Church is still the *true* social imaginary. Whilst the authorities of secular social

⁹⁰⁹ Ward, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*, 168.

⁹¹⁰ Psalm 104:30

⁹¹¹ Ward, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*, 169.

⁹¹² Collosians 1:17-20

imaginaries continue to give shape to the ecclesial, it is only the ecclesial imaginary and the authority structures therein that deliberately make an attempt to reconcile all things in Christ as its political project. Christian standpoints that eschew submission to ecclesial authorities may uncritically co-opt its non-ecclesial neighbours in defining themselves, and run the risk of becoming mere extensions of these non-ecclesial imaginaries through the uncritical incorporation of non-ecclesial epistemologies, whether such standpoints be broadly considered “conservative” or “progressive”. Such uncritical co-option of the non-ecclesial imaginary will eventually run the risk of an ecclesial complicity in maintaining, rather than challenging, the political status quo, which from a Christic perspective, means a maintenance of a mode of sociality that is less than what it should be.

The Stubborn Allure of Statecraft

In the course of the Church’s modern cultural engagements outlined in the four episodes above, another constant has been its relationship to the modern imaginary *par excellence*, the nation state. More specifically, whether the Church was hostile or accommodating to the modern era, its self-definition was almost always framed in terms that put the modern state as the ultimate point of reference. The Church’s political program gravitated around defining *itself* as a state in juxtaposition to other states, a spiritual influence on state functions, or as part of civil society seeking to exert physical control of the levers of state. Post Cold War, virtually all Churches continue to define their political programs in terms that privilege statecraft as the sole site of the social and thus the sole mode of political action. The abdication of the Church’s role as an alternative polity subsisting in the Polish “Resistance Church” was evident in the thought of John Paul II’s *Centesimus Annus*, with its uncritical endorsement of liberal statecraft.⁹¹³ The post-Cold War proliferation of Christian lobby industries pushing or opposing legislation on a particular “moral” issue, the placing of “Christian” members of legislatures or policy makers operating on the platform of the defense of a “Christian state”, demonstrate an enduring allure of the state imaginary in the minds of Christian cultural interpreters. Such interpreters evince the entertainment of the same kind of assumptions entertained by the exponents of Liberation Theology, namely that the state is a culturally neutral site that also acts as the sole locus of transformative public action.

⁹¹³ Budde and Brimlow, *Christianity Incorporated*, 114-28.

Advocates of salvation by statecraft very often ignore how the consolidation of the State coincides with the projection of its own modern cultural form. Moreover, they ignore how the state projects a culture that is antithetical to the ecclesial, particularly when the goal is to project from the ecclesial standpoint a culture of peace. If Foucauldian disciplines do indeed imprint on the subject intangible concepts of selfhood and webs of relations,⁹¹⁴ then the machinations of state can be regarded as the technologies of reproducing the Modern ontology of an autonomous individuality that precedes any communal membership. It ignores that the institutions of state and the constellation of practices that orbit around the state core eventually gravitate towards the protection of the autonomous individual as the primary political project. In such a setting relations can only be established and sustained by a hierarchy of contracts. The most fundamental contract is that with the Westphalian state, whose mechanisms are in place for the sole purpose of preventing any transgression to the individual's integrity, by those that the individual has established contractual relations with.⁹¹⁵ Viewed this way, the notion of the state as a social compact has to proceed from a Hobbesian ontology of violence, where relationships are inherently conflictual and thus must necessarily be governed by domination and warmaking⁹¹⁶.

The extension of this logic is that protection of the rights of the citizen is predicated on the individual's submission to the state as the bearer of the most substantial amount of the means of violence. Social cohesion in the Modern State therefore is the result of a process of violent domination of the collective over the individual. Violence then does not become the anomaly that the Church can fix through state institutions, but is built into the functioning of those institutions. Given all this, the Church's reliance on statecraft, far from engendering mutual participation in God and one another that by necessity rejects the autonomous individual, eventually will corrupt the Church's

⁹¹⁴ Smith, *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism*, 104.

⁹¹⁵ Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 45, 234.

⁹¹⁶ Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 278-325.

cultural mission as the Church organisationally adapts to the cultural logic of the modern state.⁹¹⁷ The primary site where such corruption takes place would be on the point of ecclesial sociality, which through its incorporation of rights discourses, can be made to conform to the state's version of the harmonious whole which, given the primacy of autonomous individuals in the state imaginary, eventually becomes an ecclesial implication in the manufacture of a modern simulation of sociality.⁹¹⁸

Another site where corruption takes place is the shift in the focus of the Church's politics from transformation to management. Regardless of the form of government, the privileging of modern statecraft in cultural transformation infuses what Walter Brueggemann calls a "royal consciousness" into all political projects. Such a consciousness is characterised by the institutionalisation of technical reason, the subjugation of all social and material realities by scientific regimes that are governed by what Herbert Marcuse calls "calculable efficiency".⁹¹⁹ Marcuse's observation of calculability is important here since, under regimes marked by a royal consciousness, transformative projects like those generated by the Christian standpoint become impossible. According to Brueggemann, the predominance of the Modern State project bears little difference to the predominance of the imperial Kingdom of Solomon, since both make things calculable by allowing no alternatives to be conceived outside what is already given in the present.⁹²⁰ Any authentically transformative project introduces such an alternative *to* the present *in* the present, and this introduces in turn an element of uncertainty which upsets any regime of "calculable efficiency". The uncritical acceptance of statecraft as the only avenue to further the Christian standpoint will eventually play into the logic of the "royal consciousness". Rather than transform the institutions of public life within the status quo, the *telos* of

⁹¹⁷ D. Stephen Long, *The Goodness of God: Theology, the Church, and Social Order* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2001), 255.

⁹¹⁸ Budde and Brimlow, *Christianity Incorporated*, 138-40.

⁹¹⁹ Herbert Marcuse, "Industrialization and Capitalism in the Works of Max Weber," in *Max Weber: Critical Assessments 2*, ed. Peter Hamilton (New York: Taylor and Francis, 1991), 125.

⁹²⁰ Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, 25.

the Christian standpoint will eventually shift towards the treatment of transformation as an unwelcome intrusion into the status quo.⁹²¹

This becomes particularly urgent with the cooption of the state imaginary by that of consumer Capitalism, as outlined at the end of the third episode. Walter Brueggemann notes that societies marked by either affluence or cultures of consumption, like those that inhabit the state form, are also caught up in the “royal consciousness”. This sets back any prospect of transformation even further, since transformation will potentially upset the interests of those that seek to maintain comfortable, affluent lifestyles. More so than in the state form, consumer societies chasten transformation in favour of ensuring “everything...be held in the now”.⁹²² Against such a backdrop, the Church’s obsession with directing its efforts towards influencing such an imaginary is harmful not just because of an abuse of that power, but also because the Church can lose its prophetic edge by becoming so enmeshed in that dominant reality that no other can be imagined.

This may cause many to try and quarantine the Church completely from the institutions of state. In response to these impulses, it must be remembered that the Church is the bearer of the light of Christ that cannot be kept under a bushel.⁹²³ The Church’s mission to have the ecclesial imaginary perfect all others *in Christo*, and the constant intermixture between the ecclesial and non-ecclesial in Church formation, would not allow the Christian standpoint to stand isolated from the modern state imaginary. The Church would have to engage the state form in a way that allows the ecclesial standpoint to overlap with the state form. This of course would raise questions concerning how the Church can both engage and transform this non-ecclesial imaginary without being co-opted into the latter’s cultural logic and becoming a mere extension of the state imaginary, an eventually normally

⁹²¹ Ibid., 24.

⁹²² Ibid., 1, 26-27.

⁹²³ Matthew 5:15

manifested in the Church's co-option of rights discourse or through its acceptance of its place in civil society.

The efficacy of addressing the risk of the domestication of the Church by the dominant imaginary turns on the areas of formation and rethinking just where the sites of the political should be. In looking at the transformation or maintenance of any imaginary against the backdrop of the recruitment of bodies to extend any particular imaginary, it is impossible to overlook how the incorporation of cultural logics collapses with the issue of training bodies to generate the necessary field. Despite the limitations evinced by the ecclesiologies of the Mystical Body or of Nuptial Communion, the last three episodes did demonstrate the need to create spaces of formation of the faithful as the primary means of resistance to the political status quo. Where such regimens of training fell was on their insistence in regarding the state imaginary as the ultimate site of the public, the ultimate site for corporeal expression and thus the ultimate target of the Church's formative efforts. This was so even after the realization that the status quo itself is a web of technologies to train that same faithful into maintaining existing social configurations. The collapse of corporeality, formation and political change or co-option points to the need for the Church to do more than just enact regimens of training. In Daniel Bell's words, the Church must also "assume its proper place in the temporal realm as...the exemplary form of human community".⁹²⁴

In other words, ecclesial political consciousness must shift away from submission to the state or civil society as the privileged site for communal formation and gear its own ecclesial regimens of training to situate the Church as a public in its own right. This is important for two reasons. If, as John Paul II recognised, the practices embedded within communal relations underpin knowledge claims that in turn underpin all sociopolitical possibilities,⁹²⁵ then recognising the Church as a public site is what underpins the endurance of a space that enacts corporeal practices, practices which in turn shape and

⁹²⁴ Bell Jr, *Liberation Theology*, 144.

⁹²⁵ Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, 21.

ultimately imagine a Christian alternative consciousness to the status quo.⁹²⁶ The provision of a concrete alternative communal site is also what prevents that alternative consciousness from being domesticated by the dominant cultural form. While it is necessary for the ecclesial to engage the state imaginary, its engagement can only be prevented from becoming coopted by the state insofar as there is a concrete site for an alternative political centre of gravity that acts as the final destination for ecclesial practices of transformation. Only the recognition of the Church as that final political destination, through the nurturing of the Church as an alternative public, would provide such a corrective to the current dominant obsession with statecraft as the only site for a Christian politics. The shape of such an alternative Christian politics will be developed further below.

Affectivity, Ritual Consciousness and Ecclesial Inroads

Market and Religious Nationalism

Developments are afoot in our contemporary context that can enable the Church to make inroads in the secular imaginary. The most significant of these has been observed by Peter Berger and Mark Juergensmeyer. Both have commented extensively on a process of “deseccularisation”, whereby previously marginalised religious players have begun to manifest themselves more publicly, emboldened by the lack of success of secular frameworks in fulfilling promises of material or political progress. What has been dubbed “religious nationalism” by Mark Juergensmeyer has become the alternative to the “secular state”. In addition, the increasing hypermobility of market forces has created drastic changes in consumer behavior that in turn forced changes on the state form. As contradictory as these developments seem, they have both contributed to the generation of a field that has given the Church more public credibility. The former has done so through the reimagining of a thoroughgoing secular form of politics, while the latter has done so through the forcing of changes to the state form that has allowed at least the conceptualisation of communities that are not confined to state borders. The significance of these developments cannot be explored fully in this concluding section, but it will be examined by reference to more fundamental factors that make such developments possible and sustainable, and explain just how the task of evangelisation can be

⁹²⁶Ward, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*, 166.

furthered by the increasing recognition of the political salience of these drivers. Particular attention will be paid to the political salience of affectivity and the ritual consciousness.

Affect and Desire

One factor that has made “religious nationalism” and hypermobile Capitalism possible is the affective dimension of human action, which has been often ignored given the post-enlightenment obsession with a self-contained rationality. Though the intimacy between subjectivity and desire was looked at by Hegel in the late 1700s,⁹²⁷ the affective dimension of human action has slowly returned from the analytical fringe in the mid twentieth century.⁹²⁸ Of particular interest is a post/modern trajectory which began with the psychoanalytical work of Sigmund Freud⁹²⁹ and continues on in Jacques Lacan, who rejects any dichotomy existing between the affective and intellectual.⁹³⁰ This line of study has nurtured a generation of authors, the most prominent of whom includes Luce Irigaray, who recognise the intimate ties between rational calculation and affective appeal. If, as Herman Dooyeweerd remarks, that the autonomous rational subject has been the product of philosophical pretense, and that the self really “is nothing...apart from...central relations which alone give it meaning”,⁹³¹ and if Ward is correct in identifying a transcorporeal transfer of knowledge claims, then it follows that all knowledge claims operate in an economy of desire. In other words, one’s rational calculation and maximisation of needs cannot be thought of outside one’s desire for

⁹²⁷ For an insightful summary of the incorporation of desire in Hegel’s famous dialectic, see Pamela Sue Anderson, *A Feminist Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 88-89.

⁹²⁸ A comprehensive historical review on this issue in Judith Butler, *Subjects of Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth Century France, 1999). On the relationship between human agency and desire, see Charles Taylor, *Human Agency and Language: Philosophical Papers, 1* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 15-44.

⁹²⁹ See in particular Sigmund Freud, “Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego,” in *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth press, 1955).

⁹³⁰ Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar, Book 1: Freud's Papers on Technique*, trans. John Forrester (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 274.

⁹³¹ Herman Dooyeweerd, *In the Twilight of Western Thought: Studies in the Pretended Autonomy of Philosophical Thought* (Lewiston: Mellen, 1999), 124.

someone or something besides the self.⁹³² This desire for this object draws the attention towards a future condition, which in turn implicates the operation of hope.

Ward finds in this new focus on desire and hope a promising inroad for the Church's evangelical mission because, as a standpoint that points to a future horizon (namely the *eschaton*), the ecclesial standpoint cannot help but be governed by a hope and desire to understand selves and their relation to the world. This takes up all dimensions of the person, including the cognitive, spiritual, corporeal and affective, in particular the sexual.⁹³³ Nevertheless, Ward is also aware of the danger inherent in the Freudian trajectory to collapse the affective into just the sexual (exemplified by his famous Oedipal fantasy),⁹³⁴ and thus the danger in reducing the fulfillment of Christian desire in the context of a purely genital or coital economy, as Luce Irigaray, for instance, tends to do in her *Sexes and Genealogies* and *Speculum of the Other Woman*.⁹³⁵ The danger of uncritically embedding Christianity within a Freudian trajectory that reduces desire to the erotic only extends a modern consumerist cultural logic centered on competition and self-gratification. This makes the Christian standpoint mirror the liberal imaginary's cultural logic of self-maximisation, which sees others as merely objects to be used for that self-maximisation.⁹³⁶ This not only grossly blunts the transformative edge of the Christian standpoint, but also renders it vulnerable to co-option by

⁹³² Ward, *Theology and Contemporary Critical Theory*, 20.

⁹³³ ———, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*, 169. See also ———, *Cities of God*, 76.

⁹³⁴ Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (New York: Plain Label Books, 1955), 174, Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock Publications, 1977), 187.

⁹³⁵ Luce Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, trans. Gillian C Gill (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), ———, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), especially 13-129.

⁹³⁶ A contemporary example of the intimate link between Freudian desire and consumption, and the exploitation of that link by corporate elites, can be seen in what has been dubbed "the democratisation of intimacy". A manifestation of this "democratisation" includes the growing role of "adult" services like the facilitation of anonymous flirtation, in driving the growth of consumer electronics. See Tracey Rowland, "Reflections on the Democratisation of Intimacy & the Construction of the Self in Response to Professor Granados," *Anthropotes* 23, no. 2 (2007): especially 261.

Capitalism's harnessing and production of such a self-serving desire, which produce atomistic social contexts marked by contracts, consumption, and private profit.⁹³⁷

To adopt an affective strategy of evangelisation, whilst preventing the Freudian reduction of the Christian standpoint to an exclusively orgasmic desire, Christianity must also affirm its own affective trajectory. This is an affectivity grounded in an inescapable "thirst" for God⁹³⁸ and a "restlessness" that ceases only in a resting in Him.⁹³⁹ Because Christian desire is focused in God as the other, Christian affective categories – and according to von Balthasar, all theology – is grounded in divine love.⁹⁴⁰ This divine love operates across a domain that includes, but also surpasses, an exclusively coital economy.⁹⁴¹ And because this divine love as expressed in the passion of Christ is a self-giving love, Christian desire operates within the context of fundamental abundance, which invests the temporal with significance and enjoins relations of self-giving.⁹⁴² This logic of abundance is different from a modern, capitalist version of desire grounded in self-gratification, which works off a logic of fundamental lack, where persons are regarded as what William Cavanaugh calls "empty shrines",

⁹³⁷ Ward, *Cities of God*, 172.

⁹³⁸ Psalm 63:1

⁹³⁹ Augustine, *Confessions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 1.

⁹⁴⁰ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Love Alone Is Credible*, trans. D C Schindler (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 10-11, 54-6.

⁹⁴¹ Ward, *Cities of God*, 76. For a more comprehensive unpacking of the dimensions of divine love as including, but also surpassing the erotic, see Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est* (2005)

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est_en.html.

⁹⁴² Ward, *Cities of God*, 172-4, Bell Jr, "Only Jesus Saves: Towards a Theopolitical Ontology of Judgement," 211-12.

which can only be filled by the consumption of objects, be those objects things or people, and yet can never be fully satisfied by them.⁹⁴³

Ritual and Liturgy

Christian affectivity, however, must still establish its place in Ward's "politics of belief". This means that Christian affective categories must still be made credible in the sea of Modern alternatives. It was argued in chapter three that the *habitus* for believing can only be nurtured through a field of praxis. It was also argued, with Stanley Fish and Jacques Derrida, that any rational discernment of evidence to determine the credibility of claims comes only *after* the immersion into a web of assumptions and authority structures. If these observations are correct, then the consolidation of any credible Christian standpoint by which to interpret and engage the world inevitably gravitates towards series of rhythmic repetitions whose foundations defy any rational explanation.⁹⁴⁴ Liturgy thus takes central stage in an evangelisation that is also engaged in the "politics of belief".

The attention to liturgy is pertinent because ritual has gained an important foothold in the intellectual imaginary, spanning a territory that goes beyond the theological discipline. In sociology, Robert Bellah notes that Modern societies that have marginalised religion and its close associate, ritual, in favour of more rational modes of public organisation, still "remain surrounded by ritual in a myriad of forms".⁹⁴⁵ Ritual pervades the most mundane elements of social life, like language⁹⁴⁶ and music⁹⁴⁷. However rational the post-Enlightenment project claims we are, a variety of disciplines, under the

⁹⁴³ William Cavanaugh, *Being Consumed: Economics and Christian Desire* (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2008), 15.

⁹⁴⁴ Pickstock, 'Liturgy, Art and Politics,' 160.

⁹⁴⁵ Robert N. Bellah, "The Ritual Roots of Society and Culture," in *Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, ed. Michele Dillon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 40.

⁹⁴⁶ See for instance, Terrence Deacon, *The Symbolic Species: The Co-Evolution of Language and the Brain* (New York: WW Norton & Co., 1998), 402-3.

⁹⁴⁷ Bruno Nettl, "An Ethnomusicologist Contemplates Universals in Musical Sound and Musical Culture," in *The Origins of Music*, ed. Nils L. Wallin, Björn Merker, and Steven Brown (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), 472.

umbrella of “Ritual Studies”, have recognised the salience of precognitive rhythmic patterns of practice in underpinning all forms of public institution. Within philosophy,⁹⁴⁸ history,⁹⁴⁹ anthropology,⁹⁵⁰ sociology,⁹⁵¹ cultural studies⁹⁵² and political studies,⁹⁵³ there has been a revival in interest in how cultural power, social maintenance, and political projection hinge on the notion of a ritual mechanism to train a culture into becoming certain people or think in certain ways.

Such studies in the intellectual imaginary have laid the field to consider the salience of liturgy. On the one hand, it recognises the institutions of Modern life, from shopping to warfare, to be the product of secular liturgical actions. On the other hand, it brings to the fore the salience of Christian liturgy in producing the *habitus* to underpin Christian knowledge claims, rehabilitating the self-seeking desire of Modernity back to the self-giving love of and for God, and underpinning a Christian politics that escapes the limits of modern statecraft. This is of particular relevance in a contemporary context marked by the near uninterrupted ascendancy of hypermobile Capitalism, which as Francis Fukuyama remarked, won out over the planned economy because of its capacity to “satisf[y] the most basic human longings”.⁹⁵⁴ While the market recognises the salience of desire, it is

⁹⁴⁸ Franz Rosensweig, *The Star of Redemption* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985), 308-15.

⁹⁴⁹ Robert Bock, *Ritual in Industrial Society: A Sociological Analysis of Ritualism in Modern England* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1974), 35-72, 98-117.

⁹⁵⁰ See Roy A Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁹⁵¹ Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Bock, *Ritual in Industrial Society: A Sociological Analysis of Ritualism in Modern England*, 35-72, 98-117.

⁹⁵² Clifford Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on a Balinese Cockfight," in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, ed. Clifford Geertz (New York: Basic Books, 1977), Rene Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (New York: Continuum, 2005), especially 94-126.

⁹⁵³ Catherine M Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), Bader-Saye, "Figuring Time."

⁹⁵⁴ Francis Fukuyama, "Reflections on *the End of History*, Five Years Later," in *After History? Francis Fukuyama and His Critics*, ed. Timothy Burns (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1994), 241.

harnessing and distorting desire to the extent that it invests that desire in things other than in God, where Augustine says is the true locus of desire. Furthermore, Capitalism's colonisation of all forms of social space via the ubiquity of market oriented multilateral institutions, shopping malls and advertising,⁹⁵⁵ has made it an all encompassing and self-sustaining web of technologies which draw persons into consumer oriented liturgies that train them into becoming consumers,⁹⁵⁶ and distorts desires from a logic of divine self-giving, to the logic of modern competition and gratification. Through the enactment of Christian liturgies, the Church not only enacts what Bell calls a "therapy of desire".⁹⁵⁷ Because liturgy cuts across temporal space, it interrupts the traffic of signs that train Modern culture and thus the Modern State and the Capitalist Market. Liturgical acts thus become political acts to the extent that it interrupts the Modern monopoly of production of fields produced by the State's and the Market's colonisation of all social space. It is meet to conclude these reflections on a theme that collapses sociopolitics with worship, for Marx was correct in observing that religion is socially generated. However, Ward observes that in doing so, he failed to recognise that social imaginaries are religiously generated.⁹⁵⁸

Epilogue

This journey will end at its point of embarkation, by considering the state of tension that persists within the Body of Christ. This ecclesial body, this messy configuration of physical bodies that assembles, disassembles and reassembles, only to repeat the process again, may stumble in its journey of exile. However, standpoint feminists remind us that this should not be a cause of despair. The Church as the site of the Christian standpoint must be constantly "achieved", and its achievement will be marked by moments of stumbling. Yet this cannot be discounted as an avenue of grace. In spite of its limitations, the history of this standpoint called the Body of Christ is punctuated

⁹⁵⁵ Michael Budde, *The (Magic) Kingdom of God: Christianity and the Global Culture Industries* (Boulder: Westview, 1997), 38-52, 70-87.

⁹⁵⁶ Smith, *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism*, 106.

⁹⁵⁷ Bell Jr, *Liberation Theology*, 161-77.

⁹⁵⁸ Ward, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice*, 17.

by a profound capacity to map itself onto, move within and eventually transform secular bodies. Whilst continuing to remain faithful to its task of making “disciples of all the nations”,⁹⁵⁹ the ecclesial imaginary will always be situated in and conditioned by other non-Christian standpoints. Such, says James Smith, is the process of the Church’s sanctification.⁹⁶⁰ Its being a light to the nations is intimately tied to a burden of discerning the signs of the times “through a glass darkly”.⁹⁶¹ Therefore, ecclesiology as the site of the Church’s politics is at once the task of perfecting the secular imaginaries, while at the same time the task of enrobing and disrobing⁹⁶² itself as the Body of Christ passes through the sea of change in its neighbouring imaginaries. Only in the sight of God “face to face”, only when the Body of Christ is robed as the Bride of Christ,⁹⁶³ can the negotiation of this tension be put to an end.

⁹⁵⁹ Matthew 28:19

⁹⁶⁰ This was elaborated in an interview with James Smith by Ken Myers. Ken Myers, "James K A Smith: On the Postmodern Insight That Our Experience in the World Requires Interpretation (and That Some Interpretations Are Better Than Others)," *Mars Hill Audio Journal* 82 (2006)

http://www.marshillaudio.org/resources/segment_detail.asp?ID=453054515&TABLE=segments.

⁹⁶¹ 1 Corinthians 13:12

⁹⁶² Song of Songs 5:7

⁹⁶³ Revelations 21:2

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