Re-Enchanting the World:

Religion, Desire

and the Crisis of Modernity

by

Dominic Wetzel

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Abstract

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My dissertation, *Re-enchanting the World: Religion, Desire and the Crisis of Modernity,* combines theoretical, historical, ethnographic and cultural analysis with memoir to examine the ways in which "renewalist" religious movements with charismatic practices reflect both a sense of disenchantment with modernity as well as a desire to "re-enchant" it in a technological, postmodern era. Long assumed to decline with the onset of modernity, the unexpected "revival" of religion reflects the rationalization, commodification and authoritarian tendencies of the larger society, calling into question Harvey Cox (1995) and others analysis of it as an upsurge of "authentic, primordial" spirituality. Focusing on the Pentecostal-influenced Catholic charismatic movement, with which my family was affiliated, it utilizes a feminist, queer and critical theory perspective to attain a "social physiognomy" of American society through an "immanent critique" (Adorno 1983; Cho 2002) of charismatic and apocalyptic literature, practices and culture to discern its "negative utopian" desire for a better world, here or beyond. Social physiognomy seeks "contradictions within the cultural object that express and contest the contradiction of the social totality" through the method of "immanent critique" - which seeks to both decipher the "secret code" according to which an object expresses and reproduces social domination - while at the same time recognizing the object's "enigmatic" and utopian denunciations of injustice (Adorno 1983; Apostolidis 2000). In a time of particular crisis in the Catholic Church, it tries to make use of immanent critique to understand the troubled conjunctions of sexuality, gender, politics and religion in the contemporary moment, and what they reflect about the larger social totality. It also examines the unexpected revival of religion in relation to the crisis of modernity's "dialectic of enlightenment" – where the overcoming of superstition and myth by science and technology results paradoxically in a dominating bureaucratic and technological rationality that renewalist religions reflect, even as they may seek to resist it.

The raging debates over secularism and secularization - given the rise of political Islam and the Christian Right, and the postcolonial critique (Asad 2003) of the (largely unacknowledged) Christian bases of Western secularism – have led some to call for the "opening up" of secularism to religion, in a recognition of their "blurred" historical and boundaries and interdependencies, to get over the stale "church-state" debates (Taylor 2007; Habermas 2006). My work tries to go the extra step of trying to re-imagine and re-think the ways that secularisms' more progressive histories might also be renewed as an alternate yet empathetic path to the "renewal" offered by conservative, politicized religious movements.

To this end, on the one hand my work situates itself in a tradition of progressive, secular critique of contemporary religiosity, for its commodified (and hence secularized) nature, as exemplified by Adorno's study of the Christian Right radio addresses of the 1930s, Apostolidis' study of Focus on the Family (2000), and Dong Ho-Cho's unpublished study of Korean Pentecostalism (2002). Such an approach runs contrary to the contemporary dominance of the triumphalist "rational choice" approach of the Christian "religious economies" school in the sociology of religion in the US. While critical, it also tries to decipher the "negative utopian" desire of contemporary religiosity - albeit often manifested in a commodified, regressive, and repressive form - for a different world, by trying to understand the ways in which it offers a putative resistance to the bureaucratic rationality of an often threatening, technological, postmodern world, where more progressive secular options, post-Cold War, seem unavailable.

The study explores such themes as the Intelligent Design debate and science skepticism (and its implications for action around such pressing issues as climate change) through a re-thinking of the class and cultural conflicts of the original Scopes Trial; the "negative utopian" desire for change of the best-selling, apocalyptic *Left Behind* novels and their violent, high-tech battles against the Antichrist; the increasingly dominionist and authoritarian nature of both fundamentalist and charismatic religion; the apocalyptic piety of Marian apparitions and its image of a "militarized Virgin Mary battling a feminized Devil" (Cousino 2006); and the popularity of charismatic practices of being slain in the spirit, healing masses, speaking in tongues, and demonic possession - interpreting them as emanations of sexually repressed, alienated and regulated bodies as well as, somewhat paradoxically, attempts at somatic and communal engagement.

Ultimately, the work is a sympathetic, symptomatic reading of the unexpected renewal of religiosity in the modern world. It interprets this emergence as an attempt to re-enchant what is perceived as a stale, lifeless modernity, amidst a largely defeated horizon of radical secular possibility, and argues for the re-engagement and re-imaging of the radical secular imaginary, one that could learn from - and perhaps channel in a more fruitful way - the "negative utopian desire" of contemporary conservative, politicized, renewalist religious movements for a "re-enchanted" world.

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Preface

On a recent trip back to Seattle for a grade school reunion, I couldn't help but marvel at the changes in the neighborhood, Ballard, I grew up in. Known at the turn of the century as the "shingle capital of the world," old downtown Ballard, bordering what was an abandoned industrial section throughout my childhood, now bubbled with activity: fancy coffeeshops, bars and condos in every direction. It had been a while since my last trip back home, and my Dad had told me that I "wouldn't recognize it anymore". He was right. The last block of the paper route I did as a kid is now part of a wall of condos that starts at Salmon Bay and the Chittenden Locks (eight blocks from where I grew up) and stretches for several miles along the canal to Lake Union near downtown Seattle. The barnacled and seaweed-strewn beach Golden Gardens of Shilshole Bay, at the far end of Ballard, bordering the cliff where we used to play in the deserted forest next to the railroad tracks, an area once littered with beer bottles, black garbage bags and the beddings of "hobos, is now an "eco-restoration" project. In 2007, Al Gore named Ballard the most ecological-friendly neighborhood in the US. The modest local library where I spent many hours reading in my youth has green grass growing from its roof and is a model for eco-building and energy sustainability.

Even more startling, in between a rejuvenated old Ballard and the parish school I attended in my childhood is a new megachurch chain named Mars Hill Bible Church. It boasts ten different locations around Seattle and a church in Alberqueque, with plans to expand. The charismatic, thirtysomething founding preacher, Mark Driscoll, born in North Dakota, grew up Catholic in the Seattle area and founded Mars Hill at age 25, is

the author of such sexy-sounding books as “Porn-Again Christian” and “The Supremacy of Christ in the Postmodern World.” A highly controversial figure in the Seattle area, he is highly critical of the “wimpy” approach to religion of the kinder and gentler evangelical “Emergent Church” movement he was once a part of (which among other things, has a postmodern sensibility and questions the existence of hell). He advocates a hyper-masculine, homophobic approach to ministry, and is often seen on tv debating cultural and religious issues. At one pastor’s conference he argued “The problem with our churches today is that the lead pastor is some sissy boy who wears cardigan sweaters, has The Carpenters dialed in on his iPod, gets his hair cut at a salon instead of a barber shop, hasn’t been to an Ultimate Fighting match, works out on an elliptical machine instead of going to isolated regions of Russia like in Rocky IV in order to harvest lumber with his teeth, and generally swishes around like Jack from Three’s Company whenever Mr. Roper was around.” (quoted in Benjamin 2008; Boy 2009). After being alerted to its emergence by my siblings, on a previous trip to Seattle I attended a service there, just as Ballard was starting to change, to see what all the hubbub was about. The warehouse-like location seats about two thousand. The amp-ed up service was replete with Christian rock and light show, as tech savy as any major amphitheater. Packed with fresh-faced, college-age couples in sportsy clothing such as University of Washington sweatshirts and jeans (the UW is two miles away), it was a bit hard for me to stomach the long-winded, masculinist sermon from the minister, whose constant references to his wife (“in the back somewhere, right, honey”?) didactically modeled the clear, ostensibly reassuring, patriarchal gender roles expected for the youth in the audience. The snappy, colorful brochure I was handed upon entering the church detailed the weeks’ activities,

information about several other Mars Hill churches in Seattle, their weekly collection and expenses of each church (listed competitively together), encouraging people to “get involved” and volunteer, apparently a requirement to belong. A highly staffed place and marvel of free labor, there was a staffed volunteer station and open binder with plenty of options and sign up sheets: rock band, light show, youth group, etc. Their website is a model of tech sophistication, clearly stating their mission (expansion), values and (rather skimpy) “narrative theology,” all of which could fit on a couple of index cards. Such high attendance, energy, money and high-tech organization money contrasts quite starkly with the skimpily attended, simple, low-tech and comparatively quiescent services at our Catholic church growing up (separate from the charismatic Catholic events we would attend at other churches). I was rather shocked when at communion time I saw one young man get up to receive the sacrament in one hand while holding a Starbucks grand latte in the other: postmodern religion. Such would never flown in a Catholic church of my youth.

Back at St. Alphonsus, a new gym, a so-called “family center,” occupies the plot of green grass where my classmates and me spent our childhood playing touch football, “smear the queer”, and other childhood games; built by the conservative, charismatic-movement affiliated (recently de-frocked) pastor relocated to the parish in my teenage years - presumably to compete with the megachurch phenomenon, but also to distance the parish from the neighboring, more liberal St. John’s parish, whose gym and basketball teams we shared. “They took away our playfield!” one childhood buddy would nostalgically relate.

Decades since the progressive Archbishop Hunthausen was removed from office by the Vatican for his controversial policies, I find that St. Alphonsus School, in my childhood peppered with peace and justice style teachers - and salted with aging, sweet-and-sour nuns - reflecting the hippie 80s Seattle milieu, now separates each class by gender. I cannot even imagine how different such a grade school experience must be from my own.

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Chapter 1:

Re-enchantment or Dis-enchantment? Religion, Desire and the Crisis of Modernity

"Philosophy lives on because the chance to realize it was missed"

Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*

Adorno argues that philosophy lives on in the modern world because the chance to realize it was missed; this study makes a similar argument about the unexpected "living on" of religious desire. Religion's role as a reflection and protest against suffering and its desire for a "better world" – here or beyond - ensures its continued existence until such realization. In a time when virtually all modern theorists, until recently, argued for religion's demise with the onset of modernity, how is the "desire" of "modern" religiosity to be comprehended? Employing Adorno's method of immanent critique (1983), which seeks to both decipher the "secret code" according to which the object expresses and reproduces social domination *and* recognizes the object's "enigmatic" and utopian denunciations of injustice" (Apostolidis 2000, p. 61) this work examines the culture of contemporary Christian religious revival with a critical, yet sympathetic lens, bypassing the dominant tendencies of romanticization or demonization, interpreting it instead as an understandable yet often troubling response to a modernity whose secular imagination seems largely exhausted.

This study argues that the increased influence and growth of conservative, politicized religious movements and religious appeal in general - as a horizon of possibility - is linked to the decline of the horizon of possibility of more progressive secular alternatives, itself an unfolding of the failed, or at best, unfinished Enlightenment

Project. This study examines the development of the rise of Pentecostal and related charismatic movements, in particular the Catholic charismatic movement, whose total growth by hundreds of millions in the past several decades make it the largest new religious movement, not only of the "West," but of the world (Gallup 2006). This is done through an immanent critique and dialectical social physiognomy of evangelical and charismatic popular culture, such as the apocalyptic, best selling *Left Behind* series and related Catholic charismatic, Marian literature, the Intelligent Design debate, and charismatic practices such as speaking in tongues, possession, prophecy, and being "slain the spirit".

Enlightenment and Its Discontents

The Enlightenment, as told by the traditional Enlightenment narrative (Horkheimer and Adorno 1988), was intended to overcome superstition, myth and religion, and replace it with a progressive society based on reason. Yet the unexpected proliferation of conservative, politicized religious movements into the public realm in the last few decades have brought this "progress narrative" into question. For some, this has provoked much alarm – such as the tenor of the recent 'backlash' against religion by "defenders" of science, the self-pronounced "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse". For others, particularly religiously-motivated Christian social scientists, this has led them to declare secularization a 'myth' – such as the influential, triumphalist rational choice Christian social scientists who dominate the field of sociology of religion and celebrate religion's "return". For others, inspired by postcolonial thinking, this has led to a call for

a re-thinking of the (colonialist and other) presuppositions of contemporary Euro-American secularism, particularly the simplistic separation of the religious and the secular.

There has also been a kind of back-tracking by former secularization theorists who once argued for its demise but seem to have come to 'see the light' of renewed, and often political, religion, such as Peter Berger (1999) who has come to "celebrate" the "de-secularization of the world" and Harvey Cox (1995). As widely noted, the remarkable about-face in Cox's perspective can be read as a gauge of political, ideological and philosophical changes that have occurred in theory and in society in the past forty years. Cox, noted for his celebration of modernization's secularization and 'disenchantment' of religion decades ago, now argues in his prominent study of the rise of Pentecostal practices *Fire From Heaven* (1995), that, as a return of 'primordial spirituality,' Pentecostalism should be viewed as a welcome and legitimate 're-enchantment' of modernity. This study critiques this conclusion and, instead, reads the growth of Pentecostalism, charismatic practices and the "wealth and health gospel" as evidence of profound disenchantment and failed re-enchantment.

This study draws on the insights of the Blumenberg-Lowith debate. Karl Lowith, amidst the pessimism of post-WWII Germany, influenced by Nietzsche's critique of progress in his idea of the "eternal return" formulated the argument that the modern notion of "progress" (ie meaning in history) was actually the secularization of the Christian notion of salvation - the eschatological redemption of humanity from the outside by God (1949). From this followed a pessimistic appraisal of prospects for progress – as progress was consequently viewed as as illusory as the second coming of

God. Lowith's argument experienced rapid popularity, quickly becoming second nature among many students, writers and German society. Fearing the potentially destructive consequences of such an interpretation, Hans Blumenberg, in *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age* (1993), argued that the main problem with Lowith's interpretation of secularization was its determinism.   There was no legitimate basis for equating the transcendent act of God with the modern notion of progress in this world, of which the latter only made sense as an immanent process arising out of human 'self-assertion'. Rather, Modernity should be seen as an evolution out of Christianity, not as its correspondence in a determined form: secularization "by" not "of" Christianity. Consequently, Blumenburg argues that the modern notion of progress is legitimate. However, there is no inevitability about it - to see progress as inevitable would be to be as deterministic as Lowith. Instead, Blumenburg argues for a non-deterministic notion of "possible progress" through human 'self-assertion'.

This debate highlights the tendency of notions of 'progress' to assume fixed, deterministic forms, reflected in secularization theory. This fosters the current bewilderment as assumptions, sometimes not even stated, that inevitable 'rational' progress via the effects of science, technology, urbanization and industrialization would result in the 'withering away' of religion, or at least its permanent retreat to the private domain. As the *Fundamentalism Project* authors (Marty and Appleby 1991) point out, 'denial reigns in elite circles' because the failure of secularization threatens their whole paradigm of progress and faith in science, technology and modernity.

I argue that, ironically, the dominant forms of these theories contain ahistoricizing and decontexualizing tendencies, which reflect a static view of reality oddly similar to the

literalism (Crapanzano 2001) of the 'fundamentalists' themselves. I argue as well that in many ways the debate over the failure of secularization theory is a displacement of larger questions around the failure of modernization theory, or modernity itself.

While charismatic practices in many ways can be seen to embody a certain kind of "negative utopian desire" for somatic and communal engagement, and their apocalyptic beliefs a resistance and desire for change, they also suggest troubling marks of sexual repression, somatic alienation, co-optation, commodification, individualism and by extension, 'dis-enchantment' with modernity. It is hard to imagine this situation changing short of the emergence of radical secular alternatives. I argue the need for a renewal of the radical, Spinozist Enlightenment to provide alternatives to conservative, politicized religious movements by creating more embodied, communal, progressive alternatives via the development of a more "libidinal" rationality (Marcuse 1962).

A Peculiar Institution: Religion in the US

The US has long been noted for its contradictory relationship with religion in comparison with other industrialized nations (Ahlstrom 2004, Casanova 1994, De Tocqueville 2001, Jackobsen and Pellegrini 2004; Marty and Appleby 1991-95, Wuthnow 1989). On the one hand, it was the first modern nation-state to establish the separation of church and state, as well as the "freedom of religion" in its constitution. On the other hand, it has been viewed as the paradigmatic case of the fusion and integration of the highly individualistic Protestant Work Ethic with the Spirit and birth of Capitalism. As Tocqueville observed early on, while the American state was not religious, the most

political spaces in America were the churches themselves. Three periods of dis-establishment are generally agreed upon. The first disestablishment, that of the constitutional separation of church and state, was followed by the Second Great Awakening of religious revivals in the 1830s and 1840s in response to the social upheavals of the early stirrings of Northern industrialization. The second disestablishment happened around the time of the Civil War, after the industrializing North won and the needs of industry for science and technological knowledge secularized the institutions of higher education. This sparked the famous debates around and resistances to Darwin's theory of evolution, where after the famous defeat in the eyes of the public after the Scopes trial, self-declared 'fundamentalists' retreated from the public sphere. What some argue was a third disestablishment (Hammond 1992) surrounded the cultural upheaval of the 60s, which challenged what was still the predominantly Protestant (Herberg 1960) nature of the highly individualistic 'civil religion' (Bellah 1991). It is the fallout from the 60s, arguably, that helped produce the current reaction or "revival" of religiosity that has culminated in the political formation of the Religious Right, where the emergence of virulent strands of religion stands in stark contrast with industrialized Europe. It is in this context that debates around the secularization thesis in the US have emerged, including the question of whether it is the US that is the exception to the dominant secularization process, of which Europe is the primary model, or whether, as recent secularization skeptics, particularly Christian ones in the sociology of religion argue (Starke and Finke 2000), it is Europe that is the exception.

Harvey Cox 1.0: The Disenchantment of the World

Harvey Cox, in *The Secular City: A celebration of its liberties and an invitation to its discipline,* written in 1965, hugely influential with over a million copies sold, argued that the twin processes of urbanization and secularization, led by the forces of modern science and technology, had essentially created a 'new man' whose needs could now be fully met by what science and technology had to offer. He categorizes religious and metaphysical thought as pertaining to the previous, less developed space-time of the town, themselves only partial advances over the 'magical' space-time of country life. 'Urban man,' on the other hand, is 'rational', and has moved to a more developed phase of 'disenchantment' with nature, which religious and 'metaphysical' man (he equates the two) is still in thrall to. Dispelling the critics of modernization at the time who argued that, rather than liberating man, the one-dimensionality of the time resulted in a stunted 'man' shut off from larger metaphysical and existential questions, Cox instead argues that this 'urban man' has moved past these questions into a more fully realized post-millennial (ie kingdom-of-God-on-earth) city.

This work epitomizes the wrestling with the two central processes of modernization - secularization and urbanization - that were happening in American and European society after World War II. Instead of viewing these processes as an "assault" on religion as many theologians and religious believers viewed at the time, he argued that these processes should be viewed instead as enabling a new freedom and embraced rather than lamented. They should be viewed as a new challenge to religion to fit itself within the new conditions and find its new role in aiding man in developing this modern version of the "city of god". Secularization - the relegation of religion to the private sphere - and

urbanization – the process facilitating this - should be embraced and celebrated. Written by a sociologically-oriented theologian himself, this popular work came to be viewed as a seminal work in secularization theory that represented a consensus that, for better or worse, secularization in the modern world was inevitable and here to stay.

Fundamentalism(s) Strikes Back

Decades later, however, the rise of Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority signaled a return of 'fundamentalists' from their self-imposed separatism since the public humiliation of the Scopes Trial, and back into the public sphere as a potent conservative political force; ostensibly pushing back against the gains of feminism, the sexual revolution and the gay and lesbian movement. This fundamentalist return shocked observers as it seemed to directly contradict the basic tenets of secularization and modernization theory. At the same time, the toppling of the Shah in Iran by Islamic 'fundamentalists,' observed by the Western world on TV, as well as the ultimately Islamic character of the Algerian Revolution, provided further strain to the credibility of the secularization thesis. How were these events to be explained? Were they isolated incidents, momentary 'backsteps', or did they indicate new developments that called basic assumptions into account and would necessitate radical revisions of modernization and secularization theory?

Chronologically, it is interesting to note that some of the first major post-60s critics of the secularization thesis were Christian social scientists, in the field of sociology

of religion, who analyzed the latest changes in American religion from a market perspective. They argued that the disestablishment of the mainline liberal and moderate Protestant churches, coinciding with a proliferation of smaller, more conservative, evangelical churches, was the result of increased religious competition, which had ultimately created a better religious “product”. (Stark and Finke 1993, 2000; Stark 2005). Far from seeing the decline of religion as a good or essential thing for modernity, they have been the avant-garde of a “revisionist” trend which argues that secularization is a ‘myth’ and sees itself as re-appropriating the history of Christianity and its contributions to modernity. They argue against the traditional progress narrative of classical secularization theory that instead of science and reason bringing about the freedom and success of modernity via the transcendence of religious superstition, rather, it is Christianity itself that is responsible for the development of reason, capitalism and modernity. Ironically, the amenability of market analysis to religious phenomena seems to evidence the commodified nature of modern religiosity itself (Adorno 1994).

David Martin, with two influential books on Pentecostalism, is a prominent variation on the Christian “religious economies” debate. He, along with Phillip Jenkins (2002), argues against “Western, elite” critics of the colonial or capitalist nature of a resurgent and emerging “global Christianity,” who he views as sour about failed revolutionary social movements. Adopting a triumphalist tone, Martin argues that this emergent global Christianity, especially Pentecostalism, should be seen as a valuable “major metanarrative of global modernity,” authentic and legitimate in its own right given the many benefits it affords its believers, who have “considered the options” and

"chosen" this narrative over and against revolutionary ones of socialism, communism or secularism (2005, p. 141-152).

Along similar lines, John Neuhaus, a Lutheran minister prominently involved in the civil rights movement, himself moving steadily in a more conservative direction for some time after disillusionment with the cultural malaise of the 70s, in 1984 published an influential book *The Naked Public Sphere*, where he made the controversial, though favorably received argument in conservative circles, that the intension of the original disestablishment of religion in the US, rather than keeping religion out of the public sphere, was to ensure its healthy participation in it. In fact, he argued, like Stark and Finke, that this active participation of religion in the public sphere was necessary for the proper and healthy functioning of democracy itself (Linker 2006).

Opposed to the beliefs of these religious critics, of course, stand the presuppositions of modernization theory, held implicitly, if not explicitly, by most natural and social scientists, and many policy makers, for whom religion is essentially anti-modern, and who have tended to assume its decline without, arguably, consistent theorization of its historical development over the last several decades, or even, perhaps, the last century. The authors of the recent scientific "backlash" against religion (the 'new atheism') are a prominent example of this position (Dawkins 2006; Hitchens 2008; Harris 2004, 2005). Another variation on this modernization theme, are those such as Francis Fukuyama (1992) who believe that with the end of the Cold War, the "end of history" has been reached in the current society of liberal, democratic capitalism, and, I would argue, have been essentially in denial about the problems that conservative, politicized religious movements pose, though Fukuyama has retreated from this position recently. Still

another variation in this group of modernization theorists are those who, in the interests of imperialism and statecraft, wish to project the problem onto Islam and the Arab world in the "clash of civilization" thesis (Huntington 1997).

The Fundamentalisms Project

In the early 90s, Martin Marty and Scott Appleby began publishing the five volume *Fundamentalism Project* (1991-1995), a collaborative effort which brought together dozens of writings by anthropologists, sociologists and political scientists in an attempt to understand the rise of global fundamentalisms emerging at the end of the Cold War, and confront the shortcomings of secularization theory in anticipating and explaining this. One of the major contributions of the *Fundamentalism Project* was the assertion that the rise of conservative, politicized religious movements were not just isolated incidents in the US and in Iran – but seemed to be happening in every major world religion – Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and even Buddhism. Noting the potential danger of generalizing across such a range of cultures and religions, they nonetheless felt compelled to note as well that these movements of religious reaction seemed to bear remarkable similarities across cultural, religious and national lines. The intention of the project was to examine whether it was meaningful to talk about a "family of resemblances" – to examine the shape and structures of the new religious movements and examine the challenges to modernity they presented in the spheres of the state, the family, education, science and civil society in their respective contexts. While the category of 'fundamentalism' originated as a self-description of Christian evangelicals in

reaction to modernist theology and Darwinism as a return to the ‘fundamentals’ of the faith at the turn of the century, the *Fundamentalism Project* speculated that, problematic as the term was for this reason, it was still meaningful as an interpretive device for understanding the dynamics occurring in religions across the world as they reacted (in their own ways) to the disruptions of modernization.

The ‘fundamentalist’ disposition, as they articulated it at the end of the first volume, *Fundamentalism Observed* (1991) are ‘embattled forms of spirituality that have emerged as a response to a perceived crisis’. They are ‘engaged in a conflict with enemies whose secularist policies and beliefs seem inimical to religion itself’. Further, they do not regard this battle as a conventional political struggle, but experience it as a cosmic war between the forces of good and evil. They ‘fear annihilation, and try to fortify their beleaguered identity by means of a selective retrieval of certain doctrines and practices of the past’. To avoid contamination, they often withdraw from mainstream society to create a counterculture. Yet, paradoxically, they have absorbed the pragmatic rationalism of modernity, and under the guidance of charismatic leaders, refine their ‘fundamentals’ so as to create an ideology that provides their faithful with a plan of action. Eventually they fight back and attempt to resacralize an increasingly skeptical world (Armstrong 2000).

One of the (somewhat Foucauldian) main points the *Fundamentalism Project* makes is that, against popular understanding, it is not accurate to view these movements as a literal “return” to or a “resurgence” of the past – some kind of “falling back” to previous stages of history. Rather they are thoroughly modern entities – marked and made possible (produced) by modern science and technology. To see it otherwise is to

fundamentally misunderstand their nature. Theodor Adorno (2000) makes a similar point as well quite presciently in his analysis of the role of advertising and modern media-influenced techniques of propaganda in the radio addresses during the 1930s by the American right-wing religious radio personality Martin Luther Thomas.

Salvaging the Secularization Thesis? Jose Casanova

Another significant position in the secularization debate, which could be called a 'reformist' one, are those who have attempted to revise and reformulate the secularization thesis, of whom Jose Casanova (1994) is perhaps the best exemplar. Relying on a Habermasian view of civil society to examine the role of "public" religion in the modern world, and the problems for secularization theory this implies, Casanova attempts to salvage the secularization thesis, taking into account its obvious empirical failures while ultimately defending the core elements of the secularization thesis, for, problematic as they are, he argues comprehension of the modern world would be even more confused without it. In order to adequately analyze religiosity in the modern world, he argues it is crucial to disentangle the descriptive and prescriptive elements of the theory, which have tended to be conflated. Breaking the theory into three different subtheses; the decline of religion, the differentiation of religion, and the privatization of religion; he concludes that differentiation is inevitable and necessary in the modern world, that the decline of religion has been shown to be empirically false, and that the privatization of religion has become an "option" that religions may or may not choose, a decision often influenced by the history of church-state relations and culture in a particular nation.

Through his five case studies, he provides a convincing argument that many of the anomalies and apparent contradictions to secularization theory – the anomaly of the persistence of religiosity in the US compared to Europe, or how some public involvements seem to be good for modernity (liberation theology) and others bad (Christian Right in US, Islamic Fundamentalism - can be explained by looking at the historical relationships between church and state in any particular nation. While his empirical observation that religion is being "deprivatized" in the modern world is hard to take issue with, his concluding argument that this "deprivatization" is compatible and possibly even desirable for modernity is more provocative. Which brings up questions of how such deprivatization of religion can, could or should be articulated in an ostensibly non-religious, "secular" framework.

Habermas: Religion in the Public Sphere

Habermas in *Religion in the Public Sphere,* ruminates on Gary Wills' speculation in "The Day the Enlightenment Went Out," written after the re-election of George Bush as to whether we have entered a "post-truth" democracy. Wills queries: "Can a people that believes more fervently in the Virgin Birth than in evolution still be called an Enlightened nation?" Dealing with, on the one hand, the dilemma of accommodating Muslim religious practices within the secular norms of Europe and on the other, the widening gap between European secularism and the increasingly strong role of religion in the public sphere in the United States, Habermas returns to Rawls' theory of liberalism and its notions of negative and positive liberty and "equal access" to explore the

conundrum of to what extent religious utterances and reasons are allowable within the political sphere. On the one hand, religiously motivated "revisionist" critiques of secularism argue that limiting religious speech in the public (political) sphere is an infringement (in the US context) of their right to "free expression" of their beliefs – the positive liberty of their "freedom of religion". On the other hand, some secularists argue that the expression of religious beliefs in the public sphere, and particularly, political decisions made solely or primarily on religious beliefs, by, for instance, religious politicians, violates the first amendment's separation of church and state – the requirement that the state remain neutral towards religion and effect no establishment of religion– the negative liberty to be "free" of state-mandated religion. Habermas considers the argument that it is "harder" for the religious than the secular to participate given the contemporary secular expectations of modernity – that there are "more burdens" for the religious, who are forced to fit within the demands of non-religious secular institutions and its secular "public reason," changing their religious language and reasons into secular language and positions. (Here Habermas echoes arguments made by Charles Taylor [2008] to the more "powerful" position of the secular versus the religious.) By this argument, on the other hand, those born into secular conditions are not required to "change" their language in the public realm. Indeed, religious people may be forced into a dilemma where they are unable to articulate their religious beliefs openly because of the demands of the secularist form in the public sphere.

Considering both sides of this argument, Habermas argues that in a "post-secular" age such as our own, where religions, for whatever reason, have proven a greater staying power than expected by modernization theory, it is imperative for both the religious and

the secular to "translate" their language in such a way as to make each party's ideas and arguments accessible to each other. This means, on the one hand, that while it may be too much to ask for all religious people to put their arguments in secular terms, it is not too much to ask for their political representatives to do so. As well, given the burden that the religious ostensibly carry in having to "translate" their religious reasons into secular ones, secular people should help with this "translation" as they may be more adept with it. As well, secularists should not view this simply as a chore, but should view it as something they may be able to learn from. Habermas argues: "Religious traditions have a special power to articulate moral intuitions especially with regard to vulnerable forms of communal life. In the event of the corresponding political debates, this potential makes religious speech a serious candidate to transporting possible truth contents, which can then be translated from the vocabulary of a particular religious community into a generally accessible language." (p. 10) On the other hand, religious citizens must make a sincere effort to respect the worldviews of non or other-religious persons, as presumably, they adhere to the tenets of the modern constitutional state. As, "the self-understanding of the constitutional state has developed within the framework of a contractualist tradition that relies on 'natural' reason, in other words solely on public arguments to which supposedly all persons have equal access" (p. 4) Religious persons should not, Habermas argues, be put in a position where their beliefs are necessarily made untenable by the "epistemic" demands of secular or public reason, though there is always the possibility that the religious will come to find them untenable, as certainly the history of Western modernization bears out. Habermas argues against a narrow "secularist" view that seeks to eliminate the ground upon which religious beliefs, beliefs that modern science and

secularism may view as “irrational”. Instead, he puts the onus back on science and secularism to come to a better understanding (or at least, some understanding) of its own historical trajectory, rather than just taking itself for granted as self-evident (as I argue the Dawkins et al crowd do). Rather, he argues for the need for a “genealogy of Modernity’s self-understanding” equivalent to the historical process of religion coming to terms with its de-legitimation from claims to absolute Godly power and justification with the onslaught of the critical tendencies of science and secularism (ie theology): “The question as to how from this angle science relates to religious doctrine again touches on the genealogy of Modernity’s self-understanding. Is modern science a practice that is completely understandable in its own terms, establishing the measure of all truths and falsehoods? Or should modern science rather be construed as resulting from a history of reason that includes the world religions”? (p. 20)

American or European Exceptionalism?

One problem with this framework, at least for Americans, is that it smacks of the situation of European constitutional states with largely secular political institutions, political culture and citizenry confronted with the influence of religious, particularly Muslim immigrants. For it presupposes an essentially secular political framework. In the US, this is highly questionable. While the constitution itself, with its strong delineation of church and state maintains certain barriers from a total breach of secularism, the political dynamics of the past several decades have steadily challenged the presumption of a secular state. Recognition has been given to the Protestant origins that motivated and

inspired the constitution, denoting the secularism in the US as the “Christian Secular” (Jakobsen and Pellegrini 2008). It seems necessary to engage more directly the historical, socioeconomic and cultural considerations of the US to understand the development of the cultural “complex” of apocalyptic, premillennial fundamentalism, as evidenced by the best-selling (70 million) *Left Behind* novels (Frykholm 2004; Quinby 1999), which this study examines in a later chapter, or what William Connolly (2008) designates as the “evangelical-capitalist resonance machine”. I believe this means going beyond a simply analytic consideration of the proper functioning of an optimal liberalism, but a critique of liberalism itself.

Furthermore, as various postcolonial thinkers have pointed out secularization theory, with its Western Christian roots, is deeply implicated in the colonialist construction of religion (Asad 1993, 2003; Mahmood 2005). Asad in particular has taken Casanova to task for this, but it can particularly be seen post-911 in the heightened influence of the “clash of civilization” thesis (Huntington 1996) where “radical Islam” came to be posed as “the” religious threat, rather than, say, the Christian theocratization of the state by the Bush Administration.

Harvey Cox 2.0: The Re-enchantment of the World

Coming full circle from his mid-60s celebration of secularization, in 1995 Harvey Cox himself attempts to revisit and account for the failure of the projected secularization of Modernity through a study of Pentecostalism, *Fire From Heaven*. As discussed before, at one time he had celebrated the ‘disenchanting’ aspects of urbanization and

modernization – for instance, anonymity and mobility, and the relativizing of faiths in close context - as necessary to the achievement of freedom, which only the “technopolis” could facilitate. This time around he comes to celebrate the “experiential” orientation of Pentecostalism as a valid attempt to “re-enchant” a rationalized modernity.

Pentecostalism, with roots in the holiness and pietist movements of the 19th Century, sprouted and took shape in the storefront churches in LA in the early part of the 20th century. It has grown rapidly over the course of the past century to a total estimated membership of between a quarter and a half a billion members (Cox 1995, Martin 2005). Its growth accounts for much of the hemorrhaging from the mainline Protestant churches in the US, as well as from the Catholic church in Latin America, resulting in the exponential growth and political influence of denominations such as the 300,000 congregations of the Assemblies of God, of which Sarah Palin is a member; the creation of syncretic charismatic movements within the mainline denominations and the Catholic church itself, of which popular Louisiana Governor and rising Republican political star Bobby Jindal is a member; the largest church in the world, the Yoido Full Gospel church with over 800,000 members in Korea, other significant and politically influential movements such as the Catholic charismatic El Shaddai in the Phillipines, and significant missionary presences throughout Africa and Asia. Though more evangelical in character than the self-declared fundamentalism represented by Bob Jones University and Falwell’s Liberty University, it has been a significant force in the New Christian Right, including Pat Robertson within its theological orientation , and often cited as the most potent and expansionist front - the avant-garde, as it were - of the new religious movements within Christianity.

Cox interprets the pervasive character of the “gifts” or “charisms” of the Spirit within Pentecostalism, such as ‘speaking in tongues’ or glossolalia, prophesy, and being ‘slayed’ in the Spirit, and the generally emotional and somatic nature of Pentecostal practices, as a remarkable return of “primordial spirituality,” based on a reading of the experiences of the Pentecost in the Bible itself. While he is concerned about some of Pentecostalism’s associations with consumerist “name-it and claim-it” theology, or fundamentalist-style theology, including the extreme and increasingly popular Reconstructionist theology, which advocates for the strict imposition of Old Testament law on society, ultimately he separates charismatic practices away from these more patently problematic beliefs, and views these charismatic practices instead as a welcome return of a theology of the “heart” after too much dominance of the “head”. To this end, Cox sees them as a valid and legitimate ‘re-enchantment’ of modernity.

However, in this study I will problematize this separation of practice and belief, as I do not think it is so easy or legitimate to separate these practices so uncritically from their ‘ideological’ associations, articulated or unarticulated. Accepting these practices at face value, I argue, is akin to the dilemma in anthropology of taking the beliefs of the “natives” at face value. Rather than a valid re-enchantment of modernity and successful resistance to rationalization, the practices of glossolalia, prophecy and “speaking in tongues,” I think, bear marks of alienation on both the levels of body and society. As Dong-Ho Cho argues in his study of Korean Pentecostalism, rather than a recrudescence of authentic, primordial spirituality, “speaking in tongues” (or its more scientific term “glossolalia”) reflects instead the “*objet petit a* as a piece of the Real, ie, traumatic encounter with the thing-in-itself that cannot be symbolized but makes possible

symbolization." (Cho, p. 78). As Zizek summarizes the dual function of the Lacanian Real: "The Real "erupts in the form of a traumatic return, derailing the balance of our daily lives, but it serves at the same time as a support of this very balance" (Zizek; Cho ibid)   In contrast, Cox arrives at a romanticized account of charismatic practices, and thereby Pentecostalism and charismatic movements generally, partly through what I believe to be a flawed methodological approach; one which accepts "empirical" reality too much at face value instead of a more critical or hermeneutic approach. I want to try to show this by re-examining a critique of Cox's earlier writings by Jose Segundo, a liberation theologist.

Re-visiting Liberation Theology: Segundo's Hermeneutical Approach and Critique of Cox and Mainstream Theology

Jose Segundo, in *The Liberation of Theology* (1975), argued that the only appropriate approach of an theology that would deem itself to be oriented toward liberation would be one that attempted to establish a hermeneutical circle between biblical writings and its interpretation in light of the existing ideas and social context of the society one finds oneself in. He notes "a theologian as progressive as Schillebeeckx can arrive at the conclusion that theology can never be ideological – in the Marxist sense of the term – because it is nothing but the application of the divine word to present-day reality. He seems to hold the naïve belief that the word of God is applied to human realities inside some antiseptic laboratory that is totally immune to the ideological tendencies and struggles of the day." In contrast, a liberation theologian should be one

who starts from the opposite end. His suspicion should be that "anything and everything involving ideas, including theology, is intimately bound up with the existing social situation in at least an unconscious way". Consequently, the hermeneutic circle is "the continuing change in our interpretation of the Bible which is dictated by the continuing changes in our present-day reality, both individual and societal." This approach of combining the disciplines of the past with that of the present so as to arrive at new interpretations is what differentiates the traditional academic theologian from the liberation theologian. "Without this connection between past and present there is no theology of liberation in the long run. You might get a theology which *deals with* liberation, but its methodological naivete would prove fatal somewhere along the line. It would eventually be reabsorbed by the deeper mechanisms of oppression – one of these being the tendency to incorporate the idiom of liberation into the prevailing language of the status quo".

As one of four case studies of this hermeneutic approach, he examines Cox's *The Secular City*, and finds it wanting. For while Cox tries to elaborate a new theology appropriate for 'man' under the new conditions of modernization, he does not adopt a critical attitude toward these conditions, which results in a theology that does not provide fresh interpretation of biblical knowledge in the light of the present day, but instead endorses the status quo and consequently is appropriated in the ideological process of fitting 'man' into the prevailing order. Cox's later attempt to understand the emergence of the "new religiosity" falls, I believe, into the same methodological trap as his first study, producing a similarly uncritical analysis and endorsement of the charismatic practices of Pentecostalism.

In order to satisfy the two preconditions for fashioning a hermeneutic circle, (1) profound and enriching questions and suspicions about our real situation; and (2) a new interpretation of the Bible that is equally profound and enriching, four steps must be followed, Segundo argues. "*Firstly* there is our way of experiencing reality, which leads us to ideological suspicion. *Secondly* there is the application of our ideological suspicion to the whole ideological superstructure in general and to theology in particular. *Thirdly* there comes a new way of experiencing theological reality that leads us to exegetical suspicion, that is, to the suspicion that the prevailing interpretation of the Bible has not taken important pieces of data into account. *Fourthly* we have our new hermeneutic, that is, our new way of interpreting the fountainhead of our faith (i.e, Scripture) with the new elements at our disposal".

Applying Cox's analysis of Pentecostalism to this approach, if one started with a more initially critical attitude toward society generally we would notice the widespread persistence of alienated forms of work, play and somatic experience in contemporary society. This suspicion would then lead us to be critical of both the ideological claims of the societal superstructure to be a truly "democratic" society that genuinely fulfilled people's real needs, as well as of the dominant forms of theology – in this case, the claims of charismatic practices to be authentic experiences of the Holy Spirit. As well, such a critical attitude would lead one to criticize mainline academic theology for not seeking (more earnestly) to alter such an alienated society, or consumerist "name-it and claim-it" theologies which embrace an alienated consumerism. Finally, this critical awareness should lead to a new hermeneutic – a new interpretation of biblical knowledge. For instance, a new hermeneutic would need to grapple with the

predominance of biblically literal interpretations. While one could understand the return of the “gifts of the spirit” as a literal return of the Holy Spirit, a more critical attitude would also note that the fact that these phenomena are accompanied by other literalistic beliefs such as creationism, dispensational premillennialism, also known as the Rapture, as well as Reconstructionist advocation of the forced reimposition of biblical law on believers and non-believers, such as stoning to the death for homosexuality and adultury, should give one pause. Given evidence of the above-stated phenomena, a much more likely interpretation is that the “gifts of the Holy Spirit” are inspired by literal readings of the Bible, which are then re-enacted, consciously or unconsciously. Consequently, it is much harder to see these phenomena as evidence of anything but profound somatic and societal alienation, rather than re-enchantment. For if one these are viewed as genuinely “re-enchanting,” what basis would one have to view the other literal beliefs of creationism, millennialism and strict, literal readings of biblical morality as similarly “re-enchanting”? An analysis of Pentecostalism that situated it in a dis-enchanted, alienated society to begin with would lead to a much more critical attitude of its claims to genuine spiritual fulfillment – rather than simply endorsing its perspective as Cox does.

But here we come back to the problem of the generally pessimistic assessment of the current state of modernity and its prospects for progress. If the rise of ‘fundamentalist’ and charismatic forms of religion indicate a deeply troubled, crisis-ridden modernity, what hope is there to overcome this? Unfortunately, the understandable frustration and even fear of these religious beliefs and forms and their romanticization by some commentators can easily lead to the other extreme.

Intelligent Design and the Scientific Backlash

In this regard, it is particularly instructive to examine the recent scientific 'backlash' against religion, particularly in response to the Intelligent Design controversy. In 2004 a school board in Dover, Pennsylvania voted to insert teaching of Intelligent Design alongside evolution as an alternate theory of the origins of life, and similar movements have been underway in other parts of the country. This was arguably the biggest re-opening of the faultline between religion and science since the famous Scopes Monkey Trial in 1925. At the same time, the ascendance of the religious right to power via the Bush Administration had led to the increased politicization of scientific policy under their influence. Responding to these developments, as well as a perception of the increased influence of religious fundamentalisms in public affairs – from 9-11 to the religious rhetoric of the Bush Administration, several scientists and other critics, adopting an uncritical version of the traditional Enlightenment perspective, have recently come out with works attacking religion as a dangerous font of superstition, prejudice, violence and ignorance –solely in itself the biggest threat to modern liberty and freedom (Dennett 2005, Dawkins 2006, Harris 2004, Hitchens 2006), regardless of historical and contextual considerations. What is most striking, perhaps for our purposes, about these works is the sense of bewilderment and frustration at the failure of the predicted decline of religion. At least these writers are no longer in denial as to religion's persistence. But what their frustration, bewilderment and anger reveal, I think, is the pervasively deterministic notions of progress held by most scientists. Accustomed to the steady increase in

scientific knowledge in the 'hard' sciences, they seem impatient with the murky realm of human behavior. "Enough already!" their leitmotif.

Dawkins, for instance, a prominent evolutionary biologist, in *The God Delusion* (2006), expresses bewilderment that anyone, in this day and age, could believe in God or any other supernatural phenomenon. This bewilderment extends to human history, as well:

> I am aware that critics of religion can be attacked for failing to credit the fertile diversity of traditions and world-views that have been called religions. Anthropologically informed works, from Sir James Frazer's *Golden Bough* to Pascal Boyer's *Religion Explained* or Scott Atran's *In Gods We Trust,* fascinatingly document the bizarre phenomenology of superstition and ritual. Read such books and marvel at the richness of human gullibility. (p. 36)

One problem with such a perspective, an empirical rationalism based on faith in the metaphysical "truth" of the scientific method, is that it has little sense of history and is thereby fundamentally anachronistic. It is easy to poke fun at what appear to be the silly beliefs of past and current societies, but what do we learn from such an approach? One of the insights of a more sophisticated historical and contextual approach is precisely to not judge the standards of one's own time against another time without seeking to understand why they might have believed it given the conditions of their life. In the absence of this, what we learn instead is something about the pretensions and prejudices of the contemporary scientist. Dawkin's approach does little to penetrate to the problem of the nature of the appeal of radically conservative religion in today's society. Instead, he proceeds to "tackle" every argument put forward for the existence of God and attempts to "refute" them – admitting, however, by his own empirical framework, that it is impossible to "disprove" God's existence, either – only argue for its extreme

improbability. However, this does little to get to the root of the problem. If the point is to reach out to and persuade the religious, this seems like a poorly thought out strategy. Given the "enclave" nature of fundamentalists and their cousins (Almond et al 2003), such as evangelicals and Pentecostals, few in such circles would presumably read such literature, and for those that do, it will most likely only serve to reinforce their sense of "alienation" and exclusion from "godless" secular culture. In light of this fact, Dawkins' *God Delusion* comes off as preaching to the choir or, more sinisterly, as a manifesto in social Darwinism. It does not help either that he and Daniel Dennett have advocated that those who believe in Darwinism should be classified as "brights". While it may be good and appropriate to rally together atheists and non-believers to defend their insecure, though perhaps growing status (if recent polls showing a doubling of those advocating "no religion" to 15% over the past decade are to be believed [ARIS 2008]), one wonders if this is the right approach. What is missing in the Dawkins-style approach is a more penetrating attempt to understand the broad turn towards religion as indicative of something problematic with the prevailing framework and contemporary conditions of modernity itself, rather than simply of "religion" as an independent variable. Simply declaring religious beliefs to be "superstitious" is not much of an analysis. It begs the question of why it is so appealing and widespread in our society in the first place. If modern science is so compelling and self-evident, why, after hundreds of years, hasn't superstition been 'stamped' out?

In addition to revealing their tendencies towards ahistorical and decontextualized understandings, which, in turn, have very little explanatory power, we discover the deterministic notions of progress underlying these scientists' beliefs. These deterministic

notions of progress recall Blumenburg's problematic – that progress can only be seen as an immanent process of self-assertion – it is "possible" but only on condition of active social struggle or conscious, organized planning. Following such an insight, the question of the persistence of religion would have to be posed back to science and modernity itself. Similar to Habermas' argument (2002) for the need for a genealogical understanding of modernity and science's self-understanding, a few questions arise. Why has modern science been so impotent in spreading its knowledge successfully to the culture at large? What role might modern science and technology have had in creating an environment that might foster such strong and widespread reaction to modernity? Needless to say, such contemplation is missing in their analysis. If 'possible' progress is based on the active work of developing an educated citizenry, and facilitating truly participatory democracy, it would seem that science, one of whose designated roles in modernity is education, would do well to become more reflexive, and thereby critical, about its role.

Method: Social Physiognomy of American Society through an Immanent Critique of Charismatic Culture

This study will combine both Adorno's method of immanent critique to achieve a social physiognomy of American society with a feminist and queer analysis. This study follows the method closely of two studies that similarly utilize Adorno's method of immanent critique – Dong Ho Cho's analysis of the Pentecostal Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, Korea, the largest church in the world, and Paul Apostolidis' cultural analysis of

Christian Right radio, specifically James Dobson's Focus on the Family radio broadcasts. As Apostolidis details, Adorno's method of immanent critique aims at a "social physiognomy" of the larger society through cultural analysis or "cultural criticism", as argued in his "Cultural Criticism and Society" (1983) as well as in *Negative Dialectics* (1981). Social physiognomy seeks "contradictions within the cultural object that express the contradiction of the social totality and perhaps contest the latter as well" (Apostolidis, p. 86). A social physiognomy is attained through the method of "immanent criticism" or "immanent critique," which seeks to both decipher the 'secret code' according to which the object expresses and reproduces social domination while at the same time recognizing the object's 'enigmatic' and utopian denunciations of injustice (Apostolidis, p. 61). Immanent critique is central to the study of critical theory with roots in Marx and Hegel.

While Marx's view of religion has been much maligned over the course of the 20th century - caricaturized as a form of vulgar, elitist atheism, summed up in Marx's taken-out-of-context depiction of religion as the "the opium of the masses". What has largely been left out of the historical record, not to mention, more importantly, the popular historical consciousness is the larger depiction from which this phrase was lifted: "This state and this society produce religion which is an inverted consciousness of the world, because they are an inverted world…Religious suffering is at one and the same time the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people" (Marx, 1975, quoted in Apostolidis 2000, p. 6). As Apostolidis argues, Marx's understanding of the political role of religion was a central model for his understanding of the political role of culture generally. Religion has power

inasmuch as it "epitomizes the worker's misrecognition of her objective misery" (Apostolidis, p. 7). Religion "reflects" this situation – in an inverted fashion - for instance in its yearning for an afterlife of peace and fulfillment. Yet religion also "reproduces" oppression, by tranquilizing any stirrings of critical consciousness. Nevertheless, religion, and culture generally, are neither "simply ideological nor exclusively a field of domination", as, in religion, it is not simply a mask for misery, but also a "protest against real suffering". Using the example of religion, then Marx shows that "culture has political significance in three distinctive ways, at once reflecting, reproducing, and contesting power" (ibid).

Apostolidis argues that Adorno's *Psychological Technique of Martin Luther*, an analysis of a proto-fascist Christian Right radio preacher of the 1930s, unpublished during Adorno's lifetime, provides a more fruitful counterpoint to his more totalizing, pessimistic analysis of mass culture in his famous and influential work "The Culture Industry" in his work with Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of the Enlightenment* (1986) - one which allows one to probe the "negative utopian" desire of the cultural object, which is all but lacking in the totalizing "culture industry" argument. In the essay "culture industry", Adorno and Horheimer analyze the culture industry as the "production of mass consciousness" ensuring the acquiesence of workers and society in general to the exploitative demands of mass production. Corresponding to the emergence of the "totally administered society" of state capitalism, culture, and cultural criticism's historical role as standing "outside the system" no longer holds. Any such pretense actually evidences its status as ideology for the system, as it loses any understanding of its own contingent determination by the system. Yet Apostolidis argues that Adorno's

stance in the culture industry argument actually undermines his more sophisticated argument for immanent critique in "Cultural Criticism and Society". For in the latter work, Adorno emphasizes the need for a "spontaneous" relation to the object of cultural analysis. Any pre-formed categorization evidences the reification of thought – one must always stay open to the ambiguities and contradictions within the cultural object in order to hold theory and cultural analysis to its highest, unreified standard. Culture, cultural criticism and social theory must always be in engagement with the contemporary historical reality of society – if it loses this connection, not matter how "true' the theory, its "transcendence" of society submits to reification, and hence, idealism – the idealism of the "pre-determined" theory. Similarly, Apostolidis critiques Gramscian and Foucauldian theory for tending to "read in" a more conscious, totalizing strategy to religious right movements when a more dialectic "immanent critique" with its "spontaneous relation" to the object can discern and interpret its contradictions more freshly. For instance, one of the few sectors of culture that Adorno still views as worthy of the name is modern music, specifically Shoenberg, who instead of submitting to ideology's nostalgic desire for "harmony" and resolution, reflected the contradictions of society through atonality - the truth that society is wrought with dis-harmony. Against Hegel, Adorno argues for the irreducible "nonidentity" of the subject and the object – a non-identity that reveals societal contradictions, from which the "negative utopian" desire for something other than the conformist, administered order can be discerned. Schoenberg's disharmony reveals the negative utopian desire for a truly harmonious societal order, in contrast with the conformist, dominating present simmering with disharmony. It is only a "spontaneous" relation of the critique to the cultural object – an

"immanent" critique – that can allow the moment of "transcendence' a grounding to critique society legitimately – and discern its "negative utopian" elements – "negative" for its critique of the existing order, and desire for something other.

Apostolidis employs the method of immanent critique to draw out the contradictions of Christian right radio and media culture in the post-Fordist period – ie the transition from totally administered, Fordist state capitalism "back" to market capitalism. Apostolidies draws upon Adorno's work in the "Psychological Technique," which he argues is one of the two examples, along with his study of astrology columns, where Adorno follows through with a truly "spontaneous" relation to the cultural object, – through an in-depth, detailed analysis, which discerns the negative utopian desire of Luther's rhetoric and his followers instead of his often more general, global analysis of culture, which falls prey to the more reified perspective of the "culture industry" argument, as, for example, in his view of religion as pure manipulation, pragmatism, and commodification in *The Authoritarian Personality* (1993). Against the post-fordist decline of the welfare state and the corruption of the political system, Apostolidis examines the "negative utopian" desire of Focus on the Family inthe contradictions evidenced by "family values" and Dobsen's figures of the "humble leader", "forgiving victim" and "compassionate professionals". Rather than viewing Christian evangelical rhetoric as mere manipulation for the social order, he views it as a narrative tradition with its own claim to historical coherence, though riddled throughout, of course, with its own contradictions.

This study is much indebted to Dong Ho-Cho and his immanent critique of Korean Pentecostalism, from which this study first took inspiration, though it hestitates in

the degree to which it is willing to follow Ho-Cho's sometimes rigid distinctions between "rational" and "irrational" forms of religion and culture, which seems to reflect somewhat Adorno's own contradictory ambivalences to mass cultural phenomenon.

This study employs the method of immanent critique to the aim of a social physiognomy of American society in grappling with vast and disparate cultural elements of charismatic culture, such as the appeal and contradictions of the theory of Intelligent Design; the apocalyptic fervor in the *Left Behind* series and Marian apparitions; and the culture and desire of charismatic practices of speaking in tongues, prophecy, possession, and being slayed in the spirit. Unlike Dong Ho-Cho's perhaps more focused study of the Full Yoido Gospel Church, Apostolidis' Focus on the Family, and Adorno's Martin Luther Thomas radio addresses, given that its object of analysis , Catholic charismatic culture - isa woefully hybridized amalgamation of traditional Catholicism, Marianism, Pentecostal influence, and fundamentalist beliefs of premillenial dispensationalism - it must wander to and fro somewhat in analyzing its disparate influences and popular manifestations.

Secondarily, this study moves from an Adornian immanent critique and discernment of Catholic charismatic and societal "negative utopian" desire to an engagement of with Marcuse's idea of libidinal rationality.

Engaging the radical imagination: A Historical, Critical Approach to the problem of Conservative Religious Revival, Gender and Sexuality

By way of contrast, then, this work will take a critical, theoretically sophisticated, historically and contextually driven approach to the dilemma of the "persistence" or "return" or, perhaps more accurately, the "revival" of religiosity, particularly in its more problematic politicized, conservative, ie "fundamentalist" forms. It will utilize in particular the Frankfurt School of critical theory's analyses of fascist and rightwing movements, particularly relevant given the linkage of conservative movements with religion in American history (Adorno 2000), as well as recent critical theoretical perspectives which seek to update this older Frankfurt School perspective by trying to understand the "utopic" desire hidden within religious right formations (Angelides 2000), as well as recent feminist and queer theory exploring the links between religion, gender, sexuality and bodies (Jakobsen and Pellegrini 2004; Jordan 2004; Warner 1993, 2004).

In response to the incipient waves of fascism enveloping Europe, which threatened cherished beliefs about the inevitability and stability of liberal democratic forms of government, Wilhelm Reich in 1933 wrote the *Mass Psychology of Fascism* trying to understand the social, historical and sexual preconditions for the frightening growth and widespread appeal of fascism. Reich framed the problem of fascism within one of the central questions of political philosophy, as formulated by Spinoza, (and developed later by Deleuze and Guattari [1989] among others) – ie, what are the conditions under which people can desire their own domination? In the *Mass Psychology of Fascism* (1970), Reich located the origins of fascism in the sexually repressed character structure of the working class. He argued that the conditions of mass industrial production in the early twentieth century required a disciplined work force, which in turn demanded the redirection of libidinal energy to the tasks of production. Sexual 'release'

was achieved through identification with an authoritarian father figure. Ultimately, Reich concludes, contemporary authoritarianism, shaped by contemporary conditions, has roots in millennia of patriarchal-based sexual repression. True liberation or "progress" could not simply take an economic form, but would require a transformation of this sexual repression into sexual liberation. Consequently, Reich believed that education about sexual health and freedom was essential. He was involved in the sexual hygiene movements of the 1920s and 1930s and advocated that socialist and communist movements integrate the goal of sexual freedom into their conceptions and practices for social change. Needless to say, however, this was an uphill battle, and his efforts were met with significant (though not complete) resistance by these political movements.

Foucault, of course, in *The History of Sexuality* (1990), problematizes any simplistic understanding of sexual "repression," "liberation," or "progress," particularly the way it has been deployed by the scientific establishment and secular authorities to justify new forms of regulation and control, particularly through its naturalistic conceptions of the roles of man, woman, nature and culture, which end in marginalizing and policing alternate sexualities and sexual practices. Reich is certainly susceptible to some extent to such criticism, especially given his increasingly biologistic determinism in later years. However, I think it is important to distinguish between the genuinely radical efforts of sexual liberationists, problematic as some of the presuppositions of their views of sexuality might be, from the mainstream scientific and medical establishment, which promoted a certain 'normalizing' view of sexual "health," influenced by contemporary political, economic and technological imperatives.

Foucault's critique of the "repressive hypothesis" happened amidst a profusion of discourse about sexuality that utilized such talk to bolster its sense of enlightenment and faith in progress by contrasting itself with its Victorian precursor. However, by Foucault's own method of historicizing sexual discourse and practices, it would seem important to grapple with the fact that we appear to be in a fundamentally new climate. While there appear to be some evidence of sexual 'progress' such as the wider acceptance of homosexuality culturally, at least to some extent in the US and Europe, as well as an openness to re-thinking the role of gender, at least in some perhaps more privileged sectors of society, there is plenty of countervailing evidence that the "sexual liberation" and openness associated with the 60s and 70s is largely in a stalemate with, if not losing to, the contemporary cultural and religious reactions. Movements to define marriage as a sacred partnership between a man and woman have proliferated on the state and federal level. The election of a gay bishop, the ordaining of lesbian and gay ministers and the blessing of same-sex union threatens to split the worldwide Anglican Union and national Episcopal church apart. At the same time, feminist and lesbian and gay liberationist activists from the previous generation, who criticized marriage for its patriarchal and thereby oppressive characteristics find themselves in the peculiar position of advocating for "gay" marriage (Jakobsen and Pellegrini 2003; Jordan 2004). The model of the 'bourgeois' family dominates sectors of mainstream gay and lesbian life as well. Collective living practices and sexual experimentation seem in many ways increasingly marginalized. The new religious movements in Christianity, such as Pentecostalism, and in the Islamic world which advocate a return to patriarchal "family" values of female

submission to male authority, and the general demonization of sexuality and the body, based on a literal reading of sacred texts is disquieting. Progress?

Some have argued, such as Thomas Frank (2005) in *What's the Matter with Kansas?*, that the success of the right in the US is due to their ability to sell an economic program benefiting the corporations and the capitalist class to the beleaguered working class and poor by playing up 'culture war' politics, which, he argues, have been overplayed by the radical cultural left of feminists, race, gay and lesbian activists. His solution for the 'left', which for him refers to the progressive elements in the Democratic Party, is to play down political struggles over culture and emphasize instead a program based on economic incentives to bring the working class back. The problem with such an approach, as those such as Ellen Willis (2006) have pointed out, is that it throws out the cultural achievements of feminism, civil rights, and gay and lesbian movements as essentially not important. It also reveals an economistic bias on the 'left' that it was the whole point of the various cultural movements to move beyond. A leftist approach solely centered on economic concerns need never have concerned itself explicitly with racism, sexism and anti-gay and lesbian prejudice, not to mention more recent concerns such as disabled or trans issues. At the same time, given the increasing numbers of women, people of color, and out gays and lesbians in the workforce, one cannot meaningfully separate economic from cultural concerns.

This debate is relevant to our critical examination of Pentecostal and charismatic practices. I earlier used the critical hermeneutic approach of Segundo's liberation theology to critique Cox for his uncritical approach to his study of Pentecostalism. Yet, when we look at liberation theology critically, we cannot help but notice that there is not

a visible feminist wing of this movement, without any gendered critique, so needed at a time like now given the raging Catholic sex abuse scandals. Partly this is due to the ascendancy of rightwing forces within the Church hierarchy and, ultimately, I argue, the abrogation of the reforms of the Vatican II council, as well as the expulsion or censure of theologians advocating feminist positions on the ordination of priests, birth control, abortion, homosexuality and other matters concerning gender and sexuality. And as liberation theology was greatly undercut by the same conservative Vatican regime, presumably whatever alliances between feminists and liberation theologians that might have been cultivated were summarily curtailed. However, it is hard not to see a certain applicability in the debate between Thomas Frank and feminists on the one hand, to the debates between Cox, Segundo, Pentecostal practices and liberation theology on the other. Any real account of progress or of a putative "re-enchantment" of the world by Pentecostal practices, such as Cox suggests, should include an analysis of the role of gender, body and sexuality in these practices.

Re-enchantment or Somatic Alienation? What would a Libidinal Rationality look like?

One such approach in regard to the issue of homosexuality and religion is that of Janet Jakobsen and Ann Pelligrini, who argue in *Love the Sin: The limits of Tolerance* (2004) for the need for a new sexual ethic that would accept the practices of sexual minorities, not just tolerate their existence. It is interesting to see how deep this conflict and prejudice is, and how hard to overcome it, as the schismatic debate in the Episcopal

Church and Anglican communion over the role of homosexuality, and the national frenzy over same-sex marriage reveal. It would seem that any attempt to recuperate notions of progress would be well advised to purge any such deterministic beliefs in their inevitability and re-orient them around Blumenberg's insight into their possibility only on the condition of its promotion through active social struggle. I would venture that rather than arguing about whether or not, or how, to salvage the secularization thesis, shrill denunciations of the religious, or their romanticization, what would be much more productive would be creating a new movement for sexual and somatic freedom and increased attention to the social conditions that drive people to problematic social forms, starting with the re-imagining of its possibility through an analysis of the new conditions of contemporary society.

For example, Marcuse, in *Eros and Civilization* (1962), looking at the character of alienation in modern industrial society in the 50s and examining the problems of modern rationalization, automation and disenchantment, developed the concept of "libidinal rationality" as one potential re-imagining of the relationship between sexuality and rationalization. He documents the developing trend of the selective permission of certain forms of pleasure and instinctual gratification, but only under the auspices of a wider oppression – what he calls "repressive de-sublimation". Instead, he suggests true liberation would involve the integration, rather than separation, of instinctual needs with those of the intellect – an integrated sublimation of libidinal energy, that, for instance, artistic expression traditionally aims for.

Such a perspective on the relationship between sexuality and rationality, quite different from Cox's endorsement of Pentecostal 'charisms of the Spirit,' is ultimately

informed by a critical assessment of the dominating tendencies inherent in the processes of rationalization in modern life. Adorno and Horkheimer, in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1988), for instance, locate the 'domination of nature' as being at the center of the Enlightenment project. Reading Francis Bacon, they show that the development of the empiricism and rationalism of the scientific method is caught up with the desire to control the disrupting and evil tendencies of 'nature' outside and purge it from within. The Enlightenment is caught up with the attempt to overcome myth, itself an earlier attempt to understand, and thereby overcome, the power of nature. However, the Enlightenment fails on all accounts, as its attempts to overcome myth through the mathematicization and quantification of nature only create a new myth that it quickly falls subject to. And the attempt to control nature only results in 'man's' objectification and domination of himself, as in his attempt to control and distance himself from nature, he forgets that he is part of it as well. Hence the inability to get beyond the domination of human by human, the stronger of the weak, woman by man, and humans of animals and the earth. Instinctual gratification, sexuality and the body - seen to represent nature - are still viewed as repellent.

Grappling with the domination of nature at the center of science and technology, and by extension, of the domination of man by man, would be a much more fruitful lens for understanding the peculiar persistence of religious 'irrationality' in society, I argue, than either romanticizing it as a welcome 're-enchantment' of nature, or displacing blame for this domination on to, arguably, its victims. This would involve adopting a much more critical and historical perspective, and again, would require science to become much more reflexive (Aronowitz 1988; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Habermas 2006) .

Jonathon Israel argues in *Radical Enlightenment* (2002) that what is currently underappreciated is that there were two strands of the Enlightenment – the moderate one more familiar to the popular consciousness - Voltaire and the other French philosophes - and a radical one, which has remained more obscure to us – inspired by Spinoza's radical reinterpretation of biblical revelation and often referred to as "spinozism". The moderate 'liberal' wing consistently sought to make the implications of the scientific and philosophical revolutions occurring in the early modern period palatable to the prevailing political and clerical establishment. The radical wing sought to follow through with the implications of the new ideas and thereby effect a more profound transformation of society. Consequently, its moderate and radical wings were often in tension – the moderates sought to distance themselves, even exaggerating the distances, from the radicals to shore up their position against and in relation to the conservative establishment. The conservatives, in turn, sought to group the moderates with the radicals for their own ideological purposes. Israel's point, however, is that our traditional understanding of the history and narrative of the Enlightenment is flawed, partly due to the fact that history is written by the victors. The implication is that we would be well served by reconsidering the role of the radical both then and in our own day.

Apocalypse and its Negative Utopian Desire

I argue that a more radically Enlightening science would be one that became more "disenchanted" about its supposed "neutrality," as this tends, like Cox's uncritical endorsement of both modernist rationalization previously and "primordial spirituality"

today, to an uncritical endorsement of the domination of the status quo. While it is possible to see stirrings of this in the recent outcry about Intelligent Design among scientists, much more such ‘disenchantment’ will be necessary, I believe, if the frightening ecological trajectory the globe is on is to be altered. It is hard to underestimate the importance that the evangelical and creationist distrust of science translates into when considering the problem of, for example, climate change and global warming, and the need to create a political will to change practices relating to human interactions with the environment on the level of everyday life. In this sense the exasperation and bewilderment by the recent scientists is on the mark, while Cox’s acquiescence is alarming. The problem is that the same potent political and religious force that makes up a sizable portion of the US that believes in Intelligent Design - beliefs fostered, no doubt, by the oil industry –(Mayer, 2010) also believes in the imminence of the Rapture, as evidenced by the widespread popularity of the best-selling *Left Behind* novels (70 million). Paradoxically, the pervasive premillennialism held by broad swathes of the public seems to accurately reflect on an unconscious level an apprehension of the magnitude of the ecological threat, a paradox worthy of further examination, as my later chapter on the *Left Behind* novels and apocalyptic Marian apparitions will examine. Already disposed to see science as illegitimate, their millennial beliefs give them further reason to dismiss or ignore the signs of imminent ecological destruction. Yet, as Paul Boyer notes, radicals looking for evidence of “grassroots resistance” to modern society have often overlooked the apocalyptic critique of premillennialists – this study, in contrasts, seeks to extract the “utopic” desire and discontent behind their apocalyptic rhetoric. In his analysis, premillennialism has largely

filled the void, or at least, channeled the desire for a "different world", as notions of progress associated with progressive and radical movements have declined. Rather than capitulating to some further 'compromise' between religion and science, it is not hard to conclude that what will be necessary is an intensification and renewal of some version of the radical, Spinozist Enlightenment. To this end science, and secularisms, will need to become reflexive about their impotence in educating the public. The clock is ticking to reverse increasingly catastrophic ecological damage (IPCC 2007) and since the advent of the Sarah-Palin-affiliated and Koch Industries funded Tea Party, the belief in global warming and climate change, after some improvement around the Obama election campaign, has retreated again to the lowest level since polling began thirteen years ago (The Guardian, March 11 2010). At the same time, I argue, a connection must be made between the domination of nature by science and technology and the self-domination of the body and sexuality, as reflected, for instance, in Pentecostal and charismatic practices, as both are part and parcel of the same domination and troubled interaction with 'nature'.

On the one hand, from a relatively sympathetic standpoint, this study will attempt to draw out and interpret what Apostolidis terms the "negative utopian" desire that inheres within conservative religious movements, and their implicit and explicit critiques of a perceived lifeless, dominating secularism. On the other hand, the problematic aspects of fast-growing Pentecostal practices across the globe will be subjected to critical analysis for the aspects of self-domination and alienation that inhere in these practices, an alienation that displaces a more critical and political awareness needed to deal with contemporary ecological and education challenges. Rising and politically powerful stars such as Sarah Palin and Bobby Jindal, who seek to integrate their Pentecostal and

charismatic religious beliefs with their political practices in the public realm should not be spared critical analysis. Ultimately, though, the overarching motivation of this study will be to understand the ways in which the contemporary religious "revival" is a response to a sense of disenchantment with the dominant forms of secularism, and how a better understanding of such religious motives and its hidden "negative utopic desire" could inform the re-imagining of more progressive forms of secularism enfused with life-filled, libidinal rationality.

Chapter 2

Deliriously Devout: The American Dream and the Religious Right, A Personal Testimony

Religion, long predicted by secularization theory to decline and become a private matter with the onset of modernity, has instead returned to occupy center stage. What to make of its emergence has become a major debate. Is the rise of religiousity around the world a welcome re-enchantment of modernity or a dangerous slide towards anti-Enlightenment fundamentalism? This auto-ethnographic piece is meant to be a contribution to this debate – as someone raised within the hotbed of 80s religiousity, I must sound a strong note of discord with recent attempts to see re-enchantment in this rise of religiousity while papering over the very serious problems this revival presents.

Harvey Cox, in his influential study, *Fire From Heaven,* written over a decade ago, addresses this debate by examining the explosive growth of Pentecostalism around the world. He argues that its elevation of experience over liturgy and dogma separates it from fundamentalism and offers a sincere, valuable re-enchantment of Modernity that recuperates aspects of ethnic, primordial spirituality such as healing, prophecy, singing and dancing. Further, by locating its roots in oppressed black communities – in newly urbanizing L.A. at the turn-of-the century depression - he takes a revisionist stance by highlighting its "radical" origins outside the mainstream churches. He makes a provocative case as he recounts the racist exclusion of the black evangelical communities

from white evangelical churches, and Pentecostalism's reply to this exclusion in a more 'enlightened' ecumenical approach which promoted mixing of races, and democratic involvement by lay persons and women in the early black Pentecostal church as they awaited a new "Pentecost" where racial and other divisions would be eliminated.

Yet how much of this is a well-intentioned, but dangerous romanticization? Skipping forward a hundred years later, what is one to make of the explosion of Pentecostalism around the world – by far the biggest growing contingent of Christianity, making huge inroads into the mainline Protestant churches as well as the Catholic Church – with hundreds of millions of converts in past decades on every continent? How much does this have to do with the original context within which black evangelicalism arose? More importantly, what is the political content of this phenomenon? Is it a progressive one that promotes the interests of blacks, the downtrodden, women and recovers ethnic identity? Or is this something more sinister? In contrast with many of the prominent writers commenting from the outside such as Cox or David Martin, who celebrates the growth of Pentecostalism as a major "metanarrative" of Modernity, my perspective is from the inside. Having been raised within a very religious Catholic charismatic (Pentecostal-influenced) family imbedded in the post-60s cultural backlash, I must take issue with such romanticization. The reality is much more complicated and disturbing.

The approach I will take will be a Lefebvrean one, examining changes on the level of the "lived experience" of everyday life. This involves using the "regressive-progressive" method – a historical, critical approach that requires assessing the historical context of society in order to assess the contemporary situation and prospects for progress. For instance, it is clear from the trajectory of the Catholic Church in the past

several decades that a move to the right has occurred – particularly in contrast to the liberating revisions of the Vatican II council. I am going to take a position that strongly differs from that represented by Harvey Cox, who I think looks at the rise of religiousity through rose-tinted glasses and ends up assessing the changes symbolized by the rise of Pentecostalism in an overly positive, upbeat way that virtually dismisses its anti-freedom elements. My experiences growing up solidly within the upward trajectory of the Reagan era rise of the Christian Right as a "chosen son" predestined to be a social leader (priest) while negotiating my own non-normative sexuality as well as my family's problematic involvement with the Catholic charismatic Movement, leads me to sound a strong note of discord to any such optimistic take.

The Catholic charismatic movement was born of ecumenical efforts by Pentecostalists to "evangelize" to Catholics in the late 60s, and its ability to make serious inroads into Catholicism demonstrates its power. Catholicism has often stood in for ethnic identity in the US, given the strong forces of assimilation, and in my family, our identity as Catholics was far stronger than any ethnic identity we retained. It has only been upon reflection that I have realized the extent to which the Catholic charismatic movement is profoundly Protestant. The "lived experience" of my family and myself will be used as a case study/terrain of struggle for the political, cultural forces in the Catholic Church, the charismatic movement and society at large. For while we grew up in the "ground zero" of the Catholic Christian Right, paradoxically, we were located at the same time in what was perhaps the most liberal archdiocese in the US, miles away from the blossoming center of high technology – the Pacific Northwest. The archdiocese was led by the beloved Archbishop Hunthausen, who through the eighties helped lead the

social justice wing of the Catholic Church – not paying his part of taxes that went to pay for the military, laying down across the railroad tracks to block the transportation of the trident submarines, letting the national gay and lesbian organization of Catholics, Dignity, hold its national conference in the Cathedral, and giving females the equal right to be altar servers, until he was unceremoniously forced out by the Vatican, and conservative, right-wing forces took control of the diocese. He was forced out by Cardinal Ratzinger himself, now Pope Benedict XVI, when he was head of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith. The intellectual trajectory of Ratzinger, and his shift to the right in reaction to the 60s, and abandonment of the Vatican II project (Kung), far from some abstract shift, made itself real in my family and community's life in the removal of Hunthausen. It is my belief that the rise of the charismatic movement in the Catholic Church, far from evidence of a shift towards a liberated "re-enchantment" of Modernity, is evidence of something else.

Pope, Prayers and Paper routes

I grew up the middle child of nine in, as one teacher put it, a "deliriously devout" Catholic family in Seattle. We were also poor, and somehow we knew those two went together. We knew we were different and often we were made fun of, but we were proud of it. We were weirdos, no doubt. We dressed poor, but we looked wholesome, all-American. Our mother could only be termed a fanatic. Nine kids, five miscarriages, fourteen pregnancies in fourteen years. We went to daily mass before school, said the daily rosary, with various prayers tacked on that often turned it into a marathon – one

extra mystery (a fifth of a rosary) for the unborn babies, one for the conversion of Russia, and another for whatever the latest cause was. Frequently we headed for one of the outlying parishes for an extra mass in the evening, a novena or a charismatic prayer group meeting. We spent much of our summers indoors, praying several hours a day, and listening as our mother read to us select passages from her large stacks of books – a combination of traditional Catholic fare like *The Lives of the Saints*, mystical writings of Teresa of Avila, St. Ignatius Loyola, mixed in with various Marian and charismatic literature such as the record of Mary's visitations in the diary of Fr. Gobbi, an Italian priest and leader of the Marian Movement of Priests, Medjugorje, and Fatima. We stuck out at the public pool because our mother made us wear miraculous medals and scapulars so tight we couldn't sneak them off. At the same time, our lives were filled with anxiety and fear. We were often not allowed to do things that other kids could do – for reasons that were often unclear to us. I couldn't see the Star Wars film *Return of the Jedi* at my best friend's second grade birthday party because it was rated PG. I wasn't allowed to do sports either till I fought for it in 5th grade.

From my mother's vantage point, pleasure was generally suspect. When I was potty-trained, I remember getting one individual M&M per regular bowl movement in the pot. Candy meant pleasure, which was bad because it removed the opportunity for sacrifice and grace, plus, it was bad for the teeth. Our Dad, however, was much more lenient in this regard, and would fight for us to have ice cream and go to McDonald's, not always successfully.

I was unhappy that I couldn't do sports like all the other kids did. Mother claimed it was because the two older brothers immediately ahead of me weren't doing as well in

school. They couldn't, and therefore, I couldn't. In retrospect, my mother was so maxed out trying to raise nine kids on nothing, in an age when extra kids, which would have been helpful on a farm in a pre-urban era, had instead become an incredible economic liability in a city. Equally, I suspect, it was due to the fear the charismatic movement encouraged of the outside world and its seductions. I wanted to take piano lessons but we couldn't afford it. She did let me do a combination of ballet, tap dance and gymnastics in 4th grade, till she got Bell's Palsy, a nervous condition that freezes one side of the face temporarily from extreme stress. It was a precursor to the financial troubles that had always existed, but were snowballing, and that would never really stop.

4th grade was the same year my eight brothers and sisters (or at least the older ones) and I started doing paper routes to support the family – we had four to six all throughout my childhood and adolescence. All the money we made went to support the family – including tips. The memories of my childhood are filled with prayer and paper routes. Every weekend we would get up at 6:30 or 7 in the morning on Saturday to start putting advertising "inserts" into the papers – sometimes there was one, sometimes there were three or four. One by one, assembly line, one of us would put inserts in, and another would fold and rubber band them, and put them in a blue plastic bag if it was raining out (which it usually was in Seattle). Then we would put 30 or so papers in our saddle-bags and hit the streets, throwing the papers and checking off the list. Once the routes were done, it was off to mass, where two or three of us were often served as altar boys (or altar girls, for a time).

Over the next couple of years, the two eldest siblings were old enough to get part-time jobs, gaving all of their earnings to to support the family. But it wasn't enough to

reverse the tide – our father's business, always struggling, was going down the tube, threatening to bring us along with it. So we prayed. Even more than usual. My oldest brother, Eddie, the perfect, model son - straight-A student, star athlete in every sport he ever tried – basketball, track, cross country, soccer (but not allowed to do football, because our mother (apparently) didn't want any of us to become a playboy like her older brother had been, star quarterback at the U of W freshman year, class president, till he ran into trouble) - would pray the rosary, every word, with purposeful intensity, on his turn leading a mystery of the rosary. We were always encouraged by our mother to endure and seek out sacrifices, as we would gain more grace and help sinners in purgatory. My oldest sister, Maria, recounts the time she discovered Eddie kneeling on the sharp edges of a hard plastic toy egg carton in pain to maximize the grace earned. He took things very seriously. Myself, on the other hand, as the middle child, though "special" for my destiny as a priest – had also developed a reputation from an early age as trouble maker #1 - the "hardest one to raise" my mother would later declare. It was an odd mix. For all my priestly ambitions, I don't ever remember finishing the rosary, almost always falling asleep by the end, as the monotony of the praying simply couldn't hold my attention. However, during the marathon reading/theology sessions on Saturdays and the summer that wore on for hours, I was often the most outspoken, challenging the dogma and the catechism, pointing out the inconsistencies I found. My mother would chide me for relying too much on my "brain," to guide me instead of the Holy Spirit, as ultimately my questions were "mysteries" without answers.

My father sold and repaired used pianos. His knowledge of music and the shop itself he had inherited and adapted from his father, who was a musician (a talented

trumpet and French horn player and member of a traveling band early in the 20th century) who taught music lessons and had a small sheet music shop for a while in Hoquiam, the small (and extremely depressed) lumber mill town on the coast of Washington state. My father convinced him to start selling pianos, and gradually took over and changed the store. My Dad was a talker and always had ambitions of making it "big," pursuing the American Dream, always believing things were on the verge of getting better. Things were often "in a rough period right now" but "deals were on the fire" and he could "make $20,000 in a week" if he could just concentrate and "get some quiet around here!" Yet, pianos, once a staple of middle-class as well as many working-class families, became obsolete with the rise of rock n' roll and the technological revolution which produced, among other things, electrical guitars and particularly, electrical keyboards. My father recounts the day someone came in his store with an electrical guitar declaring "one day" it was going to revolutionize music – my dad scoffed, and was wrong. People stopped buying pianos, but my father, with a salesman's talent but a hedgehog's perspective on what he knew – pianos – and without the benefit of higher education, (not even finishing high school it turns out) struggled to adapt and in the face of seemingly impossible odds, tried to succeed with his record/piano business and its dwindling market. Tricked into enlisting into the Korean War, he signed up at a party held by the Marines, which unbeknownst to him was a recruiting drive. While in the service, the record speed changed to 45, and, stuck with an obsolete inventory of records, the business, run by his sister, in his absence floundered. When he got out, he sold appliances and was a top seller for Sears apparently, but his wages were garnisheed due to the business' debt, and couldn't live off the leftover salary. (He now admits he should have gone bankrupt way

back then, but he was too proud to do it.) He felt he had to go back to doing the only thing he really knew how to do – repairing, refurbishing and selling pianos. He often blamed the government for his being "behind the 8 ball" since the Korean War and often threatened to sue it. As a kid, I would challenge him to actually do it, but he never did. His business always seemed a bit of a doomed enterprise as his bad credit foreclosed his access to capital. He didn't seem mean enough to be a good businessman anyway.

I can remember a couple of the different shops he used to rent, which we were proud of, as he "owned his own business". We thought we were middle-class, or at least "lower middle-class" –"working-class" wasn't used where we grew up. And if we weren't technically working class as my Dad worked "for himself," my siblings and I grew up squarely within the "working poor". He was always behind on his store's rent, our home's mortgage, taxes and bills, and slowly but surely the time his store lasted in each location before getting the boot became shorter and shorter. I remember people driving by periodically, stopping to look at our house from their cars, whenever my dad would get behind on the mortgage - our house days from being sold till my mother's brothers bought the defaulted mortgage at the last moment. I remember my parents fighting about money all throughout my childhood, while we looked on, worried and scared. We started getting food stamps, but often couldn't get them because my Dad was afraid to hand in his business receipts because of all the sales taxes he owed. So we went to the food bank instead. He went bankrupt when I was in 6th grade, a victim, partly, I would only realize later, of Reagan's de-industrialization of America and the invasion of inexpensive electronic keyboards from Asia.

Church, Choir and School

Paul was an influential teacher growing up who seemed to have a special affinity with our family. Paul was in a good position to understand my family's situation, as he performed many roles around the church and the school: church organist, playing the organ at weekend masses, funerals and weddings that my siblings and I served; teaching a weekly music class for everyone at our K-8 Catholic school, as well as directing three choirs – two children's choirs, (of which I was a member for as long as I can remember, as were many of my siblings), a parish choir, (with which I sang on and off through high school and college). Suffice to say, Paul was everywhere - and didn't get paid much for it - as he would occasionally complain. But he loved the music and was an incredible teacher. His fondness for my siblings and me, was partly due to his having been a "PK" – short for "preacher's kid" – of a Lutheran minister. As our mother was a major "church lady" (who originally wanted to be a nun, but was told she had a calling for children), we were the closest equivalent Catholics have to PKs. I was one of his top boy sopranos, which he relied on for both choirs, as well as for the Christmas pageant and other performances. He had had a tumultuous childhood and adolescence, moving around a variety of small towns in the Pacific Northwest, his father serving various Lutheran congregations - and had resented the pressure and stigma of being the "preacher's kid" – whose father was the representative of God, and whose son was watched by everyone. Instead, he had followed in his mother's footsteps as an organist, which, as he would complain occassionally, pigeon-holed him as the effete, overweight kid.

In 1968, he graduated from high school and was drafted early. He wished to be a conscientious objector, but was denied the required letter of recommendation from his local pastor – his father. It seemed to summarize the injustices his father and society had doomed him with. So, he "checked all the boxes" and departed on a life as a counter-cultural hippie – though not completely. On his mother's side, every eldest son had been a Lutheran pastor since the time of Luther. Paul broke that tradition, and instead, "rebelled" by becoming a Catholic. This may seem an odd way to rebel, but the Seattle archdiocese at the time was very liberal, and Paul seemed to romanticize Catholicism as more "of the people" than Protestantism, at least compared to the mainline Protestantism he came from. Plus he liked the bells and whistles. As well, Paul was caught in a very distinct historical and cultural contradiction – his passion for church music and liturgy (he went on later to get his DMA) meant the only way to play the organ was - other than a baseball stadium - to work at a church. This kept him close to the religious context he had resented as a child – a love/hate relationship. Paul's other passion was American history – which he wove in beautifully into our music classes at school.

Pulling the Divine Middle Finger

During baptism, I pulled the Irish priests's middle finger, who in turn told my mother this was a sign from God that I was meant to be a priest. Told this story by my mother since before I could remember, I was open about my calling for the priesthood from a young age, and early on, would out-spokenly advocate for the unborn and other conservative causes. One of my fiercest interlocutors was Carrie Wenzel, whose father

was a liberal member of the parish "peace and justice" group and active in the longshoremen union. We would argue passionately about abortion, the role of women, Democrats vs. Republican candidates, Jesse Jackson vs. Pat Buchanan, etc. It could get pretty nasty. But it seemed like God as well as the political tide was on our side. How could anyone not like Reagan? He seemed a soft-spoken, more gentlemanly version of our (bar-brawling) grandfather – fighting injustice and Godless communism, spreading American freedom and democracy around the world – indeed, it did seem to be "morning in America". I identified with Michael J. Fox in Family Ties - the smart, sharp, conservative kid seeing through the delusional, unrealistic, weak-valued mediocrity of his hippie parents, still in denial about the end of the 70s. But in my case, the light-heartened rebellion wasn't exactly against my parents, it often was directed against my liberal teachers, specifically Paul, always up for a good argument, who played the role of the diehard "shock and awed" liberal, teacher, endlessly bewildered by the conservativeness of the "new generation". It was never ending combat and wicked fun.

I took my knocks though, for playing the conservative moralist – enduring the taunts of my classmates, trying to offer it up to God, knowing I was right after all. In one memorable incident, Leo, a somewhat troubled kid who showed up in 5th grade with social problems (and a gay father, it turned out) squished his hardboiled egg in the cafeteria in front of my face as though it were an aborted fetus, mimicking its plaintive death cries for everyone to see. Though we were one of the "better" classes our teachers told us, we took turns picking on each other. Another painful but vivid memory is a terrifying playground sequence where it was "my turn" to be ganged up and picked on - feeling as though I was my turn to be crucified, like Christ, on the playground fence -

forcing me into the worst of all fates; convinced, I screamed, that they were "trying to make me a nerd!" Or Carrie's taunting, in cohorts with her fellow terrorist, Flavia – playing on my gender and sexual insecurities. Because, after all, not only did I feel strange and out of place for my political and religious beliefs, there also was this eternally lingering recognition that I was somehow fundamentally different from the other boys, and the girls seemed to pick up on it as well. I wrote it off to my calling for the priesthood.

Maybe I'll be pope someday, I thought. My mother said the earliest one could become a priest was 26, if I fast-tracked it, maybe I'll be one by the year 2000, I fantasized. There was the option of going to an all-boy high school seminary. Though they were generally on the decline, my mother always seemed to know where the exceptions were. There was one in Canada she had her eye on. I even tried to convince my best friend in 7th grade to come with me.

YCRT – The Charismatic Youth Group

It was around 6th grade – right about the same time that my Dad went bankrupt that we started going to "YCRT", the Youth Charismatic Renewal Team a young group for charismatics. It's a little unclear how my mother got involved with the charismatic movement originally. Apparently she heard about it through her mother - religious, but not as extreme as my mother – more of the traditional Irish Catholic old lady variety. In any case, I was excited because I was allowed to go hang out with the older kids – even though I was only 12. We would go to Sacred Heart Parish in Bellevue, on Mercer Island, closer to where our grandparents lived in Redmond (where Microsoft had just

started blooming in the late 80s), to a parish with fancy new facilities - much better off than ours. It was run by Fr. Gandrau, who edited the *Northwest Progress*, the archdiocesan paper, who, I learned later, represented the conservative, right-wing forces in the diocese, and had a significant role in getting rid of the progressive Archbishop Hunthausen at about the same time. It was quite different from St. Al's in Ballard. St. Alphonsus, located right off the Ballard Bridge at an intersection on the edge of downtown Ballard, on a major high-way-like commercial strip with plenty of fast-food restaurants, autobody shops, convenience stores, supermarkets and gas stations, sat next to the remnants of the former Ballard industrial zone. Populated by Scandinavians at the turn of the century, it was once known as the "shingle capital of the world" in 1895, and was its own city till absorbed by Seattle in 1907. Tucked between the Puget Sound and Salmon bays, water has always been a big presence. We lived blocks away from the famous Chittenden Locks that link Puget Sound with the system of lakes around Seattle. During my childhood, however, it was a relatively depressed, former fishing and lumber industries town, quite different from the gentrified area it has now become in post-Microsoft-era Seattle.

At St. Alphonsus, we stuck to the mainstream, post-Vatican II liturgy – vernacular, shaking hands at peace, singing traditional hymns out of the worship II book. When I was just a small child, the pastor, Fr. Sarkies, fairly liberal, was a fan of the "high church" tradition. He was partly responsible for the relatively elaborate music program that Paul started. We were the only local parish in Seattle that regularly sang Gregorian chant. When a parishioner with means died and left some property to the parish, it was Paul's great "coup" to convince the pastor to invest it for a steal in a majestic Fritts-

Hammond tracker organ, built by a budding pair of (queer) organ builders early in their career, friends of Paul (making St. Alphonsus a global destination for organists to come play to this day). Later, Fr. Doogan, a kindly Irish priest of moderate political persuasion who was pastor throughout much of my early childhood, also supported Paul's musical program, which included Renaissance music, spirituals, and professional musicians to accompany the three choirs and cantors on Christmas and Easter.

Like praying the rosary, I don't really remember successfully making it through many of the traditional-style sermons at St. Al's. They seemed formulaic, and seemed to blend in to the never-ending prayer session that seemed to constitute Wetzel family life anyway. At the charismatic youth group, however, the prayers and sermons were more excited, and there were guitars and more folksy music – something Paul, for all his counter-cultural tendencies found anathema when it came to "serious" music – like the motets, cantatas and chant we sang in choir by Bach, Dietrich Buxtehude and William Byrd, some of Paul's favorites (we would sing Woody Guthrie and Beatles in music class, but Christian folk and rock in church was seen as tacky and hence "verboten"). There also were these strange, impromptu prayer sessions – with "praying in tongues". But for the most part, I enjoyed the youth group meetings, if for no other reason than I got to be out late with the older kids.

The youth group leader was a serious, football coach-looking guy in his early 40s, who played the guitar. The earnest way in which he led prayers was different from the more ritualized, automatic way prayers were generally said in my church, school or family. After singing and praying, there was free food (always a plus for my siblings and me, who regularly cruised funeral receptions for food – rationalizing that we deserved it

since our mother made us go to nearly every parish funeral as she was concerned someone would die without anyone attending their funeral; plus, as she viewed it, every mass was more grace for us). After food, we got to play pickup basketball games with the other youth group kids - two of my older brothers, Zack and Eddie and I (Greg, now a monk, wasn't athletically inclined) and I would often make up an intimidating team.

A Motley Crew

One thing that puzzled me a bit was the "mixed" nature of some of the other, older youth group members. Dawn, ten years older than me, a friend of my oldest sister, Maria, and particularly close to my mother - was a true zealot. Her father was a salesman as well, mother a friendly, larger-than-life Brit, who often seemed a bit tipsy, her brother with substance abuse and mental health issues who lived with his parents and seemed kind of scary, and her sister a "party" girl. Apparently Dawn had also had party-girl tendencies in 8th grade (drinking and smoking pot) but reformed and became a true believer. She could be very funny but seemed a little unstable and chased guys aggressively, which didn't seem to jive with the submissive role she preached for women. She and her friends used to demonize Molly Yard – "a dyke" they would whisper under her breath like a filthy word – who was the president of NOW – the National Organization of Women – the Antichrist if ever there was one. Another older guy, Tom, on the other hand, was very friendly to me. He had been a juvenile delinquent (jailed for stealing gasoline) but had reformed as well, though not completely. He seemed more light-hearted than the rest, and still liked to party (more than praying, it seemed sometimes). The first time I ever got drunk, in 8th grade, was at one of Tom's parties. I

got so drunk I fell in a garbage can on the lawn playing around. The youth group seemed to be comprised of a motley crew of (at least temporarily) reformed juvenile delinquents on the one hand, and goody-two-shoe (and some soon-to-be delinquents) on the other.

It wasn't till I attended my first "Western Washington Catholic Charismatic Renewal," held in the Conference Center at the Tacoma Dome, the summer before high school, that I would experience the "full" impact of the charismatic movement. There must have been thousands of people there. There were a number of prominent speakers on the revival speaker-circuit that were very entertaining, but I was a little confused as they reminded me a bit of televangelists ie Protestants, which we as diehard Irish-German Catholics supposedly to have nothing to do with. But they were Catholic, so it was ok, apparently. One speaker recounted the financial troubles he and his wife had had getting somewhere once, and how the car ran out of gas. So they held hands and laid their heads on the dashboard and prayed. Then he lifted his head, looked at the gas gauge and, channeling the Holy Spirit, proclaimed "Up! Up! Up!" and lo and behold, the fuel tank indicator rose to half full, lifted by the hand of God!

Let the Fire Fall! (..but no gay sex!)

One thing I'll never forget is the sense of anarchy experienced while singing and dancing at that convention center. We sang lots of songs, with guitars and tambourines, that gave a hippyish tilt to some of it. One song in particular has always stayed in my memory "*Let the Fire Fall – Come Holy Spirit - Let the Fire Fall*!" sung in an amped up, frenetic pace. Suddenly, a line of dancing nuns and others, holding hands and shaking

tambourines flew past our row – I lunged to join without a moment's hesitation, and several of my siblings jumped on board as well. Soon we were flying around the convention center, caught up in a chaotic, gleeful frenzy (the kind we only participated in on those monthly occasions when our parents, who slept on opposite floors – my mom in the queen bedroom upstairs, my dad in the basement, because he snored - mysteriously "took a nap" together and left all nine of us to pile up all the pillows, blankets, and stuffed animals in the house and jump on top of each other).

Later that day, a series of intense prayer sessions were held. People had been speaking in tongues (glossolalia) all day for quite a while. I was in a room with people intensely praying – "laying hands on" - people, acting as a medium for the Holy Spirit to work its power. Earlier, I had attended a youth-oriented prayer session, Christian rock style, where the youngish group leaders led us in a state of quiet meditation (the state usually preceding speaking in tongues, if its going to happen) where one spoke out - "prophesizing"- about the sins that the Holy Spirit was making him aware of in the room at that present time. He specifically mentioned the sin of homosexuality among other sins and led us in offering it up to the Holy Spirit to take away forever. I remember looking around me and wondering a little at the specificity and detail of the sins. But now it was my turn to get hands "laid on". Around me already were lots of women, laying down, chests heaving, having been "slayed" in the Spirit. To be "slayed" in the Spirit was one of the six or so major gifts my mother often mentioned, though no one in our family had been slayed yet. A priest was doing the "laying on" in my line, and several people were arranged in a circle to the sides and behind each person being prayed on, to help facilitate the movement of the Spirit, as well as to help catch them should they

be “slayed” and fall backward. I stepped up. The priest put his hands on me, and already, I felt an electric buzz throughout my body. The priest started to pray aloud, and I felt an oh-so-subtle pressure from his hands on my head. It didn’t take long before I “let go” and fell backward, gently laid to the ground by the helpers. It was an out-of-body experience. My chest was heaving and I felt very emotional, vaguely aware that dozens of people were watching me with excitement. After ten minutes or so I got up and bawled, though I wasn’t quite sure why. I hadn’t seen the others doing it. Dawn from the youth group rushed up and assured me it was the Holy Spirit – I was blessed. I wasn’t so sure somehow – I felt more shaken up than anything else – guilty somehow. Whatever it was it wasn’t exactly “made up” whatever that would mean. Though I am no longer a “believer” - at least not of this variant - the phenomenon of being “slayed in the Spirit” demonstrates, I think, the power of collective somatic experience, to release trauma if nothing else – experiences relatively rare given the individualizing tendencies of modern living..

Desiring Changes/Changes Desiring

About the same time, the first hormones started to kick in. Everything seemed to change. Doubt crept in. Did I really know what I was doing? Suddenly I saw the implication of the priesthood – the “trade-off”. No sex! I started to understand what that meant, or would mean. Slowly I started to resist my mother’s expectations for my life – calling into question openly whether I really was “meant” for the priesthood, as it was put. One day in eighth grade, after church, while everyone was sitting around watching a football game (we always cheered for Notre Dame’s Fighting Irish), I communicated to

my mother perhaps my first truly independent thought – "I don't think I want to become a priest." I started to articulate my reservations, while she walked up the stairwell. "Oh yes you do," she said with an air of mystery, confidence and control, as though she knew my desires better than I did. Turned to observe me from above on the stairway, a mystically clairvoyant smile on her face, "It's your calling". Talk about a trap!

I became more wary of the whole set up. What were these desires surging through my veins? What was sex about after all? My dad never talked about it, and with my mother it seemed to be something the devil had invented as an opportunity for escorting us to hell, rendering girls taboo. The most explicit she ever got about it that I can remember was indirectly when reading us an article about a man with a "problem" who liked to "touch" the little children, repeatedly caught by his wife. (Moral: be wary of overly friendly male neighbors).

I decided to do what I had become accustomed to doing when I wanted to find out about something – go to the library. I quickly made short work of the sexuality and social sciences section of the local public library in Ballard – skimming through the Kinsey and Hite reports on male sexuality, titillated by the section recording the fantasies of interviewees. Though I had been "messing around" with guys in my class for years, I had never thought much about it – it couldn't have been "sex" because that involved girls, and my mother never said anything about other boys.

I started to feel more and more alienated from my family and my parents and as I entered high school, it was as though two different strands of consciousness were developing alongside each other. One that was straight – like I was always taught I was and had expected to be – that thought there was really no other option – that only dirty

old men and sissies were "gay". And the other one, which was exploring all these books about sexuality in the library quietly, mulling over my experiences with my pals, and getting turned on by the personal testimonies and written fantasies in sex books for teenagers like *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. I remember masturbating laboriously to a girl I thought was cute, but it didn't really seem to get me going - then the image of a guy in my class crossed my mind and I came for the first time instantly. I freaked! At the same time, I read that having homosexual feelings might just be a phase – I wouldn't really know till I was 16 or 17. I read Judy Blume, (*God are you there? It's me, Margaret)*, and came to question the doom-and-gloom God by this point. I rationalized it must be ok to masturbate while thinking about guys because God couldn't be *that* bad a guy and would allow me the space I needed to figure this all out anyway. Yet, I was having a crisis of belief.

I started hanging out with Paul more – he had finally received his DMA, gotten divorced along the way, and in 8th grade I remember helping him move into an apartment. My voice started to change that year, and Paul and I became estranged over the way the drama teacher was coaching me to sing as Prince Charming in "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs". I dropped out of choir in full rebellion. By high school, though, Paul's perspective, and those of his hippyish friends – many of them PKs themselves, all of a sudden seemed more reasonable. I was arguing more and more frequently with my father, accusing him of anti-semitism, racism, sexism and homophobia. Why had I thought Reagan was so right after all? Paul had always been very honest and open in class about his younger brother who was gay and had AIDS – and I sensed he would be ok to talk with about my questions concerning my sexuality.

The first two years of high school had been moderately idyllic – finally able to get away from the Wetzel family stigma that pervaded St. Alphonsus Parish and School. Blanchet High School, a Catholic High School that, like most Catholic schools, used to service a largely working-class population of Catholic immigrants, by then had pretty much turned into a prep school (as Paul put it – for parents who didn't want their kids to go to school with black kids) due to the changing demographics of the region - largely suburban, white, middle class, and affected by the growing high-tech influence of Microsoft. A friend of our mother, who went with her to a Catholic all girls high school and had no children of her own, convinced her mother to pay for a couple of us to go there after we went bankrupt, after my two older brothers had to switch to public school for a while as we couldn't afford Catholic school anymore. An anonymous benefactor,paid for me, the mother of a childhood friend, I later found out.

I did lots of theater and jazz choir my first two years, and following in the footsteps of my brother, track and cross country as well. A girl, Aimee, fell in love with me at the end of freshman year, she sang and did theater as well, though I wasn't sure if I was really falling in love with her. Together with my best friend, Ed and her best friend, Angie, we became a foursome. We used to hang out at Beth's Café, a greasy diner populated by alternative kids, and independent coffee shops like Last Exit, on the Ave (near the U of W), listening to the grunge hits that were omnipresent, mostly unaware that Seattle was becoming the kingdom of grunge. But something wasn't right. Aimee, who had hit puberty when she was probably nine, wanted something more. Sex. That dirty word. I, on the other hand, was a late bloomer, or so it seemed. I loved her, but I didn't feel moved to do much about it.

Finally, sometime during my sophomore year, I told Paul I thought I was gay. And it was fine (almost too fine, I wondered sometimes, given his weepy, long hugs). I met a long standing gay couple who were friends of his. I met many of his gay church musician friends – the two seemed to go together. Essentially, this gaggle of counter-cultural church musicians became a second family of sorts to me, and in some ways half-raised me as the alienation from my parents and religious community became irreversible early in high school. Slowly I came out to my high school friends and teachers, one by one, as well as a few siblings. But high school became a chore. Even though Seattle was in a liberal diocese, no gay youth groups were allowed because of Vatican policy. I started to doubt the intellectual and political integrity of my presumably liberal, enlightened teachers, many of whom had been highly influential on me and and I deeply respected. Did they support this policy? They must, I figured, if they worked there, and didn't challenge it. I started to feel betrayed – all that talk about equality and justice seemed to stop at the line that would include me.

Meanwhile, I prepared to be confirmed, as was expected. Paul was my confirmation sponsor. But I couldn't help but begin to resent the process. Fr. Gandrau, (who had helped get rid of the liberal Archbishop Hunthausen in the 80s, and whose parish had sponsored the charismatic youth group across town that we went to), had been strangely relocated ('demoted' Paul put it) to become pastor of our parish in lowly Ballard. I couldn't help but continually clash with Fr. Gandrau, a cross between John Wayne, George W. Bush and Rush Limbaugh. Sex was a constant topic in his sermons, and he frequently blamed the problems of the church (if not society), on the "lesbian nuns from the 60s". He used to complain to Paul about the "nigger music" (spirituals) Paul

would often have us sing. The choir loft was definitely a "counter-cultural" if not "queer" safe space. Paul, sitting at the massive classical organ, had to peek out at a "rear view mirror" of sorts to monitor what was happening on stage. Frequently, the two would clash during the service over liturgical or musical proceedings – Gandrau yelling up to the choir loft at Paul – Paul yelling back. Paul would poke his head out from behind the organ at various points, and, facing the choir, would "talk back" and snicker at Gandrau's sermons. (Years later Gandrau abruptly announced he had an obscure medical condition "disticulitis" and was retiring immediately. Soon after the parish was shocked to discover Gr. Gandrau to be one of the first four priests de-frocked by the new Pope Benedict XVI due to sex abuse. The diocese had ignored complaints by numerous young girls of sexual abuse for several decades, depositing him instead at our depressed, working class parish.)

As high school worn on, I started smoking pot, drinking, and experimenting with drugs. I quit track and cross country to focus on theater and music and hang out with a crowd that seemed more welcoming to sexuality and gender differences. By the end of junior year I did not want to go back to high school. I felt like I had learned everything I was going to learn there already. I dreaded my senior year.

All the while, like my other siblings, I worked part-time at the local grocery store, Art's, as a bagger, and sometimes as a meat room cleaner. The pay was fairly minimal, but decent - $5.50 or so an hour, but it was time and a half on the weekend, and double on holidays! I worked at least 12-15 hours per week all through high school, full time on holiday "vacations" and the summer. Eddie, even though on academic and athletic scholarship at Notre Dame id not get enough money to pay his tuition and living costs,

and had found a job during the winter break and summer taking care of a married couple with cerebral palsy as a live-in weekend caretaker. There were many times when he didn't know if he was going to be able to have enough money to buy a ticket back to Indiana. The job got passed on to us when he returned to school, and for the end of the junior year and during senior year not only did I have a substantial income - $86 per day, $172 for a weekend of work, but I had weekends away from home - liberation. The summer after junior year, Paul got me a job raking rocks on a mountainside in the Cascades, living on the property of an "off the grid" friend of his, Babs (who changed his name after Divine's character of the same name in John Water's Pink Flamingos in 1972). I helped make a golf course for the new girlfriend of the owner of Bayliner boats who had cashed out and retreated to the Cascades, whose estate caretaker was also Paul's friend. The only reason I escaped my parents forbidding this was because my oldest sister, Maria, was getting married that summer, and they were completely distracted.

When I was a teenager, Paul intimated to me his sense of the pressure Eddie, the oldest boy in the family, had always bore, but it wasn't till many years later that that I understood what he meant. Later I realized how much pressure there was on him to "make up" for the "failures" of my father. Failures which my mother's relatives, of sinking middle-class origins themselves, groused about, a displacement, I realized later, of their own anger at the financial and familial failure of my mother's father, educated (having been superintendent of a rural school district at one point) with an uneven work ethic, always shifting from one job to another, and prone to bar brawling. Our grandmother, with two years of college education, grew up with greater expectations than her husband delivered (she got rushed into marriage three months after meeting him at

age twenty-four due to the pressure to marry young). [Her Irish father had worked as an accountant for the railroad in Chicago, marrying his young Scottish housekeeper and, borrowing money with his brother, went west to Canada to start a couple lumber mills at the height of the timber craze at the turn of the century, running a successful general store and populating the town with their fourteen children. They did very well till the lumber mills burned down during the depression and her father died leaving her young mother to raise fourteen kids alone.]

I knew I needed to get out of Seattle, sooner than later. Paul encouraged me to check out various, elite "liberal arts" colleges, that he said might be interested in me and give me a scholarship. I had never heard of the ones he mentioned – Carleton and Oberlin. He had gone to PLU (Pacific Lutheran University) but attended the famed (for Lutherans) St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota briefly, at the height of the late 60s unrest. He ex-wife had attended St. Olaf, her father a prof there, her mother a librarian, and Paul still had lots of friends in Northfield. Though he only lasted at St. Olaf one semester, it was long enough for him to realize that where he really would have liked to attend was Carleton College – secular, liberal and smart. I started to set my eyes on there.

Escape to College

However, my mother had other plans for me. If my calling to the priesthood had been put on hold due to my resistance, at least I was going to go to a Catholic university - of her choosing. Eddie had gone to Notre Dame, the pinnacle of Catholic universities for

German-Irish Catholics like us, but ironically he had gone against my parents wishes to some degree. They were wary of the temptations for their children far from home. Somehow even such a tried and true Catholic place as Notre Dame seemed questionable And besides, they wanted him to stay home and help with the family, which seemed to be his eternal cross. However, Eddie was the class valedictorian, straight-A student, and track and cross country star. When he got into Notre Dame, with an academic and athletic scholarship, teachers, friends and parishioners alike were excited. He benefited from the excitement, and my parents were swept along with the rush. My oldest sister, Maria, had attended the secular University of Washington, and although my parents weren't happy about that either, it mattered less, somehow, because she was a girl, and most importantly, she had stayed and lived at home. But for me, I was to go to Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio. Franciscan University, what little I knew of it (and I wasn't very interested in learning much more at that point), was one of the centers of charismatic Catholicism; the reference to the medieval wandering, hippie archetype, free-loving mendicant and animal-lover highly misleading. Franciscan University produced some of the literature that my mother read, a fusion of highly conservative Catholic traditionalism (Opus Dei style) with the new Charismatic movement. There was no way I was going there. But my mother dug in her heels, and my father, dependent on her psychologically and her relatives financially, and now suffering from prostate cancer, went along with her. It was either Franciscan University or Seattle University - the Jesuit University in Seattle that my mother had attended. Eddie, the oldest son, had been an exception. I was not getting away.

But I defied my parents' commands. Surreptitiously, I applied to a number of liberal arts colleges, including Carleton. I forged my parents' signatures on the financial aid documents in order to process the application, and, after getting accepted, "came out" about my intentions to go to a non-Catholic school. By then, it was a 'fait accompli'. One of Paul's friends, David, a psychiatrist, and Ken, his partner, the first gay couple I had met years ago, had suggested to Paul that I check out one of the gay youth groups listed in the local gay newspaper. Paul relayed this advice to me, and I had been attending a wonderful gay youth group at a community center in the Shoreline District run by an energetic Latina dyke. Finally, I met out, open, proud, queer kids like I had read about in *Young, Gay and Proud* at the library, and went to dances and events at the Lambert House on Capitol Hill – one of the only two or three queer-youth houses in the US at the time. But my life at school and home had become miserable. Everything seemed to be falling apart. I often didn't come home at night, crashing at Paul's or elsewhere. When the spring musical came around, (I had been typecast as Enoch Snow, the ambitious, entrepreneurial fisherman with nine children in Carrousel), every time I went on stage, images of crucifixion lingered in my mind. Perhaps it was due to the contrast between the very public (fake?) persona I was forced to put on in the theater, and the personal turmoil within? How would my parents ever come to terms with me being gay? "Coming out" seemed like a wall impossible to penetrate – they were simply too religious to ever accept my homosexuality. I couldn't even imagine them knowing, though I did feel the urge to tell them.

Finally, I made it to college – but my dreams of a queer utopia were illusory. Instead, what I received shortly after arriving was a week of 30 below zero weather.

When I went outside, my nose hairs froze instantly. There seemed to be lots of lesbians, but not that many gay men. I also felt a real cultural distance – the only other "poor" or working-class kids I could find were a few black kids and a handful of queer Chicanos from Chicago running away from their families as well who got imported in to fill Carleton's "race" quota. There was a high turnover rate once they realized they were stuck in a white, cold Midwestern town of 14,000 in the middle of nowhere. And while everyone at Carleton dressed down, as was the style, it became clear over time that most of them came from very privileged, upper-middle class if not wealthy backgrounds with expectations and resources quite different from mine. So, like the others, I dropped out after the winter trimester of my first year – and fled to the nearest big city – Minneapolis-St. Paul. At last, Freedom! I might not have come back to Carleton if Paul hadn't screamed at me and a friend told me about a study-abroad program to London to study and attend theater through the English Dept. I applied at the last second, and got in. By the end of a summer of working at a parking lot for barely above minimum wage, and temping in unstable office work, I was ready to go to London on a Carleton-subsidized trip!

London was the first big city I was really "out" in, and I met lots of theater and opera people, as well as people my age in the clubs – had a few crushes – and generally got a taste of the "good life". But soon I was back at Carleton, depressed in the winter, yearning to be somewhere, anywhere else. I started dating Abel, a freshman and Chicano from Chicago whose immigrant Mexican parents worked in a factory for minimum wage. It didn't last long, but it generated enough desire to plant the idea of going to Chicago to see him in the summer, if things didn't go well in Seattle.

Healing masses, Stamped Diaries, Encounter with the Real

And they didn't. I hadn't been home for any substantial time in almost two years, since winter break freshman year, and things had changed, it seemed. I didn't know what was really going on. My mother seemed more on edge than ever, and Paul's drinking and substance abuse problems seemed to have accelerated. Eddie, who was supposed to have headed straight on to med school, had become indefinitely "depressed". My brother Zack and one of the church cantors were renting rooms in Paul's house, and he invited me to stay there while I figured out what I was doing. I remember having a conversation with Zack about how I wanted to come out to mom and dad, but, unsurprisingly, he recommended against it. Things just seemed frustrating all around and I decided to try to buy a cheap one-way ticket out of dodge and go seek my fortunes in Chicago. But fate had other plans for me. The last straw was a trip I took with my mother to a "healing" mass, which seemed almost indistinguishable from a mini anti-abortion rally, where she wanted me to be "blessed" by the priest. I resisted, though she insisted forcefully and cried. She had developed a method of complaining that we never got to spend "quality" time together (true to some extent), but the solution proffered to rectify this translated into coercive religious events that I wasn't interested in anymore (she also complained that she hadn't had enough time to finish "raising" me – which, from my perspective at the time, was gratefully too late to undo). As I drove back to Seattle, exasperated, I tried to share with her some of the "complexities" of my life – that I had friends that were "pro-choice" as well as "anti-abortion". I even had "gay" friends! That woke her up.

She looked at me bug-eyed. "Oh, Dominic, that's dangerous!" she said. "You should be careful. What if they hit on you?" I hadn't planned on this conversation, and my usual know-it-all countenance was strangely silenced.

On Sunday morning, as I read the *New York Times*, queasily leaning against Paul's piano, I saw my mother's ashen face at the door. Eddie told her I was gay, she said. She had actually stayed up all night reading my diary, I would find out later, which I had left with my bag in her car. She was hysterical and it was all I could do to get her out of Paul's house and on to the front lawn. To quell her up I grabbed the rosary around her neck and start praying it. She followed. (Paul had called a friend in panic and they watched in voyeuristic horror from the backyard). In my socks we walked up the block, and as I finally calmed my mother down to some extent and got her to drive off, I realized my life would never be the same. I was now independent.

My mother didn't want to return my diary, and couldn't seem to bring herself to tell my father or her mother what was in it. "The worst thing has happened! The worst thing has happened!" she told everybody, including my frightened younger siblings. She wanted my dad to read it, but he didn't want to have anything to do with it. "What, did Dominic kill somebody?" he asked. My grandmother, "What, did he get someone pregnant?" My younger siblings looked at me in terror, scared. What was so wrong with me that it could drive our mother so close to the edge?

I wanted my diary back, and went to my gay support network, many of who were friends I had met through Paul, for advice. "Get it back! It's yours!" was the consensus. My mother wasn't so sure. Why did I want it back? It was unclean after all. She asked Fr. Grandrau. Even he thought she should give it back. We finally met on "neutral"

ground - in the church. She had it in a plastic bag tied to her wrist, as it was "unclean". After coercing me to say various prayers, she gave it back. Every page was stamped with inked holy pictures – Mary, Jesus – and incantations and ejaculations abounded - "Jesus, Mary, Joseph, help us save souls," "when I forgive I forget", "Friends fail, money fails, Jesus never fails!" etc. Even the blank pages were stamped.

I went to Chicago after all, but Abel was in love with someone else. David and Ken, my gay role models, found me a place to house-sit for a while. My mother called regularly and prayed for long periods into the answering machine. There was no temping work available, and I ended up working at a (strangely comfortable) half-way house for schizophrenics run by an ex-Trappist monk in his 50s who had married his cousin, was finally coming out, and wanted to know if I was interested in running away with him. I wasn't. Briefly, I was homeless. I fell in love with Fabrice, a French summer exchange student. I had a bad acid trip at the end of the summer during which I seemed to relive the whole summer's trauma over the course of a few hours - I thought I was going to die.

The next two years of school I had very little contact with my family – I visited Seattle but only told them I was there for a couple days – it was very weird. My parents were traumatized. I tried to bring up the gay issue again, but they acted shocked that I hadn't denounced it, as though it were "all over again". I decided they couldn't handle it and that it would be one area of my life I might never talk about with them again.

I ended up majoring in Philosophy at Carleton. While my English classes and teachers in high school were excellent, the philosophy class I had in high school had brought me into access to new ideas I hadn't experienced in any other class – Sartre for example. Catholic dogma could go out the window with one little alteration in thinking.

Plus, my original “destinying” as a priest and all the religious and theological quandaries I had gone through with my family and sexuality seemed to naturally draw me to philosophy, with its similar historical growth out of theology. However, I found myself in an “analytic” department where scientistic, logic-centered concerns dominated, and the “big questions” I was grappling with generally marginalized. I was wary of what seemed to me their glorification of modern science, a suspicion I retained from my religious upbringing that.

I lived in Bogota, Colombia the first half of my senior year for a program studying urbanization that had a big political and intellectual impact on me. We also visited Guatemala and Ecuador. Our professors were Marxists, of one stripe or another – they had been part of the urban, theatrical guerrilla movement, the M-19s in Bogota in the 80s – and had all gone later to the U of Minnesota to get PhDs. One was still a diehard orthodox Marxist, one more of a cultural Marxist/soap opera writer, and one more of an eco-liberal welfare-state post-Marxist. But we studied Marxism in a way that I had not been exposed to in my philosophy program or in other classes at Carleton – as a living political project.

Great Expectations

Meanwhile, while I was estranged from my family, things had turned even worse at home. Eddie, who had come back from Notre Dame, who had always planned to go to med school with the pressure of “fixing” the family’s financial woes, had fallen into a deep depression. Notre Dame had never given him enough financial aid, and he had always had to try to make money on Christmas and summer break to make up for it. Paul had raised money among friends for him, and had even gotten Fr. Doogan, the kindly

pastor prior to Fr. Gandrau, to take up a collection for him, but still, it put unusual pressure on him. A pressure that I, luckily, never had to deal with, because I benefited from Carleton's "progressive" need-blind admissions (though this ended the year I entered), where I got most of my tuition and living costs paid for, with relatively minimal loans. The pressures and disparity of Eddie's existence caught up with him though. As he graduated, he became more aware of the economic and cultural gaps between himself and his friends and classmates – most of whom came from the middle and upper-middle classes where there were little financial pressures and their parents had set them up with jobs and a clear professional trajectory. Eddie, on the other hand, was winging it, and hadn't even received his diploma as he still owed money, preventing him from applying to med school, even though he scored very high on his MCATS. Like most working class and working poor families, none of us had received much advice or coaching for what we should do with our lives – the only cultural capital around was my mother's knowledge of the church (two of her aunts were nuns), but only one of us, ultimately, was interested in that. Certainly none of us were interested in getting into the piano business, as it was painfully obvious that there was no future there, and our father, who hadn't gone to college, (where he was from, "people didn't do that" back then) had little knowledge about college or jobs to aid us.

Eddie worked at a variety of jobs including flower delivery, until he got in an accident, and started working for Don and Sherry, the couple with cerebral palsy, again. He seemed to be in a downward spiral. After my graduation, Seattle, upon my return, seemed surreal. Everything seemed even worse in the family than I remembered. I decided to go to New York where some friends had moved recently.

A few months after moving to New York, as I was pondering what to do with my life, I received a call from my sister. She reported that Eddie and Martin had gotten in a fight and Martin, who had recently endured Marine corps boot camp twice (first time he broke his toe so he had to start over) but got kicked out because he couldn't assemble his gun fast enough and had been made fun of brutally, and who had always had social problems throughout his childhood, had spiraled into a deep depression and wouldn't get out of bed. My mother, oddly enough, who had never traveled outside of North America, was on a trip around the world visiting various places where Mary had allegedly appeared – including Medjugorje, in war-torn Yugoslavia, a mecca for the charismatic movement. Originally my great aunt and godmother, a retired nun and former hospital administrator, had purchased the trip, but was "ill" and let my mother go in her place. (Later we would find out what the nature of this "illness" was - Aunt Eva, it turns out, had been seeing floating aborted embryos around her living room for many years.) Apparently, the tenuous balance my mother had been maintaining in the family had been thrown off by her absence.

What followed over the next couple years was truly a tragedy. It turned out that, while I had been estranged from my parents, both Eddie and Martin had sunk into severe depression. Our mother had been taking them to "healing masses" for a couple of years now, having them prayed over. (I learned later than my little brother, Joey, or another of my siblings would "stand in" to represent me at the healing masses, to pray to cure me of my homosexuality as well). Suffice to say, the prayers weren't working. If anything, they made things worse for my brothers, as preventive measures - counseling, for instance, were not utilized when perhaps they could have headed off something worse. Ultimately

they were “diagnosed” with schizophrenia – a very ambiguous medical definition signaling one is severely troubled, having several symptoms of a list of hallucinations - flat affect, severe depression, paranoia, “letting go” of personal hygiene, and general withdrawal from society. In other words, you’re “fucked up” and the field of psychiatry doesn’t know what to do with you other than give you pharmaceutical drugs. While I am very skeptical of the dominant faith in science and modern medicine to “cure” psychiatiric illnesses, particularly with its tendency to attribute everything to genes and prescribe pharmacological treatments, (which has done very well for the pharmaceutical industry of course,), . romanticizing “healing masses” such as Harvey Cox does seems highly problematic as well.

The Chastisement; Devils in Disguise

Over the years, our mother had often spoken of the “chastisement” – detailed in the apparitions and “interior” locutions of our Lady of Medugorje to six children, as well as to Fr. Gobbi of the Marian Movement of Priests - an apocalyptic, charismatic Marianism that seems to reflect both Pentecostal and dispensational millennialism. I can remember as far back as 4th grade coming to music class and telling Paul that my mother was predicting a “mini-chastisement” by May. Of course, it never seemed to happen, and when I would remember to follow up with my mother as to why not, she would attribute it to the efforts of the Virgin Mary (and the prayers of the faithful) to holding God’s judgment at bay. But soon, at some point, she would say, the world was going to change inevitably from an era of “mercy” to one of “judgment” and a chastisement would occur.

There would be a sign in the sky to signal it, and people would finally know the state of their souls. There was still a lighter aspect to it when I was younger, but things had gotten darker in the ten years or so that had passed since then. As I had been estranged from the family, I had not realized that my mother (as well as the "third wave" of Pentecostalism) had become more and more tuned into a belief in the coming apocalypse. In high school and college, she had started talking more intensely about it – that there would be days of darkness, etc. and that there were specific instructions to follow for those who wanted to be saved. However, I had developed little tolerance for such talk by that point, though I was always curious as to her latest beliefs. It turned out, however, that my siblings had been living under a regime of acute millennial expectations, they would later report. My mother was predicting the imminent coming of the chastisement with increased fervor and belief - a cause for endless praying. She had also taken to sprinkling blessed salt and holy water around the house to drive out the devil as well as on the phone itself when "people," like me, apparently, were saying things she didn't like. My younger sister, Rose, says she remembers wondering why she should do her homework or apply for college if the end of the world was going to be so soon! My youngest brother first revealed to me the latest version of the story. Apparently, when the chastisement came, there would be seven days of darkness, during which one should stay inside and only light blessed candles. People would be wailing and moaning outside, and some would sound like relatives or friends and would beg to come in, but you shouldn't, as they would be "devils" in disguise.

It is in this context and under these conditions that my mother had been taking my two troubled brothers to "healing" masses to help them, while the three youngest siblings,

ages 11 to 16, were stuck at home dealing with the mess. Over the next couple years, there were innumerable battles with our parents and our brothers as two of my older siblings, a sympathetic avuncular uncle, myself and even Paul confronted our parents and forced them to seek medical help for both brothers. Ultimately, they both had to be moved into halfway houses, against our parents' wishes at the time.

Floating Fetuses

As the battles went underway, more came out about the latest flavor these healing masses had taken. While Cox sees them as recuperating valuable aspects of primordial spirituality, I see them in a much more ambivalent light. The experience of our great aunt Eva, the nun and former hospice administrator, with healing masses and deep prayer sessions is instructive. Years ago, after it had come out that she had been having hallucinations, I spoke with her about it. She said that it had been happening for a number of years. It first happened after she had retired, and had wanted to "get more into her prayer life, after too many years feeling like a 'businesswoman' running a hospital." She met a married couple in the "healing mass" circuit, and went into a deep month-long prayer session with them. She then started to see "aborted fetuses floating around in her living room." Apparently, they started talking to her first when she was gardening. As she was getting ready to plant something, one floating aborted fetus would tell her to "plant it here!" another would tell her to "plant it over there!" Some of them would tell naughty jokes, fight with each other, cry, and even tell her to kill herself. She also thought the Virgin Mary had been speaking to her, and that perhaps she was being chosen

to be a representative to the world about the sins of abortion. Later, she sent me pictures – "evidence" - of the aborted fetuses floating around her living room – which appear to be pictures of her own reflection off a window as well as mis-developed film. My great aunt, before she retired, had been a successful administrator and had even received a governor's award for her work in running a hospice. She had always been known for her organized and almost obsessive cleanliness and had no history of hallucinatory experiences before. The séance-like "deep prayer" sessions and "healing masses" and her psychotic experiences seem intimately connected.

My little brother, at the end of seventh grade, called me to tell me he wanted to leave home because he was afraid of going crazy. He had been witness to daily fights between my siblings and parents, and the police coming to the house had become a regular event – something unimaginable in my youth. The family had really deteriorated, and Joey was scared. With my mother's brother, we arranged for Joey to go live with relatives on Oregon's Mt. Hood. There was a cataclysmic battle with our mother as she resisted his departure, but he left anyway. He came back the next year out of guilt, but wanted to leave six months later, and everything replayed itself, with him leaving once again. Over the next several years, he would attend six different schools from seventh grade till graduating from high school, finally enlisting in the US Army as an infantryman (in the heat of 9-11), trying to escape from family troubles. He told me, he felt school didn't seem to offer him any real options - the army, on the other hand, told him he was "special" – instructive, if anything, of the poverty draft that has come to comprise the military in the post-Vietnam era. He later went AWOL instead of deploying to Iraq, a conscientious objector.

My two younger sisters also had a difficult time getting out of the family house. The third youngest sibling, Mary, talented in acting and singing, had been prevented from participating in the school musicals and theater because the girls wore skirts too short in one of the shows. My mother called the director behind Mary's back to tell her that Mary couldn't participate, and later found out through the director, humiliated. Mary applied and was accepted to the University of Washington and applied to live in residential housing, but our mother confiscated the mail and as Mary never heard back she stayed at home till some of us found out and intervened. Rose, the second youngest, and twice the top runner in Washington state in the half mile in high school, got an athletic scholarship to go to Georgetown University. Again, our parents said she couldn't go, and it was only by the intervention of older siblings and relatives that she went.

Eddie's depression worsened, and though the violent episodes declined, he sunk into such a withdrawn state that he would only come out of his room at the halfway house late at night, when no one was around. At this time, I was coming home to visit and check up on things about twice a year. There was a three-year period when I didn't see Eddie at all as he wouldn't come out of his room. Martin would oscillate between states of rage and incommunicative, flat affect.

At different points when I have complained about the woes of my family over the years, I have sometimes gotten a perhaps well-intentioned response from some people that the mental illness in my family must be "genetic". Of course there may be genetic "predispositions" to various illnesses, including schizophrenia, but I am very wary of the catch-all nature of the genetic explanation, particularly given its checkered, biopolitical past (Nazism) and its proximity to racism, classism and social Darwinism, given its

tendency to de-emphasize environmental factors and lead to explanations that blame the victim.

I cannot help but see connections between the authoritarian conditions of the charismatic movement - emblematic of larger trends in our society - as well as the sense of being socio-economically "left behind." with the 'mental health' conditions of my brothers, indeed, my whole family. Unfortunately, the consistent pattern of attempting to cut their children off from society and from any form of independence from fear of 'corruption' and 'contamination' seems central to the rather paranoid outlook of the charismatic movement itself – a problematic fear of freedom and autonomy. Reading the litany of instances where my mother used religion to control me and my siblings, might make one wonder understandably why we went along with it for so long and didn't just rebel and resist. On the one hand, of course, we did, such as being perennially late to mass, prayer meetings, etc . But given the environment we grew up in, it was very difficult to rebel alone. A culture of intimidation and fear that prevails in the religious right pre-programs everyone raised within its purview of control to see the feminist, gay liberation and other movements for personal and social freedom as inherently evil and selfish. The last thing I wanted as an adolescent was to end up as one of those unloyal homosexual-agenda people who turned on and confronted their family, complained about not being accepted, marched in the streets, criticized the church and even put it in print (!). But once I was "gay" or "queer", that's pretty much what I had to do to be free.

I went through a period of extreme anger and bitterness that my oldest brother, Eddie, who was my closest sibling and friend when I was young, growing up in our almost "separatist" religious family, who was so smart and held such promise, had his life

fragmented and all but ruined. And my younger brother, Martin, who never really had a chance – always picked on for wearing poor clothes, with low self-esteem, already one of the runts of the family – alive, but wishing he was dead. And I'm angry for the lost years where my life was held captive to the travails of my family as I tried to help my siblings as best I could, in some circumstances to no avail. While I used to believe many of the problems were due to what I came to characterize as my mother's "mental illness," I have come to see such an explanation as inadequate, and in many ways, "blaming the victim," as I sense her attraction to the charismatic movement and religious conservatism in general was her way of dealing with the cultural turmoil of the 60s. If nothing else, she is certainly not lukewarm. My mother is a product of her culture and society, and as such, it is the culture and society that need to be questioned.

Disenchantment, Desire and the American Dream

Years later, both Eddie and Martin's lives have actually improved, to my surprise, and moved out of their group homes. Eddie has moved out on his own, and works as a homecare attendant. Martin no longer gets into infantile rages, and is sometimes cheery, living with my parents. Eddie is a chatterbox now, making up for lost time. It has actually been somewhat difficult for me to adjust to this new reality now that he has "come back to life", given that I had, in a sense, mourned Eddie's death,.

Most of my siblings have moved on past much affiliation with religion, following, in a sense, the classic secularization trajectory –none of us, interestingly, are zealots, at least not religious ones. Greg, now a monk, "Fr. Andrew", does belong to a rather

conservative Ukrainian Byzantine-rite monastery in Northern California (originally part of the Eastern church, they went back under the authority of the Pope in the Middle Ages, but retain the Eastern title of "Father" rather than "Brother" for monks), but he is a bit "other-worldly" and of extremely mild temperament. It was unclear how he would have survived in the modern world - my mother and grandmother years ago took him 'shopping' for a monastery, and this is the one he "picked". My sister, Maria, the oldest of the family, after getting married to the first guy she ever dated (because he wanted to have sex), wanted to wait a while before having kids, but ended up using the rhythm method as birth control was contrary to church teaching. Suffice to say, she got pregnant right away, then felt compelled to have the rest of her kids – a large family with kids born close together the ideal. Only marital infidelity on her husband's part gave her the opening to get a divorce and start her life over. As her psychology degree couldn't help her get a job, she ended up working as a checker at a grocery store like she had in high school and college. Later, she did daycare, barely surviving with her three kids, till struggling on her own to become a nurse (already having a [for her, useless] psychology BA, she found herself largely ineligible for financial aid).

Similarly, many of my siblings have had great difficulty finding jobs and getting careers in this economy. Another brother, Zack, who holds a college degree and works as a home care aide, has struggled to find anything other than relatively low paying jobs. My mother, who taught as a teacher for a few years until she got married and started having kids, has worked as a low-paying homecare aid for elderly people for the past several years. While the cultural capital I inherited has led me to a PhD, it will have cost me well over $100,000 in college loans. My dad still sells pianos, but now out of a

several storage units, instead of a store. Due to Seattle's gentrification, their house had to be sold (half of the money going to liens) and moved into a small apartment. I think this sense of occlusion and being "left behind" from the "prosperity" of the high-tech economy and operation of an elitist, technocratic, secular establishment is partly responsible for the attraction of many working class families to these ostensibly "anti-establishment" religious movements – a "dis-enchantment" with the promises modernity and the American Dream have made but failed to deliver.

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Through the past tumultuous decade, I have participated in various political movements and projects. After studying with Marxists in Bogota and studying philosophy at Carleton I was eager to get involved politically – there was not much to do politically in Northfield other than preach to each other and the townies - who had heard it all before. Through a friend I came into contact with a socialist sect, the ISO, which I participated in shortly. But my affiliation didn't last long. The meetings we had which at first seemed spontaneous with grassroots participation I realized later were often manufactured and manipulated by existing members planted in the audience. Ironically, the biggest conflict I had with the people "assigned" to oversee my "integration" into group was over religion. They insisted that we needed to confront new members over their adherence to religion. Having many issues with religion myself, I could understand the sentiment, but something about their approach struck me as insensitive and ultimately counterproductive. Later I realized it was consistent with a generally static,

deterministic, ie economistic approach to historical materialism – in other words, a failure to probe and reflect adequately on the historical and cultural dimensions of blematic cultural phenomena, such as the unexpected revival of religion in Modernity. I was swept up in the anti-globalization movement, with its anarchist upsurge – attracted to its sense of possibility and hope. I was in Seattle for the famous WTO protests at the turn of the millennium and remember going to the protest and stopping in to see my brothers at their respective halfway houses on Capitol hill, blocks from the protests. Not in complete seriousness, I invited my mother along. She surprised me by indicating interest in doing so, as her religious sources didn't like the idea of a "world government" either.

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While some may wish that the rise of Pentecostalism is a harbinger of a legitimate "re-enchantment" of Modernity, my lived experience has led me to question this. This is not to say that there is not something quite valuable to be garnered from studying Pentecostalism, the charismatic movement and other contemporary religious revivals, such as Islamic fundamentalism, as they seem to be evidence of a desire for a more enchanted world. In a society where experience is so mediated and administered through technology and consumerism is it that surprising that huge masses of people have turned to so-called "primordial" ways of re-engaging feelings, problematic as they may be? While Harvey Cox and others should get credit for taking charismatic movements seriously - it is remarkable that it has been ignored for so long from the secular academy to the elite divinity schools - no doubt the latest religious revival is one of powerful

influence, as the conservative movement, the Republican Party and the Karl Roves know; I think the Pentecostal and charismatic movements should be viewed with a more critical lens than that of David Martin or Harvey Cox. For while it is true that these movements may have origins in a resistance to the hierarchy and exclusion of secular and mainline religious establishments, this far from precludes their manipulation for political gain by the establishment. It seems symptomatic of the dis-enchantment of modernity, not its re-enchantment.

Chapter 3

Religion and Science on Trial: Darwin, Intelligent Design and the culture war

"Many may find the current polemics in the US too bizarre and distant to be of much concern, and the evolution debates are not the most disturbing things that are happening there. Yet this is not just a struggle over biological theory in one country with a largely Protestant citizenry. Over the last few decades the landscape has changed, as landscapes will, partly due to our own activities. Evolutionists across the globe are increasingly in direct confrontation with religious fundamentalists from a variety of traditions, before ever large audiences. The Vatican seems conflicted about undirected evolution, whatever this may mean, and even the science-friendly Dalai Lama is doubtful (New York Times, Oct 2, 2005). Meanwhile the internet is full of ferment over Islam and evolution".

- **Susan Oyama,**
"Compromising Positions: The Minding of Matter," in *Mapping the future of biology, evolving concepts and theories*

What does the rise of the Intelligent Desire movement and its surprisingly widespread popularity indicate about modern science? The passage of anti-evolution laws in Dover, Pennsylvania in 2004 and Kansas in 1999, has struck many secular observers as a bizarre and troubling re-emergence of what was once thought "taken care of" by the humiliation of the "fundamentalists" at the Scopes Trial, and provoked a significant counter-charge by a number of scientists, notably the self-described "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse," Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens and Daniel Dennett. It has raised many questions for secular observers about the assumptions of secularization theory's progress narrative. In a time of daunting ecological challenges, which call for scientific leadership, how is one to explain, much less counter, the rapidly

rising “climate change” skepticism sweeping the globe? Is Intelligent Design simply an historical anomaly? Or does it reveal something deeper and more problematic?

I argue that the Intelligent Design (ID) phenomenon is essentially a “repetition with a difference” – a repetition of the Scopes Trial, warts and all, yet different in the sense that the current situation is haunted by the biopolitical (Foucault 2003) ghosts of the original conflict, which have helped to create it. What seems to be missing from both sides in the Intelligent Design debate is a larger sense of history. The positivist tendencies of the recent scientific “backlashers,” tend to ignore or dismiss historical and contextual approaches to understanding the growth of anti-Darwinism, which results in its own form of literalism or perhaps “vulgar materialism” that mystifies more than it clarifies. For the remarkable growth of religious fundamentalisms ultimately begs the question, that the “Four Horsemen” largely ignore: If modern science, with its empirical basis, is as overtly self-evident and commonsensical as its recent promoters claim, why has it been so impotent in prevailing over “religion”? Rather, my reading of both sides of this “culture war” debate over Darwin suggests that the problems that fundamentalism and ID signify, are a sense of disenfranchisement from science and technology, as well as a deep-seated disenchantment with modernity’s assumed “progress,” which the Four Horsemen, in contrast, take for granted. The recent scientific “backlash” ultimately miscomprehends, I argue, is that contemporary fundamentalism is a symptom, not the cause of modernity’s woes.

I think it is necessary to revisit and re-interpret the “received wisdom” of the Scopes trial, to take a fresh look at both sides of the “culture war” in the Scopes Trial debate from a more complex and nuanced standpoint, in order to understand the present

conflict. For instance, what are we to make of the significant change in the political nature of the evangelical movement from a progressive, liberal reform movement, represented by the famous anti-corporate populist William Jennings Bryan (although known mostly to posterity as simply the defender of a literal, fundamentalist interpretation of the bible) to what is largely regarded in secular circles as a reactionary "religious right"? (Gould 1999; Kazin 2006) How did this reversal take place? On the other hand, how are we to explain the challenges and limits brought to what was once viewed as the inevitably "progressive" march of scientific truth? The increased resistance to science as indicated by Intelligent Design seems to reflect a major discontent with modernity that opens up questions regarding science's troubling failure to connect with a sizable portion of the public, not only in the US but globally as well. To what extent is this an educational failure, and to what extent is this also a reflection on the poverty of scientific and philosophical thought in creating new sources of meaning and grappling with questions of existence? In the absence of more sophisticated approaches, religion, and unfortunately, religious fundamentalisms, for better or worse, seem to be filling the void. What does an "immanent critique" of both sides of the Darwin debate reveal about their contradictions and that of society? In what ways might Intelligent Design, popular in evangelical and fundamentalist quarters, (and completely underresearched in charismatic movements) embody "negative utopian" resistances to the dominant order? To what extent has the "dialectic of Enlightenment" *produced* religious fundamentalisms?

The Scopes Trial Revisited

As Thomas Frank discusses in "*What's the matter with Kansas?"* the scientific and educational establishment was shocked in 1999 when religious believers in Intelligent Design (ID) took over a number of local school boards in Kansas and mounted a challenge to the exclusion of the teaching of Intelligent Design in biology textbooks, which, as determined by constitutional interpretations of the separation of church and state historically, had been reserved for the teaching of evolution. ID supporters took their case to court, and won temporarily, before being overturned by the state supreme court later. Similar challenges to evolution have been filed, some successfully, in various other states as well. In the context of the overall politicization of scientific policy around sex education, environmental policy, stem cell research and basic funding for large scientific projects (Kaplan 2004), this has stimulated a fierce counterattack by various scientists - challenging religion as superstition – as well as the primary source of war, prejudice and terrorism (Dawkins 2006; Dennett 2004; Harris 2006; Hitchens 2007). Inevitably, every commenter on the Intelligent Design controversy invokes the famous, or rather, infamous public trial of a young schoolteacher charged with breaking the recently passed law prohibiting the teaching of evolution in Tennessee schools – know as the "Scopes" trial, or the "Monkey" trial as framed by the prolific, and Darwinian-believing journalist H. L. Mencken.

The term "fundamentalist" itself first came into use at the turn of the 20th century as a self-description (taken from an influential series of pamphlets called "The Fundamentals" published in 1905) of those who, beginning in the mid-19th century, resisted the theory of evolution and the historical and contextual approach of modernist

theology - which emphasized the "historical Jesus" and took a hermeneutic rather than a "literal" approach to the Bible. The literal belief in the creation of the world in seven days, formerly known as creationism and now as Intelligent Design, and the literal reading of revelation and related apocalyptic passages describing the return of Christ (aka the "Rapture") to establish a thousand year period of peace before the end of the world, known as dispensational pre-millennialism (a strict literal reading of Biblical time within historical "dispensations"), were, the two central beliefs of the original Christian fundamentalists (Marsden 1980; Forbes 2004). As such, the resurgence in creationism and related controversies over teaching Darwinism in the schools, as well as the best-selling Left Behind series (Frykholm 2004; Forbes 2004), describing the imminent coming of the Rapture echo these beliefs and reveal a broad and remarkable re-emergence of fundamentalist themes in US popular culture.

At the Scopes Trial, as the story goes, self-described religious "fundamentalists" launched a major legal challenge to the teaching of evolution, and the famous populist and orator William Jennings Bryan, and former leader of the progressive movement, defended a literal interpretation of the bible. Though he won the case, he was widely viewed publicly as being soundly defeated in the debate with Clarence Darrow, even by many fundamentalist supporters. He died days later - many said of a broken heart.

Intelligent Design: Back to the Future? Or return of the repressed?

After the humiliation of the Scopes Trial, and the supposed "triumph" of truth and freedom, the fundamentalists were thought to have largely disintegrated, or at least been

relegated to the outer fringes, and the "secularization thesis" confirmed. Their "return" to the public sphere via the efforts of the Republican southern electoral strategy, Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority and the Reagan Coalition by 1980 (Marsden 1980; Harding 2000; Phillips 2006) was viewed consequently with shock and dismay, made all the more unsettling by the rise of a revolutionary Islamic fundamentalist regime in Iran around the same time. However, in fact, they had not disintegrated, but retreated into separatism, and spent decades developing their internal culture, with a large network of bible institutes and colleges.

The rise of conservative, politicized religious movements has understandably sparked alarm and spawned a new movement to push back against the increasing influence of conservative, politicized religion into the public sphere. Notably, the four volume *Fundamentalism Project,* edited by Martin Marty and Scott Appleby, brought together dozens of social scientists and scholars, to examine the emergence of, amidst the decline of socialism and the Cold War, what appeared to be "fundamentalist" movements with distinctly modern aspects in every major world religion. After the so-called "wake-up call" to the West of the radical Islamist attacks on the World Trade Center of 9-11, as well as a significant challenge to the teaching of evolution by the neo-creationist theory of "Intelligent Design" this has sparked a wide-ranging denunciation of the "irrationality" of religion and "faith" literal and otherwise.

While there are many problems with the self-declared "Four horsemen" defenders of science, ie what has become known as the "new atheism," to its credit at least it critiques Christian fundamentalism rather than just Islamic fundamentalism, as many Christian writers do self-servedly. And that they are trying to broaden the public debate

to include atheism. It is clear that atheism is still not a publicly acceptable discourse in the US, particularly in the political area, whereas religion is. Eisenhower's famous quote (which Bellah notes prominently in his essay "Civil Religion in America") - "I don't care what religion Americans have, as long as they have a religion" notably leaves out non-theistic options as un-American. For instance, in the presidential sphere, the changes over the past several decades are remarkable. There has been a marked contrast from JFK's 1960 speech distancing himself from his religious beliefs - which made him then more electable, in contrast with the fact that a "born-again" Christian has more or less occupied the white house for the last 32 years (Bush Sr excepted). Certainly, it has practically become a requirement to be a born-again Christian, and as Michael Lindsey notes, every successful presidential candidate in the past four decades has had a significant connection with evangelicalism. While it is noteworthy that neither Fred Thompson or Mike Huckabee became the presidential nominee in this presidential cycle, rhetorical religiosity has all but become a requirement to win office, as can be seen by the Democrats' attempts to compete in this regard with Republicans. Obama's revelation that he "talks to Jesus every night," in an attempt to dispel rumors of his being Muslim, remarkably confirms the predicament that Harris sets out. Needless to say, there is no serious presidential candidate espousing an atheist position.

The problem is that the perspective of the writers of the scientific backlash is highly positivist, marginalizing the historical, contextual and cultural aspects that are essential to understanding this re-emergence of fundamentalist religiosity. Consequently, they can only harangue about the problem, not really analyze it. Empirical evidence is something that is very clear cut to them, with a clear cut method to obtain it – the

scientific method. While the idiocy of biblical literalism, or indeed, any religious belief in general seems perfectly obvious to them, they don't have a good explanation for why others don't agree with them. As Taylor argues in *A Secular Age*, these are essentially "subtraction" stories – such as "Darwin refuted the bible," which leave out a lot of the actual historical complexity and don't leave much space for understanding why some people don't believe this, if, for instance, Darwin indeed did refute the Bible. The "explanation" that they tend toward is a classist, elitist and colonial (Asad) one that simply "explains" the "unwashed masses" as stupid, ignorant, irrational and superstitious. They do not have the nuance of (and seem unaware of) those radical theologians and social theorists who make sense of religious phenomena as an expression of, and protest against, human suffering, such as the liberation theologist Jose Segundo (1980). Or like Hans Kung, the radical theologian known for his critique of the principle of papal infallibility, who locates within Catholicism historically and today pervasive struggles for power between bottom-up, democratic movements (what some have termed the people's church) and the autocratic, top-down tendencies of the Vatican. In this sense, we have a repetition of the pervasive Social Darwinism of Mencken and evolutionary biology of the Scopes Trial era.

Backlash begins: Harris' Brave New World

Sam Harris, in 2004, published *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason* that quickly made the New York Times bestseller list. Harris's main argument is that religion, specifically literalist beliefs, but also much of religious belief in

general, including “moderate” religion, is an outdated form of life that constitutes a major threat to the safety of contemporary society – especially, though not only, from Islam. Religion therefore needs to and can be, replaced by better forms of living and belief based on the rational evaluation of evidence, ie what we can know through empirical observation and knowledge gained through experimentation and the scientific method. He believes science has the capacity to replace various conflicting and contradictory religious moral and ethical systems with a “science of good and evil”. “Sacred,” “spiritual” and even “mystical” experiences may very well be valid and necessary, but should be based on scientific knowledge and evidence.

Central to his argument is the power of belief (in itself a very Protestant, idealist thing) to determine action – and the threat that “irrational” beliefs pose to society, or at least, to those that don’t share them. Given the centrality of Harris’ belief about belief, his argument is worth quoting at length:

> A belief is a lever that, once pulled, moves almost everything else in a person’s life. Are you a scientist? A liberal? A racist? These are merely species of belief in action. Your beliefs define your vision of the world; they dictate your behavior; they determine your emotional responses to other human beings. If you doubt this, consider how your experience would suddenly change if you came to believe one of the following proposition:
>
> 1. You have only two weeks to live.
> 2. You’ve just won a lottery prize of one hundred million dollars.
> 3. Aliens have implanted a receiver in your skull and are manipulating your thoughts.
>
> These are mere words – until you believe them. Once believed, they become part of the very apparatus of your mind, determining your desires, fears, expectations, and subsequent behavior.
>
> There seems, however, to be a problem with some of our most cherished beliefs about the world: they are leading us, inexorably, to kill one another. A glance at history, or at the pages of any newspaper, reveals that ideas which divide one group of human beings from another, only to unite them in slaughter, generally have their roots in religion. It seems that if our species ever eradicates itself through war, it will not be because it was written in the stars but because it was written in our books; it is what we do with words like “God” and “paradise” and “sin” in the present that will determine our future. (p. 12)

Harris's book, while somewhat apocalyptic, is not without humor, intentional or not, as the next line indicates: "our situation is this: most of the people in this world believe that the Creator of the universe has written a book" (p. 13). And of course not one book, but many books, each "making an exclusive claim as to its infallibility". People in turn tend to organize themselves into factions "according to which of these incompatible claims they accept". Further:

> Each of these texts urges its readers to adopt a variety of beliefs and practices, some of which are benign, many of which are not. All are in perverse agreement on one point of fundamental importance, however: "respect" for other faiths, or for the views of unbelievers, is not an attitude that God endorses. While all faiths have been touched, here and there, by the spirit of ecumenicalism, the central tenet of every religious tradition is that all others are mere repositories of error or, at best, dangerously incomplete. Intolerance is thus intrinsic to every creed. Once a person believes – really believes – that certain ideas can lead to eternal happiness, or to its antithesis, he cannot tolerate the possibility that the people he loves might be led astray by the blandishments of unbelievers. Certainty about the next life is simply incompatible with tolerance in this one. (p. 13)

Which leads to the following bugaboo for Harris:

> Observations of this sort pose an immediate problem for us, however, because criticizing a person's faith is currently taboo in every corner of our culture. On this subject, liberals and conservatives have reached a rare consensus: religious beliefs are simply beyond the scope of rational discourse. Criticizing a person's ideas about God and the afterlife is thought to be impolitic in a way that criticizing his ideas about physics or history is not. And so it is that when a Muslim suicide bomber obliterates himself along with a score of innocents on a Jerusalem street, the role that faith played in his actions is invariably discounted. His motives must have been political, economic, or entirely personal. Without faith, desperate people would still do terrible things. Faith itself is always, and everywhere, exonerated. (ibid)

After calling out liberals for "looking the other way" in a spirit of what he finds to be a warped ecumenical pluralism, he takes on religious moderates: "the problem that religious moderation poses for all of us is that it does not permit anything very critical to be said about religious literalism. We cannot say that fundamentalists are crazy, because they are merely practicing their freedom of belief; we cannot even say that they are mistaken in religious terms, because their knowledge of scripture is generally unrivaled."

(p. 20). Further, “by failing to live by the letter of the texts, while tolerating the irrationality of those who do, religious moderates betray faith and reason equally. Unless the core dogmas of faith are called into question – ie, that we know there is a God, and that we know what he wants from us – religion moderation will do nothing to lead us out of the wilderness” (p.21). And from another angle, “religious moderation, insofar as it represents an attempt to hold on to what is still serviceable in orthodox religion, closes the door to more sophisticated approaches to spirituality, ethics, and the building of strong communities.” (p. 21) Lastly, “rather than bring the full force of our creativity and rationality to bear on the problems of ethics, social cohesion, and even spiritual experience, moderates merely ask that we relax our standards of adherence to ancient superstitions and taboos, while otherwise maintaining a belief system that was passed down to us from men and women whose lives were simply ravaged by their basic ignorance about the world”. (p.21)

What is significant, if not shocking, is the remarkably deterministic view Harris has of the relationship between belief and action. “The power that belief has over our emotional lives appears to be total” (p. 52). This seems to border on conspiracy theory – or in any case, a very literal understanding between belief and action. So for all of Harris’ frustration and fear of religious peoples’ irrational belief in the literal word – he himself is susceptible to the same criticism. What justifies his belief that belief has so “total” a power over action and our emotional lives? Harris spills a lot of ink trying to justify this connection – that belief is not only private, but involves public claims about the world – which, of necessity, involves the realm of “facts” and “evidence”.

It also reveals that Harris' agenda is not limited to combating religious faith. For, it turns out, it is not only "fundamentalists" and "moderates" that Harris is after – it is also "moral relativists" and "pragmatists" like Richard Rorty. Harris' beef with Rorty is revealing – he is angry that Rorty questions the link between language and the world, ie the "correspondance" theory of truth and in so doing undermines the attempts of Harris and others to establish an absolute basis for "truth". Because ultimately, this is foundational for Harris' project. Rorty argues for an ambiguity between language, history, context and "knowing" that Harris abhors. Similarly, Kuhn comes in for criticism. By pointing out how scientific knowledge is circumscribed by the contemporary scientific "paradigm" based on a consensus of scientists, which is subject to change with a changed consensus, Kuhn introduces an element of contingency to knowledge. Even Popper's mitigated undermining of "absolute" truth by his probabilistic theory that theories can not be proved true, only "non-falsifiable" is viewed with frustration for the opening it has given people to question the truth-grounding of "facts". Harris is frustrated by this because, as he argues later in his chapter proposing a "science of good and evil" he wishes to establish a foundation between "fact" and "morality".

What is also remarkable in Harris' discussion is that, given he is a philosopher of sorts and is critiquing religion, there is no consideration of Nietzsche's attempt to get "beyond good and evil". He seems to be utilizing aspects of Nietzsche's critique in a very partial and selective way. For instance, it is also puzzling that throughout his book he uses "morality" and "ethics" interchangeably. He notes that "professional" ethicists make a distinction, but he doesn't see the point. In fact, he admits that he is not particularly well-versed in literature on either ethics or moral philosophy, but counters

that this is an asset, rather than a liability, because he (and his colleagues in neuroscience and epistemology) find little of interest in these fields – he suggests that, among other things, the persistence of religious faith indicates the failure of the fields of ethics and moral philosophy to accomplish much of significance. Instead, his lack of knowledge is an asset, because it gives him a "fresh look" at things. Rather, instead of a truly fresh look, I would argue, it reveals that, in a peculiar twist, not only does he tend toward a literal reading between belief and action, and "facts," "evidence," "truth," and the "world", but he turns out to be a profound moralist to boot.

There are several areas he discusses where he does a good job of pointing out the "irrationality" and even "immorality" of various aspects of contemporary society in relation to religious faith: he makes a good case that the "war on drugs" is based on the religious concept of "sin" with unjust, disasterous, counterproductive results – similar to the Prohibition of alcohol. But his moralism and faith in the absolute certitude of his "rational" evaluation of the "evidence" gets the better of him.

The most glaring and frightening example of how this certitude is used for questionable ends is his treatment of the "problem of Islam". Clearly affected and inspired by the events of 9-11, Harris claims he began writing this book on 9-12-01. And that's the problem. The apocalyptic, hysterical, and ultimately racist nature of the "civilizational" rhetoric detracts from his overall argument. At times, he sounds as though he were an independent contractor doing propanda work for the Defense Department in the run-up to the Iraq war. The book is littered with war-mongering phrases such as "we are at war with Islam" (p.109). Further, " it may not serve our immediate foreign policy objectives for our political leaders to openly acknowledge this

fact, but it is unambiguously so. It is not merely that we are at war with an otherwise peaceful religion that has been "hijacked" by extremists. We are at war with precisely the vision of life that is prescribed to all Muslims in the Koran, and further elaborated in the literature of the hadith" (p. 109). Or, "on almost every page, the Koran instructs observant Muslims to despise non-believers. On almost every page, it prepares the ground for religious conflict. Anyone who can read passages like those quoted above and still not see a link between Muslim faith and Muslim violence should probably consult a neurologist" (p. 109). Ie Harris. And still "Islam, more than any other religion human beings have devised, has all the makings of a thoroughgoing cult of death." (p. 123). Finally:

> The link between belief and behavior raises the stakes considerably. Some propositions are so dangerous that it may even be ethical to kill people for believing them. This may seem an extraordinary claim, but it merely enunciates an ordinary fact about the world in which we live. Certain beliefs place their adherents beyond the reach of every peaceful means of persuasion, while inspiring them to commit acts of extraordinary violence against others. There is, in fact, no talking to some people. If they cannot be captured, and they often cannot, otherwise tolerant people may be justified in killing them in self-defense. This what the United States attempted in Afghanistan, and it is what we and other Western powers are bound to attempt, at an even greater cost to ourselves and to innocents abroad, elsewhere in the Muslim world. We will continue to spill blood in what is, at bottom, a war of ideas. (p. 52)

Harris While published shortly after the Iraq war started, the fact that Harris was writing such rhetoric at the same time as the Bush Administration's drum-beat for war indicates a rather authoritarian element to Harris' "plea" for "freedom" from religion, as well as a severe lack of critical reflection – ie gullibility - that leaves him perilously susceptible to manipulation by imperial state rhetoric, apparently. For instance, his highly moralistic attack on Chomsky's historical contextualizing of the circumstances, that have facilitated the growth of radical Islam such as the objectives and failures of US foreign policy, at points makes Harris hard to distinguish from a rightwing nut like David Horowitz. Harris

attacks Chomsky for not recognizing the "moral" importance of "intentionality". Needless to say, Harris is not a student of the workings of power. In response to criticism of the US by Noam Chomsky and Arundhati Roy, that the US poses as a "well-intentioned giant," that takes advantage of its colonial underlings, Harris responds:

> but we are, in many respects, just such a "well-intentioned giant. And it is rather astonishing that intelligent people, like Chomsky and Roy, fail to see this. What we need to counter their arguments is a device that enables us to distinguish the morality of men like Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein from that of George Bush and Tony Blair. It is not hard to imagine the properties of such a tool. We can call it "the perfect weapon". (p. 142)

Harris then goes on to try to make the case that the difference between "moral" men like Bush and Blair and "immoral" men like bin Laden and Saddam Hussein is their "intentionality". Invoking the perverse concept of "the perfect weapon" we are led through a thought experiment where we are "educated" on the moral importance of "intentionality". We are instructed that any "collateral damage" inflicted by Bush and Blair is an unintentional "accident" that shows their moral fiber, whereas bin Laden and Hussein apparently lust wantonly for murder. The fact that Bush and Blair have access to much greater weapons of mass destruction where one "boo-boo" makes for a whole lot more destruction of "innocents" doesn't seem to matter. And the trope of "the perfect weapon" is employed to show the moral superiority of Bush and Blair, who would never hurt innocents, if they didn't have to, apparently, and bin Laden and Hussein, who, apparently, would. This leads Harris to try to convince us to realize that "it is time for us to admit that not all cultures are at the same stage of moral development" and "we might even conceive of our moral differences in just these terms: not all societies have the same degree of *moral wealth*" (p. 143). Finally, "as a culture, we have clearly outgrown our tolerance for the deliberate torture and murder of innocents. We would do well to realize

that much of the world has not". (p. 144). Tell that to the inmates at Abu-Ghraib and Guantanamo. It is particularly odd, and indicates, I think, a lack of critical reflection, that the same Bush that Harris is here lauding over the morally "inferior" Islamic civilization, is the same Bush that was also a primary figure in the general move toward the theocratization of the US state. As for the importance of intentions, one of the first things I learned from my mother in our home-schooled Catholic catechism lessons was that "the road to hell is paved with good intentions". Maybe Harris could learn something from religion after all.

Islamic radicalism is a problem. But Harris' narrow and literal causal connections between belief and action are woefully simplistic, deeply involved in a rather disturbing colonialist project, and allow little room, for instance, in understanding how Islamic culture could have had such a significant role at various points of history in the production of knowledge and transmission of culture. It is significant that Harris's main examples of the historical "perfidy" of religion - the Inquisition, witch hunts, and the Holocaust (which he blames on the anti-semitism of Christianity) leave out the "crusades," as this would obviously problematize his demonization of Islam – and bring up uncomfortable parallels with the present war. How would Harris respond to Bourdieu's concept of habitus, which allows for a much more subtle reading of the relationship between belief and behavior, that is far from literal? Unfortunately, there is absolutely no interaction in the book with any such more subtle concepts, perhaps because they would fatally undermine some of his more outlandish claims. And one wonders if, a few years later, Harris would or even could, maintain the same support for the Iraq war which he does in his book. But I want to argue that ultimately, all of Harris'

flailings and attempts, sincere as they may be, to locate the focus of modernity's problems squarely on religious faith, is off the mark. Harris argues:

> Given the vicissitudes of Muslim history, however I suspect that the starting point I have chosen for this book – that of a single suicide bomber following the consequences of his religious beliefs – is bound to exasperate many readers, since it ignores most of what commentators on the Middle East have said about the roots of Muslim violence. It ignores the painful history of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. It ignores the collusion of Western powers with corrupt dictatorships. It ignores the endemic poverty and lack of economic opportunity that now plague the Arab world. But I will argue that we can ignore all of these things – or treat them only to place them safely on the shelf – because the world is filled with poor, uneducated, and exploited peoples who do not commit acts of terrorism, indeed who would never commit terrorism of the sort that has become so commonplace among Muslims; and the Muslim world has no shortage of educated and prosperous men and women, suffering little more than their infatuation with Koranic eschatology, who are eager to murder infidels for God's sake. (p. ch 4)

Harris needs to take these various economic, political, historical and cultural factors back down off the shelf and give them a good hard look. For while his critique of religion and religious faith in particular is a welcome addition to the mix, by itself it is as one-sided as a sole focus on one or the other of the above factors. Only a consideration of all these factors together will help to explain the predicament of conservative, politicized religion in modernity. Ultimately, religion is largely a symptom and not the cause of modernity's malaise. As we will see with Dawkins, Harris' line of reasoning ultimately begs the question of why religion has persisted, and indeed become "modernized" in the modern era – if science in its current form is so self-evident and common-sensical, how are we to understand its relative impotence in preventing so many of our modern calamities? Clearly, I think, that while religious fundamentalism has *become* one of the major problems, things are far more complicated than Harris simplistic, literal and oddly, moral, explanation.

Harris does end his book on what seems like a heartfelt attempt to explore the possibilities of spirituality based on empirical "evidence" rather than religious dogma. He makes a good argument for the, for lack of a better word, "superiority" of meditation and mysticism, particularly linked with Buddhism, where, he argues, an examination of consciousness is based on the revelation of a non-dualistic connectedness between ourselves and our environment. That is to say, we achieve "selflessness" beyond the subject-object split. This selflessness, in turn, is connected to increased states of happiness, which, in combination with an awareness of death, is linked to more ethical behavior. He argues "a vast literature on meditation suggests that negative social emotions such as hatred, envy, and spite both proceed from and ramify our dualistic perception of the world." (p. 219) He is essentially trying to make a "scientific" argument for the spiritual superiority of Buddhist mediation because it is more "empirically" oriented – the point is to attain awareness of how the process of thinking – consciousness itself - is what constitutes the "self". By being attentive to this process, we become more aware of the nature of consciousness, being and existence. An awareness which he thinks Abrahamic religion has never attained, for in contrast with Buddhism - where elaborate meditational techniques to achieve spiritual states are abundant - there is next to none, isolated historical mystics, such as Teresa of Avila or Meister Eckhart the exceptions that prove the rule. Just as athletes can consensually elucidate the data of their sphere, mystics can consensually elucidate the "data" of their own sphere – thus genuine mysticism can be "objective" (p. 220). Ultimately, he argues "mysticism is a rational enterprise. Religion is not" (p. 221). Yet, after his ruthless critique of religion – particularly what many others find to be the source of their spiritual understanding, for

better or worse, it seems somewhat hypocritical that Harris finds room to protect his own source of spirituality – Buddhist meditation from critique. Less sympathetic types would easier locate much of the "Western" interest – including Harris' - in Eastern religion squarely in the "New Age" camp. Ironically, Harris' attempts to get use Buddhism to a non-dualistic consciousness are foibled by his completely dualistic "correspondence of truth" epistemology.

While being quite pessimistic, if not apocalyptic, about the problems of religion, Harris is also quite optimistic about the future promise of science and technology to help us to achieve a more "evidence-based" form of spiritual knowledge. But here we start to understand his problem with moral relativists, pragmatists, Wittgenstein and his emphasis on language, and all those of a hermeneutical or symbolic-interpretive bent – he is very invested in the need for his meditative states to achieve "true" empirical consciousness of "the real state of things". Ambiguity, gray areas, an overemphasis on language, history or context is disconcerting. As he says in a footnote "no doubt, many students of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish esoterica will claim that my literal reading of their scripture betrays my ignorance of their spiritual import. [..] but the problem with such hermeneutical efforts [..] is that they are perfectly unconstrained by the contents of the texts themselves. One can interpret every text in such a way as to yield almost any mystical or occult instruction". (p. 296, footnote 15). He then proceeds to "interpret" a randomly selected seafood recipe from a cookbook in "religio-symbolic" terms to demonstrate his point. But, of course, this is a straw man – whatever happened to Harris' much vaunted concern with "intentionality"? Just because it could be interpreted in any way, doesn't mean it will – sincerity and intention do matter here.

And this is where one of the weakest aspects of his whole project comes out. Apparently this book is not just an attack on religious faith – it is an attack on pragmatists, psychoanalysts, postmodernists, hermeneutic readings, literary theorists, social theorists and speculative philosophers – that seems to imply that anything that is not "fact-based" is apparently the equivalent of religious fundamentalism. In this sense, ghosts of the infamous "science wars" of the Sokal affair seem to be lingering in the background as well. Consider Harris' following statements: "nothing is more sacred than the facts" (p. 225); "an enterprise becomes irrational only when people begin making claims about the world that cannot be supported by empirical evidence" (p. 210); and, in defense of Eastern insight about the contingency of the "I" – "this is an empirical claim, not a matter of philosophical speculation" (p. 218). Indeed, what is rather troubling here is that philosophical speculation, ie thought for thought's sake, if not directly connected to "empirical evidence" is equivalent to religious dogma – which, he is arguing, should essentially be outlawed. Here we see a rather sinister underbelly to Harris' agenda. Earlier as well, he scorns the concept of "freedom of religious belief" as the "freedom to be viewed as a fool". Because of the dangerous aspects of belief in determining action and behavior, only "fact-based" or "evidence-based" belief is acceptable, Harris starts to sound like an advocate for "thought-police". Whatever happened to the good old American belief in the civil liberty of being able to believe whatever you want to believe? Or Mills' idea that liberty and freedom emerge from the "clash of ideas"? In Harris' world, because of 9-11, apparently this is too dangerous now. Throw in his extended defense of torture (after arguing earlier that our restraint from this separated us from our "enemies") one wonders if the Harris call for new rules of discourse is simply the

exchanging of one authoritarianism for another. In any case, as poignant as his critique of religious faith may be, it still begs the question of its "revival" or "persistence".

Dawkins: The Science Delusion

In *The God Delusion*, published a couple years later, Richard Dawkins, a prominent genetic biologist, takes his own swing at the problem of religion. The most interesting part of the book is Dawkins' attempts to apply insights of evolutionary theory and natural selection to religion. Yet, like Harris, as critics have pointed out, his analysis of the problem of religion, particularly when it comes to matters of cultural influence, seems based on a woeful lack of knowledge of their subject matter. As Terry Eagleton says in his critique of Dawkins "Imagine someone holding forth on biology whose only knowledge of the subject is the *Book of British Birds*, and you have a rough idea of what it feels like to read Richard Dawkins on theology". (2006). This weakness seems a byproduct of an approach that prefers to reduce things to the analogy of genes. It is quite remarkable, for instance, to compare their highly unsympathetic view of the religious with the nuanced, more phenomenologically sophisticated view of, say, *The Fundamentalism Project*, or Gabriel, Appleby and Sivan's *Strong Religion*. But more acutely, as Eagleton argues, the tone and style of the book reflects the "rationality" or worldview of a certain strata of white, male, middle-class Brits.

For instance, one main problem with the Dawkins approach is that his critique, like biblical literalism, tends toward an ahistorical approach in its analysis. Marty and Appleby cite as one of the main problems of conventional views of contemporary fundamentalism the belief that it is simply a resurgence of "the past". Instead, they argue

that fundamentalist movements are specifically modern, using science and technology for their own ends, rather than simply rejecting it. This "fact" is what makes understanding these movements so complicated, as well as extremely necessary. In comparison, Dawkins' arguments have a stale, dated feel. While Dawkins' polemic is useful in explaining how creationists take advantage of, and/or misunderstand evolution, it is less useful in actually explaining the "revival" or "persistence" of religion. Religion for him tends to have a reified or thing-like nature, rather than being a site of social life that reflects larger dynamics and changes in society. His account, like Harris, is filled with unending accounts of all the "bad," "horrible," "evil" things that religion has ever done. One is reminded of the comment of Hans Kung, the eminent radical Catholic theologian, who, in trying to make a nuanced and balanced critique of the historical accumulation of papal power versus the "people's church", yet wanting to distinguish himself from multivolume "Criminal History of Christianity"-style accounts that pruriently detail (and thereby seek to reduce the history of Catholicism to) a compilation of every lascivious papal sin and misdeed ever committed: "those who deliberately step in all the puddles in the road should not complain too loudly about how bad the road is" (2000).

While Dawkins's book is ostensibly written for a broad audience, and presumably, if not primarily, for religious persons he would like to convince or "convert" to atheism, his confrontational tone at the beginning of the book makes one wonder how he will accomplish this. For Dawkins, like Harris, adopts such a derisive tone that, while ostensibly intended to engage in "dialogue" with religious believers, is written in a way and with a certain language and pretension that seems to directly preclude real dialogue. Instead, it comes off like preaching to a relatively small choir of like-minded "hardcore"

natural scientists - fellow sociobiologists, evolutionary psychologists, neuroscientists and the like. While Dawkins, in supposed good faith, goes through the laundry list of theological explanations of God in order to refute them, it is hard to believe that many of his presumed religious interlocutors are going to actually read his work, and if they do, wouldn't his elitist tone simply provide fuel to their own distrust of "science"?. He cites a list of negative religious figures – from priests, to rabbis, to imans, but seems, revealingly, to let mainline Protestant 'ministers' somewhat off the hook – indeed, the one small space he allows for a little warm and fuzzy reflection over religion is his experiences with the well-mannered Episcopal minister, a former military chamption, at his elite all-boys boarding school in England. In many ways the book comes off, unfortunately, as an intellectual exercise in mental masturbation, a narcissistic marination in his own social Darwinism, ie sense of superiority over inferior, religious simpletons. What is missing is any sense of the cultural and historical significance that religion has had for different people (along racial, ethnic and class lines) at different levels of social, cultural, political and economic development, not to mention any admission of the insight that any belief system, including science, can be characterized as a "religion". As others have argued, this lack of, and really, resistance to, historical understanding and context seems to mark them as "anti-intellectual" intellectuals.

At the same time, we start to see a more "activist" side of Dawkins when, ostensibly modeling his efforts on the feminist movement, he seeks to engage in "consciousness-raising" about Darwin. And indeed, he does seem to be providing a useful public service in his attempts to explain evolution, particularly in dissecting the

Intelligent Design debate, where he shows that much of the arguments for Intelligent Design are simply based on a confusion of natural selection with chance.

As well, some of the arguments made regarding the "roots" of religion potentially could contribute to the discussion of the "persistence" of religion. He makes an interesting Darwinian argument that "religion" could be seen as the "byproduct" of something else, namely the tendency of the young to believe their parents or elders – which in turn protects children from unknown dangers - which in itself understandably confers Darwinian advantages (comparable to Gauchet or Nietzsche). In turn, this "openness" to believe and trusting can problematically turn into simple, and dangerous, gullibility. This seems plausible.

He also makes the argument that religion could be viewed analogically to genes - or "memes". The idea here is to see what insights might be gained from looking at beliefs or religious systems as along the "selfish gene" or "replicator" model. And clearly, it does seem that this could be a useful model for viewing some aspects of religion – what amounts to more of a "systems" or reproductive approach that seems to particularly make sense on an institutional level – akin to the insight, for instance, that bureaucracies tend to reproduce themselves. This kind of explanation offers advantages over a more conspiratorial approach that simply focuses on bad/evil popes, priests, or televangelists or religious right leaders.

Yet, ultimately Dawkins' approach ends up one-sided. His tendency is to reduce the role of culture and social history to its role in conferring genetic advantage. While this, of course, is part of the larger picture, what it ignores is the role of non-Darwinian tendencies. Dawkins perspective has a tendency to "naturalize" everything. What that

leaves out is the dialectical role of politics and culture in "socially constructing" institutions and belief systems in society. Durkheim, for instance, uses the concept of "collective representation" to explain religion: socially constructed belief systems that reflect what a society conceives about itself. If one were to apply this to the religious formations of today, one would need to analyze the role of politics, class struggle (if one believed that that existed), the economy and culture, as well as the imaginary or ideology of a society, to try to interpret and decode why it believed what it believed. Unfortunately, there is very little room in Dawkins' theoretical approach for this kind of reflection. "Memes" are one approach, but that's not enough, and they have their own problematic, reductive aspects.

These limitations are revealed when Dawkins looks for a Darwinian explanation for the "roots" of morality. He combines the vague moral sense that most people have with their difficulty in articulating rational explanations for it, and sees that as evidence for a "hard-wired" basis for morality. The role of culture here is minimized or ignored. A more subtle and accurate approach, I think, is something along the lines of Bourdieu's habitus – the "structured structuring" that produces norms and practices of everyday life behavior largely through unconscious social structures, which explains most people's difficulty in "rationally" explaining their behavior on demand.

Predictably, Dawkins highly reductive view of what controls and motivates human behavior creates problems for him in understanding how cultural change happens. In his chapter "The Good Book and the Moral Zeitgeist," Dawkins argues that religious people, whether they think it or not, do not actually get their morality from the bible – he gleans the worst from both the Old and New Testament to support this view. But when it

comes time to explain how changes occur in the "moral zeitgeist," we see the poverty of his reductive approach. "Where, then have these concerted and steady changes in social consciousness come from? The onus is not on me to answer. For my purposes it is sufficient that they certainly have not come from religion." (p. 270). Yet, clearly Dawkins doesn't know his history here, at least that of the US, as the progressive movement that spearheaded the abolition of slavery, and promoted unions and better working conditions for women, among a variety of other progressive causes, had its origins in, or drew major support from, the Social Gospel theology of evangelical Protestantism. Things are, at least historically, murkier than Dawkins makes them out to be.

Rather, for Dawkins, these changes in the moral zeitgeist are simply due to the march of progress. Of course, this advance "is not a smooth incline but a meandering sawtooth". There are "local and temporary setbacks such as the United States is suffering from its government in the early 2000s". But "over the longer timescale, the progressive tread is unmistakeable and it will continue". (p. 271). What is ultimately responsible for this progress? Dawkins identifies "individual leaders" who are ahead of their time, and "stand up and persuade the rest of us to move on with them" (p. 271). In the case of the emancipations of slaves and women's rights, it was "charismatic" leaders. As well, perhaps we have improved education and the role of science, such as evolutionary biology in the "increased understanding that each of us shares a common humanity with members of other races and with the other sex". The role of social movements (and even religious ones) in creating change are literally edited out of his account, revealing the blind individualism and "great man" view of history of Dawkins' perspective.

Lastly, I do find it odd that Dawkins believes his argument that the existence of God is "statistically improbable" to be something people would get excited about. Yet remarkably, he argues that this is his most central argument, and the one he is most invested in. He argues that the belief in God creates more problems than it solves, because, in contrast with evolution - which starts with something simple and works its way up to something complex - using God to explain the origin of life starts with something complex, which then needs to be explained. Through a Cartesian lens, starting with something complex such as God makes this more "statistically improbable". Yet, I don't see how this sheds light on the "problem" of existence. Atheist or not, the question of how something came from nothing, or how "something" was always already there, is formidable. In this sense, explaining the conditions of possibility of the "big bang" is not much different from a simple postulation of the existence of God – as the "unmoved mover". But moreover, if this book is made for the general public, it reveals the gap between the form of Dawkins' scientific "rationality" and the general public that he thinks an argument for the "statistical improbability" of God is going to mean much to them. Most people, I would venture, are not swayed by or particularly interested in statistics, particularly in these, more metaphysical matters, and it seems somewhat, dare I say, delusional that Dawkins thinks it would.

However, his polemic, like Harris', is significant in its, presumably inadvertent, piercing of the ideological veil of scientific "neutrality" – a performative contradiction that serves, consciously or not, as an acknowledgment that public opinion is important, and that science will have to "get its hands dirty" in engaging in public education campaigns to change the troubled trajectory modernity seems to be on, such as the

increase of climate change skepticism. It is also an implicit admission that politics and controversy are not foreign to science, something that tends to be downplayed by the scientific establishment and the dominant methodological imperative.

And yet reflexivity is wanting. Harris, for instance, takes for granted the "common sense" assumptions of *his* faith in empirical verification – presenting religion as a pathological rejection of the "commonsensical" need for "evidence" – something which is never really defined, yet is referred to about forty times in the first twenty pages of his book *Letter to a Christian Nation.* Yet just who's common sense is being invoked here? Or, as Alisdair MacIntyre would say, "whose reason? which rationality?" What is categorically missing from these "scientific" writers is any *reflexive, critical* turn towards "science" and "secularism" itself. Written in the heat of post-9-11, their exaggerated emphases on Islamic fundamentalism has clear "clash of civilization" and racist overtones, and including Christian fundamentalism in the equation, while better than nothing, doesn't obviate them from a simplistic projection of the blame for the problems of modernity from themselves - much of which inevitably implicates modern science and technology - onto religion. After all, modern science and technology, while certainly improving our knowledge, particularly of the natural world, and ostensibly increasing leisure time and relief from back-breaking labor, also made the gargantuan and tragic scope of both World Wars possible - making the "30 Years War" of the 17th century, conventionally attributed to religious disputes, look tame in comparison. And many of the main problems contemporary society is faced with – from global warming, climate change, SUVs, urban sprawl, nuclear war, globalization, mass consumer society, to cancer, are unintended, yet frighteningly dangerous, byproducts of science and

technology's Pandora's Box. Yet none of this reflexive awareness seems to be present in either Dawkins or Harris' writings. How has modern science and technology helped *produce* the contemporary religious reaction? Against Heidegger's insights that deeply entwine science and technology, they hold these two separate. Instead, there is a pervasive sense of confusion and disbelief that religious belief could persist to this day – indeed, it violates their common sense, which, needless to say, is not, apparently, shared by the religious "masses".

The pretensions of Dawkins et al help explain, inadvertently, better than anything else perhaps the faultline in question: revealing the haughty, arrogant class disdain of the secularist establishment towards the "uneducated" subaltern classes; while at the same time, Dawkins, as author of *The Selfish Gene*, could, in some ways, be viewed as the chief spokesperson and ideological apologist for the selfish, individualistic society that fundamentalist, Pentecostal, and charismatics arguably resist unconsciously even as they reflect it. Interestingly, it seems as though Dawkins has become somewhat aware of this potential Social Darwinist dimension to his earlier writings, and seems to be trying to correct for it, as he notes in a footnote his shock at learning that the favorite book of Jeff Skilling, the CEO of Enron, was the *Selfish Gene* (p. 215). Indeed, for all the ranting and raving about the problems that religion creates, we have nary a word about the role of the ruthlessly competitive and inherently "selfish" characteristics of capitalism. Neither Harris nor Dawkins seem very aware of the role that science can play in providing ideological grounding for contemporary society or capitalism for that matter.

The elitism and class disdain of Mencken's time still operates today. This might help explain the inhibition of 'science' to communicate with the non-elite. In fact, many

who have studied Pentecostal and charismatic movements note the relative dearth of analysis on these burgeoning and influential movements, implicating the class bias of the secular, academic establishment, particularly its scientistic "disdain" of religion, as well as the bias of the liberal Protestant divinity schools towards the "lower-class" culture of these movements (Cox 1995; Csordas 1997). At the same time, this resentment towards the educated elite has been very successfully appropriated by the leadership of the political right – as the pitting of the "latte" and "limousine" liberals against the "God-fearing, simple, regular folk" in the popular consciousness attests to. And this in turn contributes to the difficulty of facilitating an informed public.

As Talal Assad puts it – who gets to say what is and isn't secular? (2003). Or for that matter, what is or isn't science? As Ernest Becker argues, who's to say that science isn't a religion (ie belief system) for those who adhere to it? (1997). Science itself, in its more philosophical moments, given the implications of twentieth-century physics, has admitted the impossibility of obtaining absolute knowledge – though this insight seems to have been concealed as quickly as it was revealed, as it is not in most ways recognized by the dominant forms of natural and social scientific practice, and generally avoided as such by Dawkins and Harris.

In any case, one gets the sense that much of the anger and frustration of Dawkins and Harris is linked to their dawning realization that the "progress narrative" so inherent in their Enlightenment rationality isn't panning out as planned. If this represents a recognition by scientists on a broader level of the failed nature of their expectations of progress, this could be a remarkable development if it spurred a broader political engagement.

Hitchens: God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything

Increasingly controversial over his support of the Iraq War, this seemingly right-trending former Trokskyite makes a highly polemic case against religion. Because of the inclusion of Marxist and Freudian elements in his analysis, however, he is certainly a step above that of Dawkins and Harris in his potential explanatory power of the "persistence" of religion. However, he still falls prey to an enthusiasm and lack of reflexivity about the claims of science and technology that is surprising – for instance, quoting Adorno on the one hand, but then uncritically defending (really existing) secularism and calling for a "new enlightenment" without any analysis of why the first one failed and how it is linked to the problems of today. Further, his title reveals some very problematic aspects of his outlook. While clearly he's going for a very polemical and eye-catching title, he plays into the anti-Muslim and anti-Arab tendencies of the Bush Administration and US culture at large. While he corrects for this by integrating criticism of Christianity and Judaism into his argument, as well as the excesses of Hinduism and Buddhism, it does not do anyway with this tendency.

While he cites Marx's passage that :

> Religious distress is at the same time the expression of real distress and the protest against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people.

… he does not do justice to Marx's understanding, as he tends too often to not differentiate between the manipulations of religious and political authorities and the

peoples themselves. While he critiques Dawkins and Dennet's suggestion of calling those who believe in evolution "brights" as elitist and cites Mencken's social Darwinism, this is undermined by his reduction of the complexity of the situation to the mantra that "religion poisons everything". How is this a way to reach out to fence-sitters or those who have religious beliefs who may be open to questioning them? My fear is that this book is once again written for the choir. To the extent that it is a response to the specious, manipulative and delusional arguments of the Intelligent Design crowd, however, the polemical character is more understandable.

Hitchens' four irreducible objections to religious faith: that it wholly misrepresents the origins of man and the cosmos, that because of this original error it manages to combine the maximum of servility with the maximum of solipsism, that it is both the result and the cause of dangerous sexual repression, and that it is ultimately grounded on wish-thinking. Here the integration of Freudian understandings is where it is most helpful: in understanding religion's role in oppressing those under its control – its dialectic with sexual repression. As well, his account is thoughtful in exploring the wish-fulfillment tendencies and infantile projections of omnipotence and rage regarding the apocalyptic position.

On the one hand his role as a journalist and his own extensive research and knowledge about various parts of the world make for some very interesting analyses of the connections between Christianity, Judaism and Islam as well as observations about other religions, which makes his analysis much richer than that of Harris or Dawkins. Yet, anachronistic understandings pervade his text. Can we really judge the past based on what we know now? Is it really fair or intellectually honest to make past

understandings out as simply silly or stupid? If so, then all these writers should be laughing at previous scientists whose theories have been since disproved just as much. It reveals a conceit that we are so much more knowledgeable and better off than before when the circumstances that he himself is raising question exactly this belief. How then to explain the problems of today?

Another puzzling quirk of Hitchens is his anti-liberation theology stance. He states he's "happy" to see the church put out this heresy – which ultimately, I think, reveals a lack of analysis. While they are certainly not problem-free, the absence of the liberation theology or social gospel position gives the "key" to understanding the historical role of religion completely over to the right.

Examining Intelligent Design: Undoing Naturalism

Admittedly, when one examines the actual writings of Intelligent Design 'theory,' the "Four Horsemen's" polemic becomes more understandable, yet both camps reflects many common tendencies. While ID utilizes some important critiques of "methodological naturalism" and positivism in general, a similar criticism of Dawkins et al applies to Dembski and Intelligent Design, as what is missing is history and context, with its own bizarre blend of supernaturalism and logical positivism. Consequently, we have a mish-mash of complexity theory and formal logic, combined with an updated version of biblical literalism. This bizarre combo of high tech and literalism is not too different from the mega-church phenomenon, which combines lcd tvs and rock sets with literalist beliefs. And opposed to the progressivism intertwined with the evangelicalism of the 19th

century era, we have mainly an evangelicalism intertwined with a profoundly conservative, reactive viewpoint. At the same time it is a well-funded movement, not some backwater operation, which raises important questions about its financial backers – one wonder to what extent the oil industry is behind its critique of science, given their interest in fostering climate skepticism (see Mayer, 2010).

The discussion at the beginning of Dembski's book, titled *Intelligent Design*, ostensibly to be presented in a strictly "scientific format," - one needn't be a Christian to believe supposedly - belies this by starting with a chapter titled "Recognizing the Divine Finger" (the middle one, one wonders?). It argues that the book "focuses not so much on whether the universe as a whole is designed but on whether we are able to detect design within an already given universe". Further, "although design remains an important issue in cosmology, the focus of the intelligent design movement is on biology. That's where the action is. It was Darwin's expulsion of design from biology that made possible the triumph of naturalism in Western culture. So, too, it will be intelligent design's reinstatement of design within biology that will be the undoing of naturalism in Western culture." (p. 13) As Dembski will repeat many times throughout the book, (yet at other times seem to deny when he is trying to prove its scientific creds), the purpose of this book is to "undo naturalism". As it says elsewhere "naturalism is the disease. Design is the cure". In his summary of the first chapter, he states:

> The book begins by examining the use of biblical signs to guide human decision-making. Gideon, for instance, looked for a sign from God to decide whether to go to war with Midian. Among the ancients decision-making through the use of signs followed a well-defined logic. This chapter unpacks that logic. The logic of signs not only remains compelling for today but also provides the basis for how one detects intelligent causes and therefore design. When intelligent causes act, they leave behind a characteristic trademark of their activity. Biblical signs constitute a case in point. Besides unpacking the logic of signs, this chapter also presents several case studies from

> Scripture of how signs guide decision-making. Of special interest is how the resurrection of Christ signifies that humanity itself shall ultimately be resurrected. (p. 16)

And yet ID is consistently presented as something that should be taken as a scientific theory. Showing vestiges of its premillennial dispensationalist origins with its Baconian Ideal of a common-sense empirical approach to the bible, it argues that finding evidence of “design” ie “specified complexity” should take its cue from the ancient recognition of divine “signs” in the bible. Or, what they used to call “miracles”. It also doesn’t spare the direct reference to and implication of the “signification” of Christ’s resurrection; this is part of its theory, even though at times it tries to say this belief isn’t a necessary precondition for believing Intelligent Design. The second chapter is a defense of miracles and “premodernity”. It treads a fine line between critiquing the historical, naturalist critique of miracles from Spinoza to Hume to Schleiermacher, while at the same time stating that it is not necessarily saying miracles are true, as this would undermine its attempts at legal recognition as a “theory” not a religious belief. Rather, it’s trying to argue that while miracles can’t be proved, they also can’t be disproved, at least not by “naturalism”.

There is a lot of talking out of both sides of the mouth – the theory seems clearly “designed” (and manipulated) to try to “pass” as a scientific theory, particularly in a court of law, and make it into classrooms. After a while the book starts to feel like one big projection of twisted and manipulated logic.

Yet, interestingly, it touches on critiques of scientific method, or “methodological naturalism” and positivism that, in themselves, are valid and important; which may help explain, perhaps, the appeal of the ID argument. The problem is that its appropriation of the critique of positivism is essentially plagiarized, presented as the sole property of the

ID perspective. It thereby attempts to appropriate a (legitimate) critique to justify its highly questionable evangelical agenda, ignoring the other philosophical options that critique positivism as though they don't exist. Neither does it mention other religious options or perspectives than its own.

The dominant form of logic and rhetoric employed is consistently manipulative, with its misleading, high-tech references and machinations, and for this creates resentment in the reader. I have to admit this is one of the least pleasant things I have ever read. One feels the writer is playing games at the reader's expense – making her jump through hoops and complex logical and mathematical exercises, to cosmetically prop up and buttress its "theory," to throw critics off its trail and impress its followers, only to discover what the reader sensed already – "ID has no clothes.." Whether intentionally or not, or a combination of both, it reflects the fact-obsessed 'scientism' which it ostensibly critiques.

Indeed its section on "irreducible (and specified) complexity" upon which the whole of the "scientific" part of ID revolves, is based on Behe's work studying the seeming puzzle of the high unlikelihood that the "bacteria flagellum" could develop its various complicated parts at the same time, in one generation – which seems "irreducible" logically and therefore "specified" (Dembski). However, Collins and Hitchens both report this "puzzle" has since been resolved recently by good old-fashioned naturalist methods, which calls into question the only "empirical" and arguably "scientific" part of the whole enterprise.

What is particularly of interest is the way in which "intelligent" causes and "intelligent" design is constantly invoked, and is made "comprehensible" to the reader

through its use of anthropocentric analogies to things of human design - cars, watches, etc. He builds the case for ID by establishing the ubiquity of things designed in the world – yet all the examples come from things designed by humans, not "God". He never actually discusses this capacity of human (intelligent) design upfront, however – ie 'manmadeness' either. Instead, he uses our knowledge/intuition about the existence of "manmade" designed things to show the ubiquity of "designed" things in the world and nature. Within the "theory" however, it never talks about the activity of "human" designs, it only talks about "divine" designs. It's a classic bait-and-switch, we are sold on the "understandability" of intelligent design based on our knowledge of human design, but instead of examining "manmadeness" in the world, we get the opposite – "divineness". Perhaps an overt discussion of "manmadeness" – the most obvious "design" we come into contact with all the time, is avoided as it might give rise to reflection on the possibility that religion or "god" itself is manmade. As well, this fits into an agenda where social forces, the concept of "society" and all the historical and contextual factors that go into this are elided. Discussion is ended before it begins.

His discussion of the trajectory of the decline of natural theology is in some ways the most interesting and substantive part of the whole work. His discussion of the Baconian reduction of Aristotelian causality, along the lines of Heidegger, is on the mark, but unfortunately is simply appropriated for his agenda. One point that is shocking, mostly for the fact that it didn't get censored in the editorial process, is his anti-feminist rant about how "feminine" conceptions of the divine must be resisted as evil: "no, No, NO!" is his inelegant argument. Contrast this anti-feminism with the strong advocation

of the evangelical movement and Bryan in the 19th and early 20th century for women's suffrage and the right to organize.

Relevant as well is how Dembski constructs naturalism as a "false idol" – that it worships the "creation" rather than the creator – parts of his argument are interesting but it reveals too much – its indebtedness to a strictly Christian conception, notwithstanding its occasional protestations to the contrary.

Particularly interesting is the paradox of how Dembski addresses and appropriates anger at technology, standardization and mass production for his religious agenda that ostensibly opposes it, while at the same time very much mirroring the technological imperative in his stilted, mechanical and manipulative use of complexity theory and formal logic to make his "theory" look "scientific" and thereby acceptable. The fact that he has Phds in both math and analytic philosophy from non other than the University of Chicago is another interesting, perhaps revealing, element in this schizoid and Manichean approach.

A Middle Path? Collins and Gould

Francis S. Collins, author of *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence of Belief*, and the head of the Human Genome Project, occupies a middle-position between ID and the atheism of Dawkins - a scientist who believes in evolution, but is also a born-again Christian. Interestingly, Collins' conversion from atheist to born-again American evangelical geneticist can perhaps only be made sense of as symptomatic of the general tendency to avoid historical approaches, as well as helping to demonstrate

what David Nobles argues is the strong connection, rather than presumed disjunction, between religious and scientific pursuits for absolute knowledge historically (1999). Ironically, is "conversion" seems reflective of his one-sided immersion in math and quantitative-oriented studies such as chemistry and genetics, which generally occlude the historical and cultural learning that complexify matters and make literalist interpretations, whether of empirical evidence or "empirical" readings of the Biblical Word, much more difficult to maintain. In fact, his comment regarding his quest for religious belief, once doubt about his atheism set in, is revealing:

> At first, I was confident that a full investigation of the rational basis for faith would deny the merits of belief, and reaffirm my atheism. But I determined to have *a look at the facts,* no matter what the outcome. Thus began a quick and confusing survey through the major religions of the world. Much of what I found in *the CliffsNotes [!] versions* of different religions *(I found reading the actual sacred texts much too difficult) [!]* left me thoroughly mystified, and I found little reason to be drawn to one or the other of the many possibilities.. [emphases and exclamation points mine] (p. 21)

Later, he found a book by C. S. Lewis, with its more "logical" explanations for religion, more convincing. But surely an actual reading of sacred texts, or genuine historical/philosophical/contextual research about religious texts, traditions and their role in history as a stage in the evolution of human consciousness, would be helpful for Collins, as well as Dawkins and Harris, whose absolute faith in the scientific method as a shortcut to knowledge leads logically to throwing out most of the previous written literature of the world as not empirical or evidence based, and therefore more or less worthless. It seems precisely the fact that Collins was *not* taking a more historical and contextual approach (CliffNotes?) that he could switch from one literalism to another – from a positivist to a biblical one. In any case it is interesting to note as well how

Dawkins and Harris are so bothered by someone like Collins who believes in God, while sharing an otherwise similar scientific perspective.

Of note as well is Collins' attribution of his conversion and God's existence to the "fact" that we innately have a "moral" law, which he mentions many times but doesn't really provide evidence for. It doesn't seem to occur to him that this is something that could be socially constructed – an achievement, or at least an element, of human societies and the "evolution" of culture.

Given that his book is meant to make science more appealing and palatable to religious persons, Collins tries to explain science in a favorable way. One way he does this is by emphasizing that science is "radically open" to being overturned by any new theory. Yet, given the bureaucratic and disciplinary constraints of much of academic science, this rings a bit hollow.

Stephen J. Gould: Science studies how the heavens go, religion how to go to heaven

Stephen J Gould, the late and noted paleontologist who wrote many works on science for the general public, in *Rocks of Ages: Science and Religion in the Fullness of Life,* tries to settle down the simmering passions over the Intelligent Design controversy by re-invoking the traditional separation between religion and science historically- by distinguishing the domains that both entities deal with as "Non-Overlapping Magisteria" (NOMA). In a remarkably calm, sane, readable and humane way, Gould makes the argument that religion and science have their own spheres – science that of empirical

fact, religion that of ultimate "meaning". Each should keep to their own sphere. When they do, things are fine. When they don't, we have trouble.

Gould borrows the term "magisterium" from Catholic discourse, which comes from the Latin *magister*, or teacher, which represents a "domain of authority in teaching". It is to be distinguished from homonyms like *majestic*, or *majesty* which have a very different meaning – and a different root of *majestas*, or majesty, (ultimately from *magnus*, or great) which imply domination and unquestioning obedience. A magisterium, on the other hand, is a domain where one form of teaching holds the appropriate tools for meaningful discourse and resolution - ie, "we debate and hold dialogue under a magisterium; we fall into silent awe or imposed obedience before a majesty" (p.5). Gould then uses this concept to separate the realms of science and religion in the following way:

> The net, or magisterium, of science covers the empirical realm: what is the universe made of (fact) and why does it work this way (theory). The magisterium of religion extends over questions of ultimate meaning and moral value. These two magisterial do not overlap, nor do they encompass all inquiry (consider, for example, the magisterium of art and the meaning of beauty). To cite the old clichés, science gets the age of rocks, and religion the rock of ages; science studies how the heavens go, religion how to go to heaven. (p. 6)

Dawkins, however, attacks Gould's separation of these two realms because he does not like any restrictions placed on science, and doesn't understand why science shouldn't be able to compete on religion or theology's turf – what could religion or theology (he objects to philosophy being included in this "inferior" group) have to say that science couldn't say better? In fact he doubts whether religion or theology have anything to say or offer at all, other than superstition and falsity.

But one of the advantages of using the term "magisterium," at least for the realm of "religion," is that it doesn't just refer to or demarcate religion – it refers to the domain

of “ultimate meaning or moral value”. As such, this includes philosophy, ethics, literature, the humanities, as well as developed positions of atheism – whatever any particular individual, group or society uses in dealing with the realm of “ultimate meaning or moral value”. Gould uses the term “religion” in a pragmatic sense because traditionally and historically (at least most of the time) this has been the term used to designate this realm of “ultimate meaning”. He is also trying to shed light on the presumed conflict between these two realms, which have come to be seen in the popular imagination as a conflict between “science and religion” rather than, say, “science and philosophy”. Dawkins uses, and apparently needs, religion as a “straw man” to shoot down, and argues that Gould capitulates to “the powers that be” in formulating NOMA. Yet, while a simple distinction, NOMA facilitates a far more complex analysis of the real “conflict” between science and the realm of “ultimate meaning” than Dawkins or Harris’ analysis, or non-analysis, does.

For one thing, this separation checks the most excessive tendencies on either side – that of religious fundamentalists to prevent the teaching of evolution or impose the teaching of creationism as an alternative theory of science. It also checks the tendencies of scientists who would wish to extrapolate moral values or ethics from their study of nature, as Harris and Dawkins would both like to do. In showing the need for this, Gould cites the ignoble history of evolutionary biology in this pursuit, where concepts like the “survival of the fittest” were taken as ethical principles that justified and sustained racist ideology and white or Aryan supremacy for significant periods of time, and served as a motivating ideology for Germany in WWI. Gould has a certain reflectiveness about how science can and has been misused that is woefully, if not frighteningly missing in Harris

and Dawkins. The NOMA principle also checks the agenda of those scientists who would like to make empirical "evidence," or the scientific method the sole criterion for "truth". An agenda which can be seen fairly clearly in both Harris and Dawkins, that seeks to "lump" postmodernists, anthropologists, cultural or moral "relativists," literary theorists, social constructionists, and many social theorists, feminists and philosophers into the religious, superstitious "camp". Instead, Gould understands the limitations of empirical science and modestly demarcates this role.

This is not to say, however, that there are no problems with NOMA. As Gould states, it is based on a rather simple acceptance of the famous "is-ought" split, the problem of getting from the realm of the factual or "empirical" to the realm of value, or the "should". Gould's framework is decidedly Kantian, which separates these spheres dualistically. Other more historical and materialist approaches, would integrate these realms more dialectically. But Gould's intention in writing this book was more pragmatic and simple – to be used as a tool in the public debate over Intelligent Design, and consequently, it is a work that one can imagine a devoutly religious, even fundamentalist person being able to read, understand and respect, in near diametrical opposition to Harris and Dawkin's works.

As Gould makes clear, the principle of "non-overlapping magisteria" is entirely conventional. It reflects the historical, Enlightenment compromise between the realms of religion and science. He brings it up because he feels it has become lost from the contemporary debate. Harris and Dawkins may have a point in attacking this separation, which reveals an unproblematic acceptance of the "is-ought" or "fact-value" split. But, it seems the reasons why they want to undermine this split are of dubious motivations. It is

one thing to articulate the problem of conservative, politicized religion, and make an argument for atheism as a legitimate and defendable position in public discourse. It is another to try to hold all discourses accountable to their own reductive, decontextualized worship of the "sacredness" of facts.

Ironically, Gould's approach, even with its Kantian tendencies, is refreshingly historical and knowledgeable about the history of religion, and the historical relationship between religion and science, in a way that Harris and Dawkins aren't. For instance, he deconstructs the Enlightenment "myth" of a relentless "war" between science and religion. For instance, he shows how the terminology of "war" is of relatively recent vintage – and can be located more in the conflict between the Vatican and the emerging Italian state in the mid-nineteenth century than with science per se. This conflict, in turn, understandably gave rise to polemics and myths that understandably sought to pose religion as in endless conflict with science, but which have been shown to be ultimately false. One of them is the belief taught to schoolchildren of Gould's time that the institutional church believed in the "flat earth" throughout the Middle Ages – and that a group of clerics told Columbus that he would "sail off" the edge of the earth. Drawing on the historical J. B. Russell's *Inventing the Flat Earth*, Gould shows how this story was invented – actually, all of the major theologians and "doctors" of the medieval church believed in a spherical world, as known through Greek texts – ie the Venerable Bede, Roger Bacon, and Thomas Acquinas. Only two authors can be found arguing for a flat earth – the somewhat well-known Lactantius and the "truly obscure" Cosmas Indicopleustes. And although Columbus did have a meeting with some church officials before his voyage, who were advisors to his patron Isabella, and while they did pose

criticism to his plan to reach India; the criticism was not that he would sail off the edge of the world, rather they argued, *correctly*, that he had underestimated the size of the globe, and would never reach India, which, of course, he never did! (p. 114).

Ultimately, Gould's more historical account of the relationship between religion and science, and how the latter developed out of the former, provides a much better understanding of how we got to where we are today. Gould points out that many early scientists were clerics or members of religious orders, and traces the process of the separation of these two spheres. Such an account flies in the face of the myth of an endless "war" between science and religion from the start. Even Galileo's famous conflict with the Pope, posed as a conflict between courageous truth and religious dogma, can only be understood within the context of the power dynamics of patronage in the princely courts of Europe at the time. As Biagioli's *Galileo, Courtier* argues, the new pope Urban VIII had previously been Galileo's patron, and Galileo's impatient push for recognition for his science was seen as overstepping: known at the time as the "fall of the favorite," a very "conventional form of court drama" which had little to do with a conflict between science and religion.

As a significant participant (and court witness) in the battle over the reaching of creationism in Arkansas in the late 80s, and a significant "public intellectual" who sought to share the fruits of recent scientific knowledge with the public, his comments on the perceived conflict between religion and science should be considered with a certain weight, even if his concept of NOMA is not fully agreed with. Ultimately, he recognizes that both the realm of empirical science and that of the consideration of value and meaning are in many ways tightly wound together. He argues for an "irenic" approach

between the magisteria of science and religion (or philosophy/meaning) that seeks to take the best of each and each to learn from the other. This approach, however, should not be confused with the "false" irenic approaches of the vapid confluence of scientific discovery with religious belief on one extreme, or the "political correctness" which adopts the "fully avoidant tactic of never generating conflict by never talking to each other, or speaking in such muted and meaningless euphemisms that no content or definition can ever emerge" on the other (p. 220). And although now passed away, it is interesting to note what might be seen as his relevant commentary on the controversies the "Four Horsemen" have recently stirred up:

> Irenics sure beats the polemics of ill-conceived battle between science and religion – a thoroughly false model (chapter 2) that too often continues to envelop us for illogical reasons of history (chapter 3) and psychology (chapter 4). I do get discouraged when some of my colleagues tout their private atheism (their right, of course, and in many ways my own suspicion as well) as a panacea for human progress against an absurd caricature of "religion," erected as a straw man for rhetorical purposes. Religion just can't be equated with Genesis literalism, the miracle of the liquefying blood of Saint Januarius (which at least provides an excuse for the wonderful and annual San Gennaro Festival on the streets of New York), or the Bible codes of kabbalah and modern media hype. If these colleagues wish to fight superstition, irrationalism, philistinism, ignorance, dogma, and a host of other insults to the human intellect (often politically converted into dangerous tools of murder and oppression as well), then God bless them – but don't call this enemy "religion" (p. 209).

Contemporary Literalisms in Science and Religion

It is somewhat ironic that Dembski, the true 'literalist' actually integrates more history into his analysis than the Four Horsemen at points when invoking a whole tradition of philosophical thought to refute it – ie, the 'higher biblical criticism' of Spinoza, to Hume to Schleiermacher, not to mention Hegel and Feuerbach. Ironically, Dembski comes off on this part more knowledgeable and historically-minded than

Dawkins, Harris, or Collins, who make no mention of this important line of thought. Ironic as well given that Spinoza holds the key in many ways to the historically and contextually oriented approach that is the antedote to the ahistorical, de-contextualized literality of both Dawkins' rationalist empiricism and ID's biblical word. Spinoza was the first historical figure, in his *Theologico-Political Tractacus* to give a fully worked out hermeneutic interpretation of the Old and New Testament in writing, something that earned him the wrath of his Jewish community, as well as of the Catholic and Protestant hierarchies.

As was discussed earlier in the Intelligent Design debate, I argued that, on the one hand, there is a fundamental difference between the dominant scientific perspective and the religious, reflected in the differing "common senses" of scientists and the religious, generally speaking – the appeal to "evidence" that is seen by the scientist as "common sense" in their belief (ie religious) system is somehow not shared by the religious, the secular, scientific mindset is in turn confused by. Yet, on the other hand, I want to argue that the scientist (of the dominant mindset) and the literal-minded religious, in other ways, do share some common sense, in one particular way. Fascinatingly, Marsden, in his *Understanding Fundamentalism*, shows how the roots of the fundamentalist outlook are based on an 'early' form of science – what he calls "the Baconian Ideal" and "common sense realism," both of which defined the common sense of the time, as well as of the highly influential Princeton school of Presbyterian theology. This democratic approach appealed to people's common sense, focusing on the empirical "facts" to be found in the Bible. However, during the confrontation with modernism and in the

context of the upheavals of industrialization, after resisting evolutionary thinking, this common sense empiricism was "frozen," in time, so to speak.

Conceptually, I think, this helps shed light on the recent "scientific" critique of religion, as well as the shortcomings of the secularization/modernization model. It shares common roots with the empiricism of the Baconian Ideal, and has similar ahistorical, literalistic tendencies – only a literalism of "empirical fact" rather than of the "word". As I argued before, the main problem with an overly empiricist approach is that it is one-sided and excludes or marginalizes considerations of history and context as well as more conceptual understandings (Aronowitz 1988). These shortcomings are reflected in the dominant trends in the sociology of religion, composed mainly of statistical analyses of polls and surveys. A similarly literalistic, ahistorical approach (other than the "history" pertaining to natural selection) may help explain Dawkens et al's confusion and disbelief regarding the rise of radical religiousity.

Scopes Revisited II

In 1960, in the heat of McCarthyism, the film *Inherit the Wind* used a fictionalized account of the story of the Scopes Trial as a metaphor for the struggle against censorship and free speech in its own time. A powerful and dramatic movie, it depicted a re-enactment of the Scopes Trial, starring Spencer Tracy as Clarence Darrow, Gene Kelly as H. L. Mencken, and Frederic Marsh as William Jennings Bryan. Although some commentary is given to William Jennings Bryan's previous role as a progressive, populist leader for democratic reforms, he is generally depicted in the movie, as well as the conventional Scopes narrative, as a leader of the force of bigotry and backwardness,

the main oppressor, as leader of the fundamentalists, of free speech, civil liberties, and scientific truth. As such, it follows the lines of Arthur Miller's more well-known *The Crucible* of the same period, which also used a previous instance of religiously-inspired censorship and witch-hunting to comment on contemporary struggles. Yet, the somewhat Manichean depiction between the forces of science, truth and freedom on the one hand, and bigotry, oppression and religious superstition on the other reproduce an account that streamlines and simplifies the actual historical record, which muddies the waters for understanding the current conflict. While the didactic motivations of the movie are quite understandable and served an important end in critiquing the witchhunt against leftists and the hypocritical censorship of free speech in the McCarthy period, the typical Scopes "narrative" has been overly influenced by Menken's pointed and largely undisputed framing of the conflict. What seems to have been left out of the conventional accounts the way in which Mencken's framing operated, advertently or not, in the service of a biopolitical, Social Darwinist tendency that sought to legitimate the unequal and excessive power and wealth of a largely Northern industrial bourgeous class over the "lower classes," which at the time included both the industrial working class and the farmer.

Mencken's writing at the time of the Scopes Trial was widely influential. Art Winslow, in the introduction to the recently published writings of Mencken's reporting during the Scopes Trial, notes:

> As an unattributed witticist in Marion Rodger's *Mencken: The American Iconoclast* put it, "If the Scopes Trial had not existed, H. L. Mencken would have had to invent it." Scopes himself went so far as to suggest, four decades after the trial, that "In a way it was Mencken's show," the journalist's lacerating critique of the Bible Belt (a term Mencken coined, along with "booboisie") garnering most of the lasting attention. (2006, p. xiv)

One unintended consequence of Mencken's influential and largely unchallenged framing of the Scopes conflict is that it has bequeathed later generations with an interpretation of the conflict that now obscures, and creates difficulty in understanding, the history of the contemporary religious right – for instance, how at one point in history evangelicals were largely progressives. If evangelicals are depicted as "bad" or "evil," and timelessly "reactionary" from the Salem witchhunts to the Scopes Trial to our own day, this is an ahistorical and inaccurate account. How to explain that the foremost advocates for abolition were ministers? Or that some of the primary advocates for women's suffrage and women's unions, as well as prohibition, were devout evangelicals? And advocates for radical democracy, people power, the popular election of senators and a progressive income tax against the trusts, corporations and capitalist financiers of the day? Instead of highlighting these notably complex historical contradictions, this simplistic narrative inadvertently plays into the hands of a contemporary religious right that is quite willing to claim "timelessness" for its brand of conservative, reactionary positions that claim to be the voice of the "moral majority" (a term Bryan appears to have originally coined in speaking about the democratic basis of the progressive movement, later appropriated and trumpeted by Jerry Falwell, shorn of any progressive vestige. The fact that these progressive issues were advocated by evangelicals and specifically Williams Jennings Bryan as one of their most influential (if not most radical) advocate does not jive with history's judgment on him as the fundamentalist Inquisitor against truth and freedom, and defender of untruth and superstition, in the Scopes Trial.

At the same time, this rendition of events poses an overly flattering and historically inaccurate role for that of "science" and the advocates of "freedom" against

Bryan and the evangelicals/fundamentalists. It is far from being so cut and dry. For instance, Clarence Darrow, Scopes' defense lawyer himself had been a supporter of Bryan's presidential campaigns and worked with him over decades supporting a populist and anti-corporate platform. And the role of Mencken, who did more to shape the public interpretation of the Scopes or "Monkey" trial itself through his journalistic coverage - posing the march of truth and freedom against the superstitious "masses" - must be examined. What is largely obscured in his portrayal of events, and the relatively uncritical acceptance of his version by most writers and thinkers, was the aristocratic, elitist and in many ways, anti-progressive nature of his beliefs, which thought little of the potential of democracy, and in fact thought that the "monkey" trial (a play both on the role of the monkey in human evolution and the unevolved "working class" human/monkeys too dumb to understand evolution gathered there in Dayton) was in fact what happened when the lower-classes and "darkies" (Mencken's term) held sway in a "democratic" regime.

Mencken, the son of a factory owner, famously said "throw an egg out of a Pullman window and you will hit a fundamentalist almost anywhere in the United States today" (Marsden 1980; Mencken 2006). Note who is riding in a Pullman and who isn't. The role of class and education in influencing the interpretation of the Scopes Trial has been generally obscured, even though, I would argue, it played a significant, if not the most significant role. For all Bryan's flaws, particularly his tacit acceptance of Jim Crow, he advocated a class-conscious support of and belief in the power of the working and "producing" classes to govern themselves against the corporate, moneyed interests of both major parties. Mencken's disdain for the "masses" and the "mob" reveals another

layer to this drama of science and truth versus religion, ignorance and superstition – the role of an elitist justification of oppression and exploitation through the superiority and inevitability of the "survival of the fittest" – ie what many commenters of the time termed "social Darwinism" (Hofstadter 1992; Lewontin et al. 1985). Mencken's role as an advocate for this has been largely obscured in the dominant version of events and needs to be re-integrated to help make sense of the contemporary Intelligent Design debate, as well as the contemporary "religious right".

The traditional narrative starts to look quite different if one looks at the Scopes Trial through a class lens, and views Mencken's interpretation as a justification for the dominance of the more "highly evolved" classes of the WASP northern establishment, which had been fighting for the rights of capital, through a defense of the gold standard (which protected the interests of the northern, moneyed establishment); anti-union practices; a resistance to the popular election of senators, as well as any income or corporate tax, much less a progressive one; or the reforms that expanded democratic control, like the referendum and initiative, which Bryan long supported. The contemporary division between the liberal, secular, and progressive and the religious, reactionary and conservative does not make sense if read back literally into this historical period, although most do, on both sides of the Intelligent Design debate.

In reexamining the conventional narrative of the Scopes Trial, and its agency as a "ghost of the past" in the current Intelligent Design debate, as well as considerations of the religious right more generally, we would benefit from integrating a fuller sense of a variety of historical factors. One, as Michael Kazin points out in his recent biography of Bryan, *A Godly Hero* (2006), is the fact that the biology textbook Scopes used included

numerous arguments of support for eugenics, and how this was clearly one of the things Bryan and his followers, largely of the 'under class' objected to, something largely left out of the traditional narrative. An aspect that still echoes, for better or worse, in today's healthcare reform debate, in the power of the rhetoric of "pulling the plug on Grandma". Gould, in his reading of the textbook in question at the Scopes Trial, *A Civic Biology*, (cited in Gould, 2002) by George William Hunter, notes discoveries that have eluded other commentators, who have focused solely on the parts on evolution – such as an "egregious claim, for example that science holds the moral answer to questions about mental retardation, or social poverty so misinterpreted". Gould also notes that Hunter discusses the infamous Jukes and Kallikaks, the "classic," and false, cases once offered as canonical examples of how bad heredity runs in families (p. 167). Under the heading "Parasitism and Its Cost to Society – The Remedy" Hunter wrote:

> Hundreds of families such as those described above exist today, spreading disease, immorality and crime to all parts of this country. The cost to society of such families is very severe. Just as certain animals or plants become parasitic on other plants and animals, these families have become parasitic on society. They not only do harm to others by corrupting, stealing or spreading disease, but they are actually protected and cared for by the state out of public money. Largely for them the poorhouse and the asylum exist. They take from society, but they give nothing in return. They are true parasites.
>
> If such people were lower animals, we would probably kill them off to prevent them from spreading. Humanity will not allow this, but we do have the remedy of separating the sexes in asylums or other places and in various ways preventing intermarriage and the possibilities of perpetuating such a low and degenerate race. (quoted in Gould p. 168)

On this question, by today's standards, the beliefs of Bryan and his "yokels" undeniably best Hunter and Mencken, who presumably would have agree with Hunter's textbook's argument. A later paragraph distinguishes five races of mankind, locating Negros on the bottom, all the way up to "finally, the highest type of all, the Caucasians,

represented by the civilized white inhabitants of Europe and America" (Hunter in Gould, p. 168).

Another problematic aspect of the traditional myth is that Bryan is constructed as the "Inquisitor," yet in fact the originator of the lawsuit was the ACLU, which was seeking an appropriate avenue to challenge the anti-evolution laws. Scopes himself was approached and agreed to be charged, even though he was actually only a PE instructor, and had only taught as a substitute biology teacher for as little as one day. This lends a "staged" element to the conflict that is not shown in the film, of course, and is excluded from the traditional narrative (Kazin 2006; Winslow 2006).

The trial itself treated the rather mundane issue of whether or not the defendant had violated the law and taught evolution. Scopes and his lawyers agreed that he was guilty of this basic point. The intent of the trial was to challenge Bryan's defense of the anti-evolution law and, for Mencken at least, to publicly humiliate him and his "yokel" supporters.

The most sensationalized aspect of the case – the unheard of cross-examination of Bryan (the prosecuting attorney) as a witness for the defense attorney (Darrow), where Bryan was roundly felt to be shown up by Darrow's cross-examination, was agreed to by Bryan with the belief that Bryan would have his chance to cross-examine Darrow in turn the next day. But because the judge ultimately threw Bryan's examination out of the record, technically this negated the need for a cross-examination of Darrow, and Bryan never got the chance to cross-examine Darrow and "have his day in court". Consequently, Darrow got the last word. As Kazin points out, Bryan could have made some important points in pointing out the arguments supporting eugenics in the biology

textbook. Bryan's response to Darrow, given that he never got a chance to cross-examine Darrow, was published days later. In any case, the depiction of the movie that Bryan self-servedly tried to force his "speech," to rectify himself, as the judge ends the case, is quite unflattering and completely false. As is also his collapse and death on the court floor, which the film presents as a 'moment of truth' for Bryan, who, realizing his own falsity and hypocrisy – dies under its weight. Bryan actually died five days after the trial ended.

What had Bryan planned to say in his "Last Evolution Argument" speech, which he never had a chance to give at the Scopes Trial? Bryan charged that "evolutionists had misused science to present moral opinions about the social order as though they represented facts of nature" (p.165). Crazy or on target? Further:

> By paralyzing the hope of reform, it discourages those who labor for the improvement of man's conditions… Its only program for man is scientific breeding, a system under which a few supposedly superior intellects, self-appointed, would direct the mating and the movements of the mass of mankind.. (William Jennings Bryan, quoted in Gould, p. 166)

As Gould comments, who can fault Bryan here? "One of the saddest chapters in the entire history of science records the extensive misuse of data to support the supposed moral and social consequences of biological determinism, the claim that inequalities based on race, sex, or class cannot be altered because they reflect the innate and inferior genetic endowments of the disadvantaged" (Gould, p. 166). Enough "harm has been done" by scientists "misidentifying their own social preferences as facts of nature in their technical writings" (p. 166). And just imagine, Gould suggests, how much more mischief could be done when scientists who write textbooks "promulgate these social doctrines as the objective findings of their profession" (ibid). It is not hard to see the resonance with today's debates.

As well, the fictionalized insertion of Bryan's "betrayal" of secrets told him in confidence by Scopes' girlfriend, the local minister's daughter, while making for good drama, heightens the Manichean image of Bryan as cruel and evil. Nowhere in this presentation might one think of this person as a radical pacifist who objected and protested against World War I – who, as Kazin suggests, if he had stayed as part of Wilson's cabinet, might have seriously changed the draconic terms of the Versailles treaty, which set up the pre-conditions for World War II. Instead, he is portrayed as a deluded, selfish, narcissistic, self-serving hypocrite through and through – which, not incidentally, was also Mencken's unkind assessment in his obituary of Bryan written days after his death, before the flies had left the funeral banquet (Mencken 2006). (For Mencken, apparently atheism and the absence of a God gave a green light to speaking ill of the dead.) Both Gould and Kazin note as well the writings of Vernon L. Kellogg's *Headquarters Nights* and Benjamin's Kidd's *The Science of Power* as having powerful influence on Bryan. Kellogg, who was ambassador to Germany while the US was still neutral, was privy to the discussions of the Kaiser's advisors, some of whom had been university professors before the war, and was shocked by the "false and particularly crude version of natural selection, defined as inexorable, bloody battle" that they advocated and used to justify their assumption as the superior race (Gould, p. 159). Certainly, Bryan was astute to take note of the use of Darwinism as a "scientific" and even "moral" justification for the domination and the "survival of the fittest". It seems pretty clear where Mencken stood on this issue: "might makes right". Kidd, on the other hand, argued that Darwinism had "rekindled the most dangerous of human tendencies – our pagan soul, previously (but imperfectly) suppressed for centuries by Christianity and its

doctrines of love and renunciation" (p. 161). Kidd identified Darwinism with domination by force – something that awoke a primordial pagan lust that had long struggled and grown "bored" with the ideals of Christian love and the subordination and renunciation they required.

Clearly, however, the greatest flaw of Bryan was his tacit acceptance of Jim Crow laws in the South and his failure to challenge the racism and overt belief in white supremacy among the Democratic party and his base of rural whites from Western and Southern states. It appears that this issue was not something Bryan felt strongly about either way, though Kazin suggests there is some evidence that Bryan had misgivings about the plight of black folk. At the same time, it is instructive to examine the context of the time. The Republican party, the party of the Northern industrial and financial elite, ostensibly advocated for the black man, yet for instance, employed him self-servedly as a strike-breaker against whites. These divide- and-conquer tactics only heightened and exacerbated the pre-existing racism of rural and working-class whites, benefiting the ruling elite against its potential challengers, eg "lets him and you fight". Clearly though, in this regard, Bryan was a man of his time and geographic location – and this is clearly his most negative mark – worst than the staged Scopes Trial.

In Bryan's defense, during his cross-examination, his response that the bible was "written in the language and understanding of the people at the time" – viewed by Mencken and others as an indicting self-contradiction, interestingly coincides almost word-for-word with Spinoza's enlightened, progressive argument on biblical interpretation in his *Theological-Political Tractacus*. As Kazin argues, whether he thought he was or not, Bryan was not really a fundamentalist at all, but much more of a

pragmatist in his interpretation of the bible, as his work for social change in the populist and progressive era demonstrate. Similarly, Gould argues against the standard narrative as well, that in many ways Bryan held his own against Darrow at the Scopes Trial.

Relevant as well is the fact that many of the "uneducated" of Bryan's day did not have access to any education, much less higher education. As such, the Bible was one thing that "everyone" had access to, and for this reason, was considered a "democratic" common asset, accessible to everyone. Bryan's ultimate ignorance over evolution, as well as the ignorance of the "yokels" and "commoners" who looked up to him, should be viewed through this light. Is it not unfair to judge those without education by the standards of those with education? Surely the larger question becomes the problem of extending education to everyone – which implicates the larger society, particularly the ruling elite. Can one truly blame those for believing only what they have access to?

Surely, Dawkins, Harris, and Mencken's judgment on the religious, particularly the less educated, comes off harsh and judgmental compared to Marx's interpretation of religion as the "sigh of the oppressed". How many of the aforesaid would walk into any number of the black churches of today and throw around their accusations of being oppressed by their religiousity? Indeed, who is the oppressed here?

The Four Horsemen approach, particularly given their bases in the controversy-driven fields of genetics, sociobiology and neuroscience, has a tendency to reproduce the class, cultural, and biopolitical biases of the Scopes era debate. Given the greatest split between the haves and have-nots since the roaring twenties, in conjunction with the dominance of neoliberal-guided globalization, perhaps this should not be a surprise. If

Harris et al actually want to have a real impact in the move toward a more "rational" society, it would behoove them to take this tendency into account.

Changing Climate: Evolution, Catholicism, Charismatics

Unlike various parts of the scientific establishment, the Left, or gay/lesbian movements, I've don't have the luxury of demonizing and successfully "othering" the religious Right – given that any reflection would locate my family there. Such demonization (such as that of Dawkins et al) tends not to separate opportunistic "leaders' who manipulate underlying discontent and fear, and the people who make up the base of the Religious Right - a crucial distinction to make if one wants to truly understand the social and cultural complex of radical conservative religiousity. In my family, we felt the class disdain and stigma towards our religious orientation, though in a way, we felt morally superior. For unlike our more secular counterparts - as Nietzsche notes regarding the power of ascetic thought - we *believed* in something ("Geneology of Morals" in Nietzsche 2000). We had not succumbed to complete malaise with modernity, or spectatorship. Religion provided meaning and purpose, in the midst of great economic and cultural difficulties. It also provided for strong community ties – harder to come by in the more secular context.

One mustn't forget the history of anti-Catholicism in the US, as well, in trying to understand Catholic and Catholic charismatic defensiveness about their faith, as it can be seen as an attempt as well at preserving ethnic and cultural identity, which may help explain a portion of conservative Catholics' fear of secular modernity; as it can be seen as

a response to the historical classism and elitism of Protestant nativism. My father, for instance, didn't go to college, and seems to feel put down by many who have gone, who tout the secular as their own and put down the religious. While my mother got a degree in education from a Catholic university and taught elementary school for a few years, she stopped working when she started having kids, and in this sense is separated from her college-educated, and often, more feminist-leaning, peers.

Yet, at the time of my involvement in the charismatic movement, the late 80s and early 90s, I do not remember the questioning of evolution being much on the radar at all, though this probably is explained by the relatively recent birth of the Intelligent Design movement. I have vague memories of listening to an old record with a song critiquing the idea that frogs were our ancestors ("Old Time Religion" was on the record as well), and I remember at least one member of our charismatic youth group grumbling about evolution. But for Catholics of the 20th century, evolution is something that has been accepted as basically compatible with the existence of God. If God wanted to make things that way, he could. The nitty-gritty aspects of evolution weren't engaged with with too much scrutiny, but it didn't largely didn't matter because Catholics have never really had a "literal" reading of the bible. Being around for as long as it has, with plenty of time to experience first hand the inconsistencies and contradictions in the bible – spurring the various councils in the early church period that codified church dogma and fights with "heresies" – over time its relatively discrete strategy seems to have been to place the bible to the side to some extent and base church law on its theologians' interpretations of the bible as well as that of Greek thought more generally, resulting in the huge body of work known as the "magisterium". Literalism has always seemed to

have been seemingly a more Protestant concern with "getting back to the truth," motivated by a sense of the marginalization of the literal word by the Catholic church. At the same time, literalism seems to emerge at the same time as the rise of modern science, technology and capitalism with which the Protestant era is affiliated.

Given the power of the evangelical/Pentecostal/fundamentalist moment, however, this may be changing. There have been murmurings of recent that the Vatican could be backing away from its deference to evolution, though solid evidence of this has yet to appear. It is significant, however, that an influential conservative Catholic figure like George Weigel - author of the 1,000 page official biography of John Paul II, with substantial ties, access and influence in the Catholic church as well as the Bush II Administration – is also an "adjunct fellow" at the Discovery Institute, the leading "Intelligent Design" thinktank, located in my own hometown of Seattle. One wonders at the implications.

Data is practically nonexistent on the extent to which Intelligent Design has made inroads on charismatics. A recent Pew report broke down belief in Intelligent Design by Catholics, evangelicals and mainline Protestantism, but not for charismatics and Pentecostals! But given the 75% non-belief in Darwin in evangelicals, one can only assume this is a similar rate for Pentecostals, who are presumably included in this group, impacting charismatics. One can only imagine charismatics and Catholics more generally as a growth field for dominionists and others interested in challenging and "taking over" prominent secular institutions, particularly given the seepage of Intelligent Design's twin dispensationalist fundamentalist belief into charismatic culture -

millennialism, ie the “Rapture”, or for charismatic Marianists, the “chastisement” (as I detail in the next two chapters).

Scopes Trial III: Mencken, Nietzsche and Social Darwinism

In trying to understand the cultural division between religion and science around evolution in the US, both historically and now, inevitably, it is hard not to eventually have to grapple with the role of the ideas of Nietzsche and his critique of religion. Nietzsche advocated for an “overcoming” of human weaknesses, such as the Manichean belief in good and evil, the internalization of the drives against ourselves, and the need for humans to take responsibility for their lives, which, for Nietzsche, meant recognizing that there is no God. However, it is fascinating and quite relevant to examine Mencken as one of the major interpreters of Nietzsche to the US. In his writings on the Scopes Trial, Mencken’s work abounds with disdainful references to the “mob” and “masses” and “Homo Neanderthalis” and the need to resist their religious inferiority - troubling slogans in a time when eugenics were taken seriously. It is impossible not to see direct echoes of Nietzsche’s language in Mencken’s writings. And clearly Mencken was well-versed in Nietzsche - he wrote the first book on Nietzsche’s philosophy in the English language only seven years after Nietzsche’s death, wrote introductions to *The Anti-Christ* and the *Nietszche-Wagner correspondence*, and was very influential in introducing Nietzsche’s thought to the US, which may explain partly why Nietzsche’s thought was melded with the “survival of the fittest” mentality for so long in the US.

In the context of the time, Nietzsche was interpreted and appropriated in an elitist way that, reflecting and legitimating the ruthless conditions of robber-baron capitalism, together with an emphasis on the competitive 'survival of the fittest' aspects of Darwin's thought, was fashioned into the ideology of Social Darwinism, with disastrous consequences. Nietzsche's challenge to "overcome" our human weaknesses, and essentially, 'be all that you can be,' which he calls becoming the 'superman,' via Mencken, becomes a legitimation of the strong over the weak, of capital over the worker, of the educated over the uneducated, ie the religious. This educated, bourgeois disdain for the uneducated, peasant and proletarian subaltern 'fundamentalist' is reflected in Mencken's hugely influential reportorial shaping of the Scopes, ie "monkey' trial. We know who the monkey is here – certainly not Dawkins' and Dennett's "brights". What is not maintained in the Social Darwinist interpretation of Nietzsche's thought is his critique of science, central to his whole project, and arguably, more important than his critique of religion, as he sees science as the inheritor of religious power, and scientists, the new priests. None of this is reflected in Mencken's one-sided scorn for the simple-minded religious and uncritical embrace and exaltation of science above the uneducated 'monkeys'. One of Nietzsche's main criticisms of science was for the myopic tendencies of the dominant empiricism. Ironically, Mencken is noted for and viewed himself squarely within the empiricist tradition. One wonders how well he read his Nietzsche.

At the same time, as Michael Kazin's and Stephen J. Gould's contributions demonstrate, we would do well to reconsider the received wisdom of the Scopes trial, particularly if we want to make sense of today's cultural contradictions. For the prevailing tendency is not to think historically, but literally, on both sides. A rethinking

of the role of classism and a social Darwinist perspective is necessary in the case of Mencken, as well as a rethinking of the progressive populism of Bryan and the movements he represented prior to Scopes. Once we do this, we start to see more clearly that the presumptions of Dawkins and Harris reveal an unreflective, elitist scientism that reproduces (advertently or inadvertently) the social Darwinism of Mencken's day. How else can one view, for instance, Harris' arguments for the possible need for a "pre-emptive" nuclear strike against the Islamic world, to protect ourselves against their "irrationality," killing millions along the way? At the same time, Dembski and the Intelligent Design authors reveal a troubling loss of progressivism from the time of Bryan and the populist evangelical movement, while reflecting, ironically, a technocratic scientism. Both sides in the new "culture war" over Intelligent Design seem more literal and reflective of each other than either would like to think.

Chapter 4

Charismatic Practices and Apocalyptic Desire in a Disembodied Lifeworld

Floating Fetuses

My godmother and great-aunt spent her life as a nun, running a hospice very successfully as an administrator and even receiving a governor's award for service. Towards the end of her career, however, she felt she had inadvertently become a "businesswoman" more than anything else, and after she retired, desired to get back more into her prayer life. She started having prayer and healing sessions with a couple of renowned healers, who she met through the charismatic movement. Shortly thereafter, she started having apparitions – seeing "floating aborted fetuses" in her living room and garden. They started appearing when she was gardening. At first, on a more mundane realm, they would talk to her and argue with each other, cry, laugh, tell dirty jokes, instruct her where to plant things and contradict each other. Later, the apparitions became more intense and malicious, instructing her to do things like put her head in the oven and kill herself. At other points, she also believed that the Virgin Mary was appearing to her, and that perhaps she was being chosen by Mary to be a representative to the world about the sins of abortion. Her personal spiritual adviser in her religious order thought otherwise however, suggesting that the apparitions from Mary were a "personal gift" best left to herself. Later, she started to become disoriented when she was driving, and would call her sister, my grandmother, late at night, not knowing where she was, desperate. Still later it became necessary for her to seek psychiatric help for her condition, and when I spoke with her some time after the first episodes, later she seemed

more doubtful about her visits by Mary, but more sure of the certainty of the apparitions of the floating aborted embryos. At times though, she questioned whether they might be more like little "devils" than little angels – spirits of darkness rather than of light. She also, somewhat contradictorily, admitted that she did seem to be having mental/psychological issues, and that they could have been a part of it, perhaps a significant part, as well, though she didn't seem to really think that this was the case. The experience seems to indicate a fine line between experiences of "primordial" spirituality (Cox 1995), and a triggering of deep psychic trauma, which Csordas (1994) explores extensively, though with a mostly implicit emphasis, in his studies of charismatic possession and demonology.

Pentecostalism and charismatic movements have earned the undeniable status as the fastest and most influential movement in Christianity, with growth of over 500 million converts and participants since its birth in the early 20th century (Cox 1995, Pew 2006). As a result, understanding the significance of its central "charismatic" practices associated with Pentecostalism – glossolalia (speaking in tongues), being "slain" (or alternatively, "resting") in the spirit, as well as increased belief in demonic possession and divine prophesy, has become an important and contested question. Many have come to see these movements and their practices as an important and legitimate, ie authentic, resurgence of "primordial" spirituality, such as Harvey Cox, David Martin, and Phillip Jenkins. However, with the increasing penetration of the harsh, fundamentalist Christian theology of Christian Reconstructionism, or dominionism into Pentecostalism and related charismatic movements in the so-called "third wave" of Pentecostalism since the 80s, as well as that of apocalyptic premillenialism (the Rapture, as illustrated by the best-selling

Left Behind novel series) I argue this upbeat analysis needs a closer examination, particularly at the levels of sexuality, gender, desire and the body in these movements. This chapter explores this question through an "immanent critique" of these levels in the Catholic Charismatic movement, starting with a critical engagement with Thomas Csordas's "cultural" phenomenological (Merleau-Ponty 1969) account of the role of the body and "self processes" in charismatic practices, an examination of apocalyptic and sexual themes in charismatic literature and the increasing role of domininionist theory in the "third wave of Pentecostalism", and bringing this into relation with the current sexual and institutional crisis of the Catholic church. What is one to make of contemporary charismatic religious desire, and what "negative utopian" elements can be discerned in it? Marcuse's notion of "libidinal rationality" is drawn on to discern the ways in which charismatic practices could be seen to arise out of engagement with and in response to the threatening sense of a disembodied and rationalized lifeworld (Habermas 1991, Husserl 1970, Lefebvre 1984) as its "negative utopian" inflection.

The Sacred Self: A Cultural Phenomenology of Charismatic Healing

An early ethnographer of the Catholic Charismatic movement, Thomas Csordas, in his first book *The Sacred Self: A Cultural Phenomenology of Charismatic Healing* (1994), takes an in-depth phenomenological view of the existential grounding of charismatic practices in the body and the social and phenomenological contruction of a charismatic "sacred self". Unique in contrast with other assessments of charismatic practices, which tend to skirt the surface of the phenomena, Csordas argues that such a phenomenological approach is essential to understanding charismatic phenomena

themselves. His attempt at formulating a "cultural" phenomenology bears some remarkable similarities to Adorno's "immanent critique" – which involves a "return to the things themselves" but without phenomenology's belief in the ability to access "things" directly, unmediated. Oddly, there is no reference to Adorno in Csordas' work, however, and it is unclear whether this is intentional or not.

Citing the "enduring premise" of cultural anthropology that "the answer to the question of 'what it means to be human' is the same as the answer to the question of 'how we make ourselves human,'" Csordas argues that this means "an inquiry into a topic like the 'sacred self' is an inquiry into human creativity, and in particular self-creativity". (p. vii) He terms his approach that of a "cultural phenomenology" because it "represents a concern for synthesizing the immediacy of embodied experience with the multiplicity of cultural meaning in which we are always and inevitably immersed". (ibid) Finding much of the literature on ritual healing largely redundant, his strategy has been "not to write about Charismatic healing, but to ask what charismatic healing is about and write about that". His thesis is that charismatic healing is about "self". (p. viii)

Given the multiplicity of definitions of the self, he chooses to draw on phenomenology for a working definition of self as "orientational process" (p. ix). The particular self-processes he finds articulated in Charismatic healing are imagination, memory, language and emotion. In particular, he shows how these processes bring about orientation in terms of psychocultural themes in the North American context, of spontaneity, control and intimacy. Drawing on Merleau-Ponty, he grounds his account on " a particular variant of phenomenology in which bodily experience is understood as the existential ground of culture and the sacred". His methodological and theoretical

decisions to start in this way is informed by his concerns with what he sees as an overly "semiotic" or "structuralist" approach which has tended toward an overly "representationalist" account of how ritual healing works. For instance, he notes that accounts of ritual healing in anthropology have tended to focus on the experience of the healer, if at all, and not the supplicant. Explanations take the form of structural, clinical, social support or persuasive hypotheses, non-mutually exclusive, that "represent different descriptions of how therapeutic efficacy is evoked, [and] tend to share a common understanding of how that efficacy is actually constituted by a limited repertoire of global mechanisms (trance, catharsis, placebo effect, suggestion)" (p. 3). Yet, the mechanism itself remains unelaborated as some kind of "biocultural 'black box'". (ibid) Csordas in turn intends to focus on the experience of the supplicant, or those to be healed, particularly their imagery processes. He thinks there is an "experiential specificity" of effect in religious healing, such that "transformative meaning dwells in the 'minute particulars' (William Blake) of human existence taken up in the healing process, the "locus of efficacy is not symptoms, psychiatric disorders, symbolic meaning, or social relationships, but the self in which all of these are encompassed". (p. 4)

Much of the book, then, is concerned with formulating a "theory of the self" that would allow for specifying the transformative effects of healing cross-culturally, as well as which will "allow for the experience of the sacred as an element of therapeutic process [..] an account of the cultural constitution of a sacred self". One might wonder why the title says "the sacred self" with its more intimidating claims to universality, instead of "a sacred self" then, but my specific concern is less with his theory of the sacred self, then

of what his cultural phenomenological approach reveals about the specific experience and self-processes of North American Catholic Charismatics.

Csordas then situates the problem of the sacred in the context of a cultural phenomenology of the self. Phenomenologists of religion have defined the understanding of the sacred as a kind of "modulation of orientation" in or engagement with the world. Eliade defined the sacred as a mode of "attending to the world," van der Leeuw argued the object of religion is a "highly exceptional and extremely impressive Other" (ibid). When not preoccupied by arguments of the rationality or irrationality of religion, anthropologists tend to take a predominantly semiotic approach, which can be seen in the familiarity with the first part of Geertz's definition of religion as a "system of symbols," "articulated in a system of social relationships". For a cultural phenomenology, however the second, more obscure part should be given equal weight – that religion acts "to establish long-standing moods and motivations". Csordas argues the way to get at these moods and motivations is through the phenomenologists' notion of Otherness. The sacred is "an existential encounter with Otherness that is a touchstone of our humanity," a touchstone because it "defines us by what we are not – by what is beyond our limits, or what touches us at our limits". Additionally, we will discover that this sense of otherness itself is phenomenologically grounded in our embodiment.

Csordas has now come to a working definition of self – "self is neither substance nor entity, but an indeterminate capacity to engage or become oriented in the world, characterized by effort and reflexivity. Self occurs as a conjunction of pre-reflective bodily experience, culturally constituted world or milieu, and situational specificity, or habitus. Amalgating Merleau-Ponty, Bourdieu and Heidegger, Csordas defines self

processes as orientational processes in which aspects of the world are thematized, with the result that the self is objectified, most often as a 'person' with a cultural identity or set of identities". While Hallowell was the first anthropologist to propose a "proto-phenomenological" theory of the self based on "orientation," by basing the key concept of self on self-awareness – recognizing oneself as an "object in a world of objects," Csordas critiques that he "cast his analysis at the level of the already-objectified self". In contrast, Merleau-Ponty is interested in the 'preobjective' or 'prereflective'.- "perception begins in the body, and ends in objects". The body is a "setting in relation to the world" and consciousness is the "body projecting itself into the world". Phenomenology is a science of "existential beginnings, not of already-constituted cultural products". Hence the focus on the "indeterminateness" of the self.

Csordas uses Merleau-Ponty's focus on the indeterminacy of orientation to correct for Bourdieu's more structuralist and representationalist approach which he argues leaves little room for individual agency. For Bourdieu, the "socially informed body is the principle generating and unifying all practices and consciousness in a form of strategic calculation fused with a system of objective potentialities". Parallel to Merleau-Ponty, Bourdieu's goal is to move the study of perception from objects to the process of objectification; his goal for a theory of practice is to move beyond analysis of the social fact as opus operatum, to analysis of the modus operandi of social life. (p. 9) He finds this modus operandi in the concept of "habitus," defined as a system of "perduring dispositions," a system what constitutes the "unconscious, collectively inculcated principle for the generation and structuring of both practices and representation. (ibid) This is promising because it highlights the "lived, acted" content of the behavioral

environment which synthesizes behavior and environment in one term, habitus. For Bourdieu as well the body is also central – the "principle generating and unifying all practices" is the socially informed body with all its tastes and distastes (p. 10)

Finishing out Csordas's conception, another important theme is the self as an "indeterminate capacity of orientation". Here again Csordas draws on Merleau-Ponty, who argues that existence is indeterminate "insofar as it is the very process by which the hitherto meaningless takes on meaning.. chance is transformed into reason.. we shall give the name 'transcendence" to this act in which existence takes up, to its own account, and transforms such a situation" (ibid). As Csordas underscores, Merleau-Ponty's transcendence is "not mystical, but grounded-in-the-world, such that existential indeterminacy becomes the basis for an inalienable freedom" (ibid). In turn, for Bourdieu, while the synthesis of practical domains in a unitary habitus is predicated on indeterminacy, it does not lead to transcendence. Instead of an existential indeterminacy, Bourdieu's is a logical indeterminacy, which is the "basis for transposition of different schemes into different practical domains, forming the basis for the polysemy and ambiguity that allows for improvisation in everyday life" (p. 11). So, although a shared paradigm of embodiment leads both to a principle of indeterminacy, Csordas argues that the critical difference is that Boudieu's logical principle becomes the condition for semiotic improvisation, while Merleau-Ponty's existential principle becomes the condition for phenomenological transcendence" (ibid). This difference is important for how we construe orientation among selves or within a collectivity. As Csordas summarizes, "the locus of these differences is Bourdieu's rejection of the concepts of

lived experience, intentionality, and the distinction between consciousness in itself and for itself" (p. 12).

For now, in contrast, Csordas sides with Merleau-Ponty and his insistence on a concept of intersubjectivity, where "any actor's adoption of a position presupposes being situated in an intersubjective world". Csordas finds this the moment where semiotics and phenomenology "diverge," but interestingly, also where they meet. This concept is important because intersubjectivity is not "an interpenetration of isolated intentionalities, but an interweaving of paths of behavior" (p. 13). Because body and consciousness are one, intersubjectivity is also a copresence (ibid). Another's emotion is "immediate because it is grasped preobjectively, and familiar insofar as we share the same habitus" (ibid). In turn, the preobjective character of another person as "another myself" is a major part of what "distinguishes our experience of the social other from our experience of the sacred other, for the latter is in a radical sense 'not myself'" (p. 14)

Lastly, Csordas brings back in the concepts of reflexivity and effort as "fundamental moments of the self" (Zaner):

> The self-reflectivity of the whole that is composed of bodily experience, habitus and world is a kind of 'inwardness' that results in the awakening of the senses of presence in the world and of copresence with others. This situated reflexivity is accompanied by an effort which is precisely the effort to become oriented in the face of the vertigo of essential indeterminacy encountered in this awakening" (ibid)

The advantage to this approach/order is that it "recognizes self-awareness and objectification (ie the creation of culture) as inevitable – there can be no other consequence of reflexivity and effort); it also implies that the orientation process is never

complete – the self is constantly “en route” (Zaner, Gabriel Marcel). Hence, for Csordas, “self processes achieve the self-objectification of persons”. (ibid).

The Charismatic World

Being a charismatic, then, is constituted by a particular “style of relationship to divinity” – that of a ‘personal relationship’ with Jesus and “direct access to divine power and inspiration through a series of ‘spiritual gifts ‘ or ‘charisms’” (p. 17). The notion of a relationship to the deity is a ‘template for orientation in the world, and the exercise of spiritual gifts is a template for self processes that bring about that orientation” (ibid). Unlike the evangelical language of being “born again,” or the typical psychotherapeutic notion of finding one’s “true self,” charismatics tend to use the term “new self” in the sense of “coming to know what I am in Christ”. But these processes do not happen in a cultural vacuum, but in engagement with the psychocultural themes of spontaneity, intimacy and control.

In turn these “self processes addressed to these three themes become operative within a coherent ritual system”. Csordas points out that Catholic charismatic ritual performance is characterized by a “marked linguisticality” in that “most of what goes on is verbal,” and is in this sense a “religion of the ‘word’…bound by the mortar of oral performance, ritual events become the building blocks of Catholic Charismatic life in a manner distinct from societies typically encountered in the anthropological literature” (p. 20). Because ritual events like prayer meetings are both “historically and structurally prior to the generation of distinctive patterns of thought, behavior and social

organization," (given they are a result of outreach by Pentecostals) ritual creates society as a self-affirmation, rather than the other way around (p. 21). Csordas divides charismatic ritual events into three main classes: prayer meetings, initiation ceremonies and healing services. Ritual language within any of these classes of events can be divided into a system of four major genres – prophesy, teaching, prayer and sharing. Whereas performance of ritual genres can be understood as a rhetorical means of ordering experience and directing attention, the concrete character of the Charismatic world can be found in the movement's specialized "vocabulary of motives" (Mills). The motives are "worlds with specialized religious meaning which are constantly circulated in the genres of ritual language" (p. 22). In turn, they play a role in orientational self-processes insofar as their use both "anticipates the situational consequences of participants' actions and implies strategies for action". (ibid)

The charismatic world includes several types of "culturally reified persons," including humans, God (deity which is really three persons – Father, Son, Holy Spirit, corresponding to mind-body-spirit), deceased human spirits, human embryos and fetuses, Satan, Virgin Mary, saints (to a lesser extent), and angels.

Summarizing his dual project of a cultural phenomenology of charismatic healing as well as constructing a theory of self, Csordas argues:

> We will examine how, in the conjunction of these self-processes and the three psychocultural themes with respect to which they are oriented, the indeterminate self is objectified and represented as a particular kind of person with a specific identity. This self is sacred insofar as it is oriented in the world and defines what it means to be human in terms of the wholly "other" than human (van der Leeuw, Eliade, Otto). The sense of the divine other is cultivated by participation in a coherent ritual system. This ritual system is embedded in, and helps to continually create, a behavioral environment in which participants embody a coherent set of dispositions or habitus. These are the elements that constitute the webs of significant – or of embodied existence – within which the sacred self comes into being. To be healed is to inhabit the Charismatic world as a sacred self. (p. 24).

In the chapters that follow, Csordas gives a remarkable "embodied" account of the role of culturally constituted self processes of imagination, memory, language and emotion combined with the North American psychocultural themes of intimacy, spontaneity and control, examining ritual healing with remarkably insightful results. His examination of the way imagination is used somatically by charismatics to open up different sensory realms, in ways not typically examined given the dominance of visual representation is quite illuminating, as is his exploration of how the charismatic imaginary is articulated through metaphors and language demonstrates the interpenetration of body and language.

His examination of the role of deliverance, a "domesticated" form of exorcism, is particularly interesting for our topic, as he examines the way in which the charismatic demonology can give insight into the contemporary alienation we are interested in. Csordas argues that the proliferation of demons and need for deliverance reveals a deep and profound "alienation of self".

Of primary interest is his idea, hinted at above, that the "sacred," which includes the deity and demons in their positive and negative modes, is based on a sense of the "alterity" or "otherness" of the body. While a theme that Csordas developed mostly implicitly, given the sensitivity of his topic and ethnographic context, it is a theme essential for examination of the role of sexuality in the Charismatic context. For it implies that Charismatic demonology and the widespread perception of the need for deliverance of evil spirits in healing masses is a reflection of the sense of somatic alienation and sexual repression/regulation in Charismatic and Pentecostal culture, one

that has only gotten more severe with the seepage of dominionist theology into charismatic practices via the “Third Wave” of Pentecostalism, and the pragmatic “health and wealth” gospel on the other (Cho 2001).

“Renewalist Religion”: The rise of an “authentic” Global Christianity or a Theocratic Christian Fascism in the “post-industrial” era?

While Csordas does not choose to make explicit “value judgments” about different aspects of the “profound conservatism, including sexual” of the Charismatic belief system, particularly its more repressive and authoritarian aspects, at least not till the end of the book, his analysis in many ways speaks for itself. In a rather jarring contrast, Harvey Cox’s analysis of charismatic practices (1995) does make a “value judgment,” a largely positive one. If nothing else, it is clear from Csordas’s analysis that the charismatic practices, while illustrative of the creative capacities of humans, exhibit a deeply alienated sense of these creative capacities. In a sense, while it is admirable that charismatics make their own world, the problem is that they make it without knowing it. Cox, in turn, no doubt with the best intentions of being non-judgmental toward something largely outside of his direct realm of experience, and which has traditionally been looked down upon by the mainstream churches, seeks to valorize them as “legitimate” “authentic” experiences of primordial spirituality, an attempt to “re-enchant” a “dis-enchanted” modernity. Yet, if they are based on a deep sense of somatic alienation, particularly in relation to the complete alterity of one’s own body, I think this is a highly problematic, if not dangerous, position, as Adorno’s “emotional release technique”

analysis of Pentecostal emotional outpouring suggests – where antisocial, taboo emotions become socially sanctioned toward questionable ends, such, as Adorno suggests in his study of rightwing radio, the "pogrom". The "emotional release" of the Tea Party and rightwing radio of today dovetail with such an intuition.

In another jarring contrast, Chris Hedges, a Harvard Divinity School graduate, student of the progressive theologian William Sloane Coffin, and longtime *New York Times* foreign correspondent specializing in the politics of American and Middle East politics and societies, whose father, a liberal, but tee-totaling minister in upstate New York advocated for the rights of gays and lesbians, makes the argument in *American Fascists* (2007) that the new Christian Right, of which "renewalists" (Pew 2006) such as Catholic Charismatics are a part, is led surreptitiously by the explicitly authoritarian theology of dominionism, the Reconstructionist theology which seeks to re-impose (re-construct) a literal understanding of biblical law on society, and whose chief ideologue, Rousas Rushdooney, is the primary influence of the Christian homeschooling movement. Hedges argues that dominionism is best characterized as an American form of proto-fascism, or "Christo-fascism", whose dangerous apocalyptic rhetoric of destruction is frighteningly anti-tolerant and linked to a history of racial and ethnic cleansing. Hedges argues:

> The racist and brutal intolerance of the intellectual godfathers of today's Christian Reconstructionism is a chilling reminder of the movement's lust for repression. *The Institutes of Biblical Law* by R. J. Rushdoony, written in 1973, is the most important book for the dominionist movement. Rushdoony calls for a Christian society that is harsh, unforgiving and violent. His work draws heavily on the calls for a repressive theocratic society laid out by Calvin in *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, first published in 1536 and one of the most important works of the Protestant Reformation. Christians are, Rushdoony argues, the new chosen people of God and are called to do what Adam and Eve failed to do: create a godly, Christian state. The Jews, who neglected to fulfill God's commands in the Hebrew scriptures, have, in this belief system, forfeited their place as God's chosen people and have been replaced by Christians. (p. 13)

And of special note:

> *The death penalty is to be imposed not only for offenses such as rape, kidnapping and murder, but also for adultery, blasphemy, homosexuality, astrology, incest, striking a parent, incorrigible juvenile delinquency, and, in the case of women, "unchastity before marriage".* The world is to be subdued and ruled by a Christian United States. Rushdoony dismissed the widely accepted estimate of 6 million Jews murdered in the Holocaust as an inflated figure, and his theories on race often echo those found in Nazi eugenics, in which there are higher and lower forms of human beings. Those considered by the Christian state to be immoral and incapable of reform are to be exterminated. (ibid italics mine)

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Rushdooney was also "deeply antagonistic toward the federal government" laying the groundwork for the rightwing libertarian-religious right coalition operating in the Tea Party and the Republican party today. As Hedges details, Rushdooney believed the federal government should concern itself with little more than national defense, that education and social welfare should be handed over to the churches, and that "Biblical law must replace the secular legal code". Further, Hedges argues that it was Rushdooney's ideology that motivates and inspires much influential public figures as Pat Robertson, who along with Francis Schaeffer and other disciples, made it more palatable for the mainstream though it remains at the heart of the movement" (ibid). During the Bush Administration, many of its tenets were enacted through the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, channeling billions in federal funds to groups such as National Right to Life and Pat Robertson's Operation Blessing, as well as to innumerable Christian charities and organizations that did everything from running drug and pregnancy clinics to promoting sexual abstinence-only programs in schools. (ibid)

Further, Hedges makes a clear distinction between traditional fundamentalism and what he calls a "huge and disastrous" mutation of the new fundamentalism, which

fundamentally distorts the meaning of Christian concepts and engages in “logocide” of terms such as liberty and love:

> While traditional fundamentalism shares many of the darker traits of the new movement – such as a blind obedience to a male hierarchy that often claims to speak for God, intolerance toward nonbelievers, and disdain for rational, intellectual inquiry – it has never attempted to impose its belief system on the rest of the nation. And it has not tried to transform government, as well as all other secular institutions, into an extension of the church. The new radical fundamentalisms amount to a huge and disastrous mutation. Dominionists and their wealthy, right-wing sponsors speak in terms and phrases that are familiar and comforting to most Americans, but they no longer use words to mean what they meant in the past (p. 13-14).

As Hedges puts it, they “ engage in a slow process of ‘logocide,’ the killing of words”:

> The old definitions of words are replaced by new ones. Code words of the old belief system are deconstructed and assigned diametrically opposed meanings. Words such as “truth,” “wisdom,” “death,” “liberty,” “life,” and “love” no longer mean what they meant in the secular world. “Life” and “death” mean life in Christ or death to Christ, and are used to signal belief or unbelief in the risen Lord. “Wisdom” has little to do with human wisdom but refers to the level of commitment and obedience to the system of belief. “Liberty” is not about freedom, but the “liberty” found when one accepts Jesus Christ and is liberated from the world to obey Him. But perhaps the most pernicious distortion comes with the word “love,” the word used to lure into the movement many who seek a warm, loving community to counter their isolation and alienation. “Love” is distorted to mean an unquestioned obedience to those who claim to speak for God in return for the promise of everlasting life. The blind, human love, the acceptance of the other, is attacked as an inferior love, dangerous and untrustworthy”. (ibid)

Hedges argues that “as the process gains momentum - with some justices on the Supreme Court such as the ostensibly Catholic Antonin Scalia steeped in this ideology – America starts to speak a “new language”. There is a slow and inexorable hijacking of religious and political terminology. Terms such as “liberty” and “freedom” no longer mean what they meant in the past. Those in the movement speak of “liberty,” but they do not speak about the traditional concepts of American liberty – the liberty to express divergent opinions, to respect other ways of believing and being, the liberty of individuals to seek and pursue their own goals and forms of happiness. When used by the Christian Right, the term “liberty” means the liberty that comes with accepting a very narrowly conceived Christ and the binary worldview that acceptance promotes.” (p. 15)

Ultimately, Hedges argues that it should be the role of liberal, conscientious religious and non-religious persons to explicitly challenge and exclude such intolerance, as tolerating intolerance leads to the elimination of tolerance. Yet he is particularly concerned that "liberals" as traditionally understood, have become complacent and deluded - as dominionists are all too well aware - in their prerogative of "openness" and "dialogue" with everyone, even those who seek to eliminate them. For Hedges, fascism in a distinctly American form is hiding behind the Bible and religion and must be exposed and opposed forcefully. Similarly, Adorno argues in his studies of Christian rightwing talk radio from the 30s that, unlike Europe, where fascism did not take of have a religious hue, but was often critical of Christianity, fascist tendencies in the US take on a distinctly religious character. It is interesting to note the ecumenical nature of this assessment. For instance, Kevin Phillips (*American Theocracy,* 2006), one of the original strategists of the Republican Party's Southern strategy, now disillusioned with the GOP, is also in agreement that the ultimate and troubling goal of the Christian Right movement is to upend American democracy and replace it with a theocratic state.

Archaic Modernities and Despair in the De-industrial era

Persuasively, Hedges argues that the growth of the Christian Right and dominion theology is linked to despair resulting from the widespread decline of manufacturing jobs and the industrial economy in the Rust Belt. When people's futures are bleak and hope is in short supply, it is understandable that people would turn to religion, often one reliant

on strong moral absolutes, to help give them hope. Yet what is frightening is how this despair is being marshaled.

When we look at the history of the Catholic charismatic movement, for instance, it is illuminating to note where and when it took root and grew – at prayer meetings/rallies at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and at Notre Dame University in South Bend, Indiana, both located solidly in the Rust Belt (Csordas 1994). These revivals took place in the late 60s, and experienced their flourishing in the early and mid 70s, coinciding more or less with the rise of the global economic crisis, the post-industrial economy and the neoliberal restructuring that relocated manufacturing jobs to lower wage areas in the South and "developing" countries (Harvey 1989). The current seat of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal is at the highly conservative Franciscan University of Steubenville, (a college my own mother wished me to attend) in Ohio, 20 miles outside Pittsburgh, within the tri-state Pittsburgh area. Along with the neighboring community of Weirton, West Virginia, the Steubenville-Weirton area has suffered from the decline of the steel industry and manufacturing, with which it was long associated, in the 80s. Census figures show that from 1980 to 2000, the Steubenville-Weirton area experienced the greatest drop in inhabitants of any urban area in the country, and has gained notieriety for its high levels of political corruption (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steubenville). Under the leadership of Fr. Michael Scanlon, the rector-president since 1974, the university changed its name from the College of Steubenville to the Franciscan University of Steubenville, as part of a program of "restoring" its Catholic Heritage.

Csordas raises the question, in psychoanalytic language, of “regression in service of the ego” in his examination of charismatic practices (p. ?). While such language may smack of an overly reified, developmentalist Freudian terminology, it is not hard to get sense that the rise of deeply conservative moralities that recall or “re-imagine” the purity of previous eras – what Banu Subramaniam (in Jakobsen and Pellegrini, 2000) terms “archaic modernities” in the context of Hindu nationalism, are an understandable response to, as well as a production of, the terrifying forces of globalization and the neoliberal free market.

Lifeworld Left Behind?

In addition to the more recent impact of de-industrialization and globalization, approach this problematic from another angle, one that refers back more directly to the concerns that Csordas' phenomenological approach raises at the beginning of this chapter, how the widespread popularity and dispersal of charismatic practices are linked to a sense of alienation from one's body and environment, by examining of Husserl's problem of the estrangement of the “lifeworld” by modern science and technology, later developed by Habermas, Lefebvre, Heidegger and others. Husserl, in the *Crisis of European Sciences,* written on the eve of the rise of fascism in Germany in the mid-30s, argues that the mathematization underlying modern science and technology has resulted in a disconnection of science from the originary experiences of the everyday experience of the lifeworld. Galileo's thorough mathematization of nature, from which so many successes of the natural sciences have flowed, has resulted in the displacement of

philosophy and the "big questions" of existence from the concerns of science. In a section titled "The life-world as the forgotten meaning-fundament of natural science," Husserl argues:

> But now we must note something of the highest importance that occurred even as early as Galileo: the surreptitious substitution of the mathematically substructed world of idealities for the only real world, the one that is actually given through perception, that is ever experienced and experienceable – our everyday life-world. This substitution was promptly passed on to his successors, the physicists of all the succeeding centuries. (p. 49)

Husserl argues the problem goes back to ancient geometry, which was, in its way, already "removed from the sources of truly immediate intuition and originally intuitive thinking, sources from which the so-called geometrical intuition, i.e., that which operates with idealities, has at first derived its meaning." For "the geometry of idealities was preceded by the practical art of surveying, which knew nothing of idealities" (p. 49). But, Husserl argues, in what was a "fateful omission," Galileo didn't stop and reflect on the "meaning-fundament" upon which the idealizations of geometry and math were based. It could thus "appear that geometry, with its own immediately evident a priori 'intuition' and the thinking that operates with it, produces a self-sufficient, absolute truth which, as such – 'obviously' – could be applied without further ado." That this obviousness is an illusion remains hidden to Galileo and "the ensuing period". "Immediately with Galileo, then, begins the surreptitious substitution of idealized nature for prescientifically intuited nature":

> Thus all the occasional (even "philosophical") reflections which go from technical [scientific] work back to its true meaning always stop at idealized nature; they do not carry out the reflection radically, going back to the ultimate purpose which the new science, together with the geometry which is inseparable from it, growing out of prescientific life and its surrounding world, was from

> the beginning supposed to serve: a purpose which necessarily lay i*n* this prescientific life and was related to its life-world. […] To be sure, everyday induction grew into induction according to scientific method, but that changes nothing of the essential meaning of the pregiven world as the horizon of all meaningful induction. It is this world that we find to be the world of all known and unknown realities. To it, the world of actually experiencing intuition, belongs the form of space-time together with all the bodily shapes incorporated in it; it is in this world that we ourselves live, in accord with our bodily personal way of being. But here we find nothing of geometrical idealities, no geometrical space or mathematical time with all their shapes. (p. 50)

To what extent has the exclusion of the lifeworld, the everyday experience of perception of bodily living and being, and reflection back upon this experience, from the formalized, mathematized and methodologized framework of modern science and technology contributed to the sense of alienation experienced by large swathes of the public, living in the dehumanized strip-mall, exurb environments that Hedges depicts so well, making them susceptible to the "security and clarity" offered by dominion ideology? To what extent has the loss of a connection back to the immediacy of the "lifeworld" resulted in the profound alienation from and sense of alterity to the sense of one's body, as Csordas details?

Intimate Alien: An Immanent Critique of Korean Pentecostalism

Dong-Ho Cho, in his unpublished dissertation "*Intimate Alien: An Immanent Critique of Korean Pentecostalism,"* provides a fascinating and bleak analysis of the quality of spiritual "encounter" in Korean Pentecostalism, one of the largest and most vibrant contingents of global Pentecostalism, focusing specifically on the Yoido Full Gospel Church, the single largest Christian denomination in the world with 700,000 members. Taking an Adornian and Jamesian approach, his analysis concurs with many

of the assessments of both Hedges and Csordas as to the "alienated" elements in Pentecostal practices. Analyzing the church's popular literature, he sees a transformation of the traditional Christian message into a "pragmatic," "power of positive thinking," prosperity gospel, smacking of its US origins: corporate, expansionist logic and philosophical positivism. In its literalism, Cho reads the "collapse" of the subject-object distinction, the exclusion of mediation that makes it cousin to philosophical positivism. Within the charismatic practices at Yoido Full Gospel Church he sees a troubling "loss of reality," a regression to "secondary narcissism" and "secondary superstition" (Adorno 1994) that speaks to a distinctly post-modern context:

> Thus, the modern Pentecostalism in Korea attests the general social tendency toward what Frederic Jameson calls "de-differentiation," the interpenetration of economy, politics and culture as the realization of the logic of capital at the latest phase of its historical development. It is no surprise that the contemporary Pentecostalism shares the characteristics of cultural post-modernism that Jameson identifies with the cultural logic of transnational financial capitalism: flatness, the waning of affect and the predominance of euphoria, pastiche writing, the primacy of spatiality over temporality and the elimination of history (Jameson 1992: 1-66 cited in Cho, 239)

Working off of Adorno's studies of an astrology column in the 1940s and the radio addresses of Martin Luther Thomas, a fascist-style demagogue of the Christian Right in the 1930s, Cho is troubled by what he argues as the distinctly authoritarian elements in Korean Pentecostalism, a reflection of the string of totalitarian state regimes and internal division that Korea has endured in the modern era.

In his analysis of the phenomenon of "speaking in tongues" for instance, he argues that the "loss of reality" it exhibits can best be understood as:

> The *objet petit a* as a piece of the Real, ie, traumatic encounter with the thing-in-itself that cannot be symbolized but makes possible symbolization. Slavoj Zizek succinctly summarizes the dual function of the Lacanian Real: The Real 'erupts in the form of a traumatic return, derailing the

> balance of our daily lives, but it serves at the same time as a support of this very balance.' (Zizek 1992: 29). In glossolalia, the literal Christians (sic) find God's immediate answer, the "answer of the Real," to their quest of the divine manifestation in the here and now. […] What lends glossolalia the aura of the divine is not its intrinsic property, but its position as the only tangible evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the symbolic universe of Pentecostalism (Cho, p. 78)

Gender, Marianism and Apocalyptic Desire: The Catholic "Remnant"

One can see a remarkable and surprising seepage of apocalyptic premillennialist beliefs, know popularly as the Rapture, into traditional Marianism, perhaps via the charismatic movement. In my experience there has been much overlap between the Catholic charismatic movement and Marianism, though Csordas doesn't comment at all on this, even arguing that the Pentecostal influence on charismatics results in a minimization of the role of Mary. This change may very well be a post-80s development, perhaps a result of the popular Medjugorje appearances of the Virgin Mary in wartorn Yugoslavia, as well as the appearances of the Virgin Mary to Fr. Gobbi, founder of the Marian Movement of Priests, both of which may have drawn charismatics back into the Marian fold somewhat. In any case, there seems to be a remarkable confluence or perhaps cross-pollinization between Marianism and the influence of apocalyptic premillennialist beliefs into the charismatic movement. The apparitions of Mary in Medjugorge and to John Leary, for instance, are decidedly more "apocalyptic" than say, the apparitions of Fatima in 1917, which focused more on the need to pray for the conversion of Russsia from communism and atheism. Some critics even claim the Medjugorje appearances responded to a charismatic "prophecy" of a Marian apparition in Bosnia/Herzegovina two weeks before the apparitions themselves (Society of Saint Pius X website, http://www.sspx.org/miscellaneous/catholic_charismatic_renewal.htm) .

In contrast with domininionism, which is post-millennial, ie which argues that the Rapture (the return of Christ to fight the Anti-Christ and save the world) is not going to happen, and that instead the church of God must be built here on earth by humans via a theocratic state based on the literalist biblical beliefs. Premillennialism is historically linked to the early stirrings of Christian fundamentalism in both England (Darbyism) and the US. It is an understanding of the future based on a literal reading of the Old Testament where Jesus will return to "rapture" up his true believers, and the Antichrist will reign for seven years of tribulation before Jesus returns to triumph and preside over a thousand years of peace before the end of the world. Historically, this was very much a Protestant, not Catholic belief. The conflict between premillennial literalist beliefs (the Left Behind series and the Rapture) and postmillennial literalist beliefs (dominionism) are an interesting cleavage or contradiction between two huge segments of the Christian right movement, which is reflected as well in the charismatic movement. While the beliefs are theoretically incompatible, this does not seem to have prevented many people from holding aspects of both – Tim LaHaye of the bestselling Left Behind series is a good example – while one of the principle promoters of the premillennialist Rapture story, his Council on National Policy has helped anoint each Republican candidate since Reagan, a decidedly postmillennial role. This may reflect the changing nature of religious fundamentalism in the US – even the premillennial, more separatist aspects have become integrated paradoxically into a postmillennial, theocratic drive for power.

In "Before, the Cup was Filling Up. Now it is Flowing Over!: the Eschatology of Fluids" (in *Gender and Apocalyptic Desire*), Christy Cousino, examines a subgroup of Catholics (in which I would locate my own family) who refer to themselves as the

"Catholic Remnant" (echoing the "Faithful Remnant" self-description of what she terms their "evangelical cousins"). She examines the role of the image and symbolism of bodily fluids in their eschatological visions. Members of the Catholic Remnant have special devotion to the Virgin Mary and sometimes also refer to themselves or an associated group, person or ritual as "Marian". Drawing on the work of feminists (Kristeva) who locate the instability and impermanence of bodily fluids as the domain of the feminine and a threat to the stability of a masculine, patriarchal order, she argues that "the narratives these Catholics tell about the End implicate sex and reproduction, the defining cultural markers of women's bodies under patriarchy, at the very heart of salvation and damnation. Only by binding women and her sexual/reproductive flows can the spiritual and physical worlds be made safe and bountiful". Through a reading of the "rhetoric of fluids" in contemporary Catholic apocalyptic texts, she tries to show how the "body of woman, reduced to sexual and reproductive fluid, is not only a political, moral, and social battleground, but also an eschatological one [..] in the End Times, violence arises out of the body of woman and violence must keep it in check. The hostility articulates itself in an overriding image: a militarized Virgin Mary fighting a feminized devil in a final, decisive battle. The aggression ultimately leads to a cult of fertility, which expresses itself in blood." (p. 104).

It is interesting to note the extent to which this "Catholic Remnant" imagery is pastoral and blood-linked, suggesting an ostensibly pre-biopolitical or at least non-biopolitical (Foucault, 1990a) imaginary. One wonders if this is one of the directions that some conservative religious movements have gone in unconsciously as a response or resistance to the dominance of science. On the other hand, one can also see the ways in

which the imagery is also obsessed with reproduction, fertility, and sexuality generally, supporting Foucault's contention of the "profusion" of discourse about sexuality in the biopolitical era, even in the areas (conservative religious devotions) where one might least expect to find it.

Global Christianity: Onward and Upward?

Yet the whistle being blown by Hedges, Cho and others is of a markedly different pitch and timbre than that of some other prominent researchers and interpreters of the global renewalist Christian upsurge. Jenkins, in his *The Next Christendom*, argues that "Western" scholars has largely missed one of the most significant religious developments of all time – the rise of what he calls "global" or "Southern" Christianity. He argues that the locus of Christianity has moved to Africa, Latin America, and, to a lesser extent, Asia, from its previous moorings in Europe and North America. Taking a triumphalist tone, echoing David Martin, he blames the lack of recognition of this development on the liberal bias and denial of Euro-centric, "Western" observers on their disdain of the highly conservative, sexually and morally, but also market-friendly (health and wealth gospel) nature of the movements. Critiquing what he calls the "popular" notion of Christianity as primarily in the service of European imperial expansion, he ultimately lays a basis for the argument of the "authenticity" of the contemporary forms of Christianity around the globe, in an even less critical vein than Cox. Going back in time to early Christianity, the middle Ages and early modern exploration and missionary movements, he details the spread and dominance of early Christianity including overlooked "heretical" movements,

such as Nestorianism, in North Africa, the Near East and Asia to boost his claims of an "authentic" "global Christianity" overlooked or criticized by what he views as a Western elite.

What Martin and Jenkins completely dismiss or overlook is the way in which the rapid expansion of contemporary churches and sects in Africa, Latin America and Asia have been nurtured by conservative Western missionary money and the political nature of the way missionary efforts have been shaped. In the case of the Catholic church, for instance, the turn towards more politically conservative religious movements has been greatly affected by the highly authoritarian moves of the Vatican in the 80s to shut down liberation theology and other dissenting movements – what many observers have considered the "abrogation" of the reforms of the Vatican II council, which in turn raises questions of legitimacy of the current Vatican regime and its very structure, and the contemporary Catholic missionary movements it supports. The even more widespread, well-funded evangelical missionary movements are deeply involved in colonial projects, providing pathways to citizenship and opportunity in the "developed" world, especially in various parts of Africa and Asia, providing, of course, one is willing to convert. Jenkins and Martin's interpretations are problematic in the sense that they founder uncritically on the so-called "is-ought" problem of modern philosophy: they go from empirical assessments of what "is" – statistical and demographic analysis – to judgments of "ought: because Christians exist in such large numbers globally, they must be "authentic" and "legitimate" and therefore beyond criticism, a variation of "might makes right". Questions such as Hedges raises or feminists or gay or lesbian activists or members raise are not addressed or are summarily dismissed before being examined. As well, Jenkins

argument for "authenticity" seems to be a clever, and ultimately cynical, move to appropriate arguments about the postcolonial "subaltern" to deflect criticism, an attempt to foster a kind of "subaltern" Christian identity politics. In his framing, any such criticism, hence, is inevitably Euro-centric or anti-Christian. Yet, as Hedges, Csordas and Cox show, the rise of Pentecostal and evangelical movements are not only in the Global South, they are right here in the US, in the ostensible center of the so-called "modern" world. And the conservative tenor of issues of sex and gender between Pentecostal, charismatic, evangelical and conservative Catholic movements in the US and their counterparts abroad are too similar to write off as a coincidence. Rather, I would argue, they are part and parcel of the same larger movement or social tendency. Appealing to a supposed "marginal" subaltern status is not a legitimate basis for insulating them from criticism.

The case of the Anglican Communion is instructive. The power of conservative, evangelical and charismatic-style movements and a conservative bishopry in Africa and other parts of the "developing" world have threatened to split up the Anglican Communion, if English and American Anglican bishops (viewed as part of the "mainline" denominations by Jenkins and others) do not stop the election of gay ministers, bishops and the allowance of gay marriage. This is a remarkable show of power and force that is not simply concerned with the local matters of churches in the "developing" worlds, but of the status of European and American morals. It has successfully tied the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan, who has been forced to compromise on the equal recognition of gays and lesbians.

Similarly, the recent passage of an "anti-homosexuality" law in Uganda to institute the death penalty for homosexuals, shortly after a series of talks by three prominent evangelical ministers from the US to thousands of Ugandans about the "evils" of homosexuality, belie Jenkin's and Martin's fantasy of the "authenticity" of "global" Christianity, and its separation from any "Western" missionary influences ("Americans' Role Seen in Uganda Anti-gay Push," *New York Times*, January 3, 2010). The recent riots in Kenya, another center of intense Western evangelical missionizing, over a rumored "gay marriage" that resulted in widespread violence against suspected gays ("False Gay Marriage Rumor Sparks Kenyon Riots," *Gay City News*, February 18, 2010) is also disconcerting.

If these movements are truly so vulnerable to oppression by secular, Western cultural critics, , how could they be wielding so much power? On the other hand, given that they clearly have so much power, why should they be insulated from criticism? Such power and force belies any simply assignment of these movements as the "marginal," "oppressed," subaltern movements Jenkins and Martin give them. The basic problem is that Jenkins wants to have his cake and eat it to. By emphasizing their marginality, they want to protect them from "western" Eurocentric" criticism and scrutiny, but by emphasizing their power and numbers, they wish to give them recognition as a "moral majority".

On the one hand, Jenkins and Martin argue that the conservative, patriarchal morality of the new religious movements of "global Christianity" is a result of the democratic "choices" of the oppressed, subaltern of the world (of which they are apparently self-appointed spokespersons). Given their numbers and power, these

“choices” should be accepted and respected as “legitimate,” and “authentic,” without being subject to further criticism or scrutiny. But as Franz Fanon pointed out, the “oppressed” often take on the worst aspects of the “oppressor”. Criticism and scrutiny is how these dynamics are discerned. For instance, the symmetry of the conservative morality of these “non-Western” movements with the profoundly conservative, patriarchal “modeling” of sex and gender in the best-selling *Left Behind* series (70 million novels) seems too much of a coincidence to be accidental.

Reich, Foucault: Repression? Regulation?

Wilhelm Reich, in his *Mass Psychology of Fascism,* an analysis of the rise of German fascism, argues that the followers of fascism achieved sexual release through identification with their leader, through which they feel powerful and omnipotent. Building on Freud’s notion that the drives towards sex and aggression have been fundamentally redirected in problematic ways in the “civilizing, modern context,” he locates the susceptibility of the German working classes to fascism in the sexual repression, itself a re-direction of the aggressive drive against oneself, endemic to the patriarchal structure. His solution to this problem was the promotion of sexual “liberation,” particularly through sexual education, which he promoted as part of the hygenics movement. He also worked to have sex education and liberation included in the socialist movements of his time, which was largely not well received, till the 60s. The

sexual revolution of the 60s and the consequent feminist, lesbian and gay liberation movements augured an ostensibly more expansive and democratic approach to sexuality. Or at least so the story goes. Foucault later problematizes the concept of sexual liberation for an essentialized notion of gender and sexuality, an overly "naturalized" conception which he argues serves the appropriation of the formerly moral/religious disciplining of sexuality for the regulatory biopolitical agenda of modern science and the state, with its own forms of control and rationalization: normalization and medicalization. Yet what is remarkable in the post-60s era is the emergence of radical religious movements, in the mid to late 70s, particularly in Christianity and Islam, which, by the 80s, seek a bald and unapologetic (albeit thoroughly "imagined") authentic return to a lost "purity" via the re-imposition of patriarchal gender roles and sexuality within their own movements and society at large. It is this (desired) return to an openly repressive regime, which makes a rethinking of the repressive hypothesis, or perhaps, a Freudian-Foucauldian repressive-regulatory synthesis, or hybrid, of interest.

Dominionism, Marcuse, Rushdoony and Sexual "Liberation"

It is also interesting if not rather odd, to note that Rushdoony, the chief ideologue of dominionism, whose desire to reconstruct society based on a literal reading of the Old Testament has increasingly penetrated the charismatic movement in the "Third Wave" of Pentecostalism, wrote a book on Freud, in 1965, reflecting the debates around Freudianism of the time, as well as his attempts to grapple with and resist modern secular modes of thought which had come to critique traditional religious thought. It shows the

penetration of psychoanalytic thought into the radar and imaginary of fundamentalist thinking of the time. It is an eerily sophisticated book, in which he seemingly offers a somewhat sympathetic reading of Freud. He is particularly interested in the problem of guilt, and ultimately, death. He finds it interesting that Freud, unlike later "revisionists," views guilt as endemic to the human condition, which he finds analogous to original sin. He is also taken with Freud's idea that guilt increases with the "progress" or intensification, of "civilization". For Freud, this is due to his evolutionary understanding of man's history of the "primal horde," the rebellion of the sons against the father, culminating in parricide in order to possess the sexual, incestual "goods" of the mother and sisters, and the first step towards a more democratic social structure. For Freud, the later "repression" of these instinctual drives by the civilization process fuels the guilt resulting from the original deeds themselves (through identification and affection for the father), such that the more repressed we are, the more guilty we feel. Rushdoony critiques the later revisionists, for denying the "reality" of guilt and death, by taking a less biological, and more cultural approach, which locates the problem of guilt and repression in one's contemporary culture and society, rather than in the "timeless," biological human condition. For Rushdoony, this is cultural relativism and an attempt to replace God with man. Of course, Rushdoony doesn't buy Freud's argument either, but seems to find in Freud a confirmation with (or at least an easy substitutability for) his belief in the God-given sense of guilt, resulting from original sin, ie Adam and Eve's originary disobedience of God's instructions in the Garden of Eden. Ultimately, however, Rushdoony argues that, Freud's toleration of homosexuality and perversion,

and belief in sex as a source of vitality is a reversion to the paganism of the ancient "fertility cults":

> Freudianism thus leads to the concept of perversion as a potency pill, which it has increasingly become to many. For many more, adultery has become a milder form of rejuvenation. In every instance where Freudian concepts have permeated thought, the old fertility cult concept of revitalization and rejuvenation through a return to chaos and through Saturnalia, an overthrow of moral order, is close to the surface. The abnormal is the primitive and the primitive is the vital. If Freud is right, then the well-springs of vitality from the id, man's basic reservoir of energy, are best tapped when the repressions are defeated and incest, murder and cannibalism prevail! (p. 63)

Besides the "revisionist" sidelining of guilt, Rushdooney critiques the emphasis they take off death, and for this reason, lumps Marcuse in the revisionists.

It is true that both Reich and Marcuse critique the emphasis Freud places on the aggressive instincts or death drive, Thanatos. In *Reich Speaks of Freud*, Reich (1967) explicitly argues that Freud "shrinks away" from the liberatory aspects and radical implications of the life drive, the drive towards unity and cohesion, or Eros. Marcuse, on the other hand, argues that the life, or libidinal drive can and should be fostered and cultivated to the extent possible, used as a resource to keep the aggressive instincts, or death drive, at bay, or at least minimize its influence relative to the instincts or drive, to life. He suggests a notion of "libidinal rationality" – the combination of pleasure or libido with thought or reason, as a synthesis that could help minimize the destructive aspects of rationalization, which, in a sense, has been caught up with the drive to aggression. Ultimately, Rushdoony views such approaches as a denial of the "reality" of death, which for Rushdoony, of course, means death for those not "saved" by Christ. For Rushdoony, only Christians can deny death, not secularists.

Marcuse, in *Eros and Civilization*, critiques the revisionists for backing away from what he sees as the essential "metapsychological" or philosophical aspects of Freudian theory. Freud thinks that repression is inherent in the civilizing process, as the instinctual demands of the "pleasure principle" are inevitably confronted and replaced by civilization's "reality principle" which demands the curbing, redirection and sublimation of instinctual demands, both on the ontogenetic and phylogenetic levels. For Freud, civilization is inherently based in repression. But Marcuse thinks that a non-repressive civilization is possible, based on two concrete and realistic grounds, neither abstract nor utopian: first, that "Freud's theoretical conception itself seems to refute his consistent denial of the historical possibility of a non-repressive civilization", and, second, that "the very achievements of repressive civilization seem to create the preconditions for the gradual abolition of repression". To elucidate these grounds, Marcuse reinterprets Freud's theoretical conception in terms of its own "socio-historical content" (p. 6), criticizing the revisionists for undercutting the most progressive aspects of Freud's theories inadvertently:

> In contrast to the revisionists, I believe that Freud's theory is in its very substance "sociological," and that no new cultural or sociological orientation is needed to reveal this substance. Freud's "biologism" is social theory in a depth dimension that has been consistently flattened out by the Neo-Freudian schools. In shifting the emphasis from the unconscious to the conscious, from the biological to the cultural factors, they cut off the roots of society in the instincts and instead take society at the level on which it confronts the individual as his ready-made "environment," without questioning its origin and legitimacy. The Neo-Freudian analysis of this environment thus succumbs to the mystification of societal relations, and their critique moves only within the firmly sanctioned and well-protected sphere of established institutions. Consequently, the Neo-Freudian critique remains in a strict sense ideological: it has no conceptual basis outside the established system; most of its critical ideas and values are those provided by the system. Idealistic morality and religion celebrate their happy resurrection: the fact that they are embellished with the vocabulary of the very psychology that originally refuted their claim ill conceals their identity with officially desired and advertised attitudes. (p. 6)

Instead, Marcuse sees within the tension between the pleasure principle and the reality principle the possibility of freedom. The memory of instinctual gratification and fulfillment, ie freedom, that the pleasure principle retains within the unconscious, both in memories of early childhood for the individual, and in the distant past on a social level, make demands on the repressive function of the reality principle to curb its own repressive tendencies and strive for a more sane, less repressive world. With this sentiment, Marcuse argues for the need for a "libidinal rationality" which would integrate pleasure and libido with reason to lessen repression and attain more freedom.

Ultimately, though, for Rushdoony, such a project inevitably smacks of "playing God", as he locates the main problem that Freudianism represents in the Enlightenment's attempt to replace man for God:

> ..Freud, while expressing Enlightenment thought, was also its culmination, an end of an age thinker. The modern era had its first stirrings with the Renaissance, and came into its own with the Enlightenment. Its key concept was the centrality of autonomous man, so that man assumed the prerogatives of God. (p. 68)

While Rushdoony critiques the technical and scientific zeal surrounding the psychiatric experiments of the 50s, seemingly aligning himself with the anti-psychiatry movement of the 60s, arguing for a defense of "civil liberties" and the role of a layman, do-it-yourself approach against that of the medical "expert," we can see the early development of what Hedges calls the stealthy "logocide" of notions of freedom and liberty. "Civil liberties" for Rushdoony does not mean what has been commonly thought of as a defense against the totalitarian control of the state, it refers strictly to the prerogatives of a theocratic framework.

Another Look at the Culture Wars

It is interesting to compare Rushdoony's perspective with that of someone like Thomas Frank. Frank argues in *What's the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives won the Heart of America,* that the re-emergence of creationism and the victory of conservatives in the culture wars can be explained by the unmooring of liberalism and the Democratic party from economic programs and positions that advocate for working Americans. Essentially, globalization, job flight, the erosion of the manufacturing base and the neoliberal shrinking of public services has resulted in the susceptibility of the American working classes, particularly the white working class, to a reactionary cultural conservativism. The implication of Frank's argument is that the focus of the left-liberal movements and specifically the Democratic Party on cultural issues such as feminism, gay and lesbian rights, civil liberties, abortion, prayer in schools, etc. has alienated the white working class and helped consolidate the "base" of the conservative movement. It is an argument re-asserting the primacy of the economic over the cultural.

Such a position is diametrically opposed to someone like that of Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci, writing at a time of the ascendancy of fascism in Italy, argued that given the arrival of the conditions of a post-scarcity society with the development of the productive capability of economic conditions, that the main terrain of social struggle had shifted to the cultural sphere, coining the term "culture war". Given the ability of industrial society to satisfy the material needs of everyone, it was now an ideologically-influenced struggle for cultural hegemony over how society would be organized. In this sense, Gramsci and Frank take opposite positions. It is interesting to see what contingent

has internalized this position best. In my research, I randomly came across the webpage of a conservative, religious right blogger arguing that the Right needs to read Gramsci. He notes ironically that conservative people are often shocked that he's advocating for people to read a Marxist, but he notes the importance for the right to be aware of the crucial struggle over culture and ideology that the "culture war" embodies. While there is a liberal tendency to dismiss the religious right as "quacks" or "flakes," it is noteworthy to remember Marsden's argument that the intellectual strength and resources of a small, but militant faction of fundamentalism has always exerted on the broader, evangelical movement and helped shape its actual contours, an intellectual influence that has largely been concealed, not correlating to simple empirical observation. Marsden wrote this in 1980, and it is interesting to note that Rushdooney is not even mentioned. When one looks at the militant positions that Rushdoony and dominionism take, and the success the religious right has had in comparison to the "left" since the 60s, it seems fairly clear who has been reading their Gramsci.

Jakobsen and Pellegrini in *Love the Sin: Sexual Regulation and the Limits of Religious Tolerance,* in their own way make a similar argument to that of Hedges. They argue that the "tolerance" occasionally advocated for those of alternate sexualities by society and churches is not enough. Simple toleration of homosexuality ultimately denies the "recognition" crucial to real personhood. Tolerance of undesirables' existence falls short desirable standards, partly due to the constant comparison to racial civil rights and (to a lesser extent, gender). It also leaves those within a paradigm of "tolerant pluralism" ultimately still vulnerable to those who hide behind a temporary veil of "tolerance," as Hedges argues dominionists do, ultimately seeking to eliminate their right to existence

under a future theocratic society. Again, the current situation of the worldwide Anglican Communion is revealing. The striking rise of a patriarchal and homophobic religious right within the institutional hierarchy of the "developing world" as well as a significant minority in the US, particularly in the South, which threatens to tear the Anglican Communion apart, harkens back to the "culture war" of the abolition period. It speaks to the heightening salience of a "cultural war" over homosexuality.

Sexuality, sex abuse and the predicament of contemporary Catholicism

Since 2002, when a critical mass of stories about cases of sexual abuse of minors by priests, many of them suppressed for decades by guilt and shame, cascaded into daily coverage in the media, it has been clear that the Catholic church faced a major crisis. As Eugene Kennedy writes in *The Unhealed Wound: the Church and Human Sexuality* (2001), the once lauded figure of the masculine, self-controlled priest, a model of male sexuality, earlier in the century, has deteriorated to the image of a child-abuser. With over 4,000 accusations from 1950 to 2002, 4% of priests were implicated. While conservative commentators such as George Weigel have blamed the crisis on the "culture of dissent" of the 60s and Mel Gibson on the liberal reforms of Vatican II, other writers, many ex-priests themselves, such as Michael Sipe and Eugene Kennedy, argue that the problem stems from the institutional repression and power prerogative of the Catholic Church itself. Kennedy argues:

> …the sexual problematic for Catholicism is a function of its acting as an Institution does rather than as a Church should, so that its bureaucratic attentions infect what its pastoral possibilities would otherwise heal. This bureaucracy is a shadow Church that reflects less the glory of God than the cunning of the world, less a sense of eternity than of drowning in time. As an institution, its chief goal is to perpetuate itself – for it is threatened more by time than by eternity.
> This shadow Church keeps itself together as an Institution by investing its power in keeping its members in a frightened and dependent state. Wise in the world's ways and friendly with the Mammon of Iniquity, *the Institution knows that if it can control sexuality, it can maintain its mastery over human beings.* (p. 10, emphasis mine)

Kennedy locates the "sexual problematic" for Catholicism in the knowledge of the Institutional hierarchy that if "it can control sexuality, it can maintain its mastery over human beings". An interesting question is to what extent this control includes the church's workers, its foot soldiers and enforcers of control, as well. Viewed as abusers in the recent scandals, to what extent are they part of the abused as well? On the one hand priests are clearly part of this institutional hierarchy of intended control, as on a day-to-day level, certainly many priests are involved with this control or "mastery" over humans. Yet, as Kennedy articulates in his sympathy for the "woundedness" of priests in relationship to their sexuality, he finds them to be generally subject themselves to the same "repressive" imperative of the Institution. On the other hand, as many of the abused declare (as articulated through their representative group, the Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests [SNAP]), as abusers, they are implicated in power and its abuse – it is precisely because of their status as representatives of God in the community that they are entrusted with so much deference, power and respect. In this case, perhaps, too much power. But clearly, from a Freudian or Marcusian standpoint, they are subject to the repression of the church as well, as are the upper echelons of the church hierarchy, which translates, essentially, into self-repression.

As someone who grew up within the Catholic church, I have to object to the simplistic explanations put out by those such as George Weigel and Jenkins, who blame the problem of the sexual abuse of minors by priests on the liberal reforms of Vatican II. Rather, I would suggest that it is more likely due to the failure to follow through with these reforms. The ironclad grip of a tightly controlled sexual regulation, the failure to ever really deal with the issues of sexuality in a more enlightened way, is self-evident to many who have lived through the past several decades in the Catholic Church, as Kennedy suggests. It is well known that a majority of cardinals were in favor of giving approval to birth control, as were the majority of parish priests, who knew the daily pain of couples who struggled with the fear of having unplanned pregnancies or pregnancies they couldn't afford, and the stress it caused in their relationships via the inhibiting of intimacy during periods of fertility. Yet with the premature passing of John the XXIII, these hard decisions, which required personal strength, were left to Pope Pius VI, of less strong conviction, who ultimately equivocated and shrank away from the passing of measures contradicting the long term position of the church, and the conflicts that implied (Kung 2004). Of course, the majority of American Catholic families have moved on, with some ninety percent using contraception today. But it set up a system of built-in denial about sexuality that has festered and helped produce, I think, the current predicament and scandals of today.

For example, in coming to terms with my own sexuality in high school, I discovered there was no gay and lesbian student group at my high school, due to the explicit forbiddance by the Vatican. This was even though our school was a relatively liberal school in a relatively liberal diocese, run by principal who left the priesthood and

married a nun - even after taking into account the right-ward shifts that happened after the removal of the progressive Archbishop Hunthausen from the Seattle diocese in the mid-80s. As Cardinal Ratzinger, then Prefect of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, wrote to Hunthausen in 1984 "The Archdiocese should withdraw all support from any group which does not unequivocally accept the teaching of the Magisterium concerning the intrinsic evil of homosexual activity. This teaching has been set forth in this Congregation's Declaration on Sexual Ethics and more recently in the document, Educational Guidance in Human Love, issued by the Congregation for Catholic Education in 1983." (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raymond_Hunthausen). Interestingly, the group that initiated the investigation of Hunthausen was a conservative group called "Catholics United for the Faith," based in, unsurprisingly, Steubenville, Ohio. Unfortunately queer student groups are still banned. This is a real injustice to all queer youth in Catholic schools.

Charismatic Practices: The Impact of Pentecostalism and domininionism on Catholicism

One of the revealing discoveries I have made in studying the Catholic charismatic movement has been the realization of the extent of the impact of Protestantism on American Catholicism, particularly Pentecostal Protestantism. Only on reflection and personal research much later than my involvement with this movement did this awareness emerge. It is particularly strange given the strong identification as Catholics in my family, as well as the Catholic communities we interacted in. Researching the history of

the charismatic movement, one finds that it emerges from outreach by Protestant Pentecostals to Catholics, under the auspices of the burgeoning ecumenical movement partly opened by the Vatican II council. One might consider this Protestantization an unintended, and largely unrecognized (by many participants) consequence of Vatican II. Given the influence of Reconstructionist theology within Pentecostalism, and Pentecostal influence on the charismatic movement, it seems that paradoxically with the abrogation of the enlightened reforms of Vatican II has come the creeping influence of dominionism and premillennialism into the Catholic church.

Damon Linker, in his *Theocons* (2007), argues that the media of recent has focused too much solely on the influence of the evangelical right, and missed what he thinks is actually the significant impact of the below-the-radar influence of a movement of conservative, rightwing Catholic intellectuals and writers (a significant number of which are ex-evangelicals who "converted" to Catholicism, and bring much of their evangelical culture and attitude with them), particularly associated with the *First Things* journal, with which Linker was once affiliated, who wish to consolidate the religious right in the US around a loosely "catholic" or "universal" ideology, pushing the undermining of church and state, and the promotion of revisionist history regarding the relationship between religion and democracy. Yet, weighing the history and influence of dominion/Reconstructionist theology, it is hard not to see the latter, and particularly the influence of Rushdoony, as the primary or originary influence behind these Catholic theocons. The late John Neuhaus, for decades a Lutheran minister, once involved with the civil rights movement, turned steadily over the decades toward a more strict, reformed approach, converting to Catholicism and became a Catholic priest relatively

recently. It is hard not to read political, strategic motives by the evangelical power structure into this move as well, as the chronic shortage of Catholic priests leaves the Catholic Church increasingly open to evangelical, Protestant influence, witnessed in the number of evangelical ministers "converting" to Catholicism and becoming Catholic priests. Many of these developments beg questions about the larger status and standing of institutional Catholicism globally and as well as nationally. Do some of these rather strange developments indicate a religion in decline? Or perhaps, one undergoing some version of secularization that supports the classic secularization thesis? Or one in a competition to the death with other Christian denominations and sects?

A People Adrift… The Sexual and Institutional Crisis of contemporary Catholicism

Peter Steinfels, a religion reporter for the *New York Times* for several decades, and a practicing Catholic, takes an institutional look at American Catholicism in *A People Adrift: the Contemporary Crisis in the Catholic Church* in the immediate wake of the sex abuse scandals that broke out in the Boston archdiocese. He charts the story of how the Boston scandals served as a catalyst, quickly spreading around the country as previously hidden stories surfaced, resulting in the highly publicized, media conflagration and national crisis that blew up in the early 2000s. Steinfels argued that, above all, the sex abuse scandals were due to a failure of leadership, particularly on the national episcopal level. The bishops and cardinals picked by John Paul II were men chosen for their

loyalty and obedience, not public leadership. Consequently, when crisis struck, there was a vacuum of leadership to prevent the situation from becoming the tragedy it did. Steinfels examines the significant leadership shown by the previous generation of episcopal leaders in the 80s on social justice issues of opposition to nuclear weapons and plants, and on economic justice, and the inability of the National Congregation of Bishops to take strong stands, other than on those of traditional morality, already pre-ordained by the Vatican.

He examines many below-the-radar issues, which may not have gotten as much media attention as those of female priests, homosexuality, contraception, abortion etc. These include battles over liturgical changes since Vatican II, such as the scrapping of long-planned changes in the liturgy to make it more gender inclusive, in the face of Vatican pressure against it. He also examines the precipitous decline in new vocations by priests and nuns, and its aging workforce – the religious "workers" who used to staff the once huge and still sizable network of Catholic parish elementary schools (which still educate one eighth of the US population, down from its height of one-quarter in the 60s), and even more impressive organization of hospitals, hospices and charity organizations. In their place has arisen, on the one hand, a large group of primarily female, mainstream to liberal, lay religious educators and ministers who have taken up the slack, and, on the other hand, a much smaller, but much more socially conservative, religiously orthodox, and, he argues, often less theologically educated group of young priests. These dynamics set up a variety of conflicts that he examines. On the one hand, there is a "crisis of Catholic identity" as the formerly immigrant, ethnic and working class population of Catholics becomes more middle-class, educated and professional. Without the numbers

of priests, nuns and brothers to maintain these institutions, their “Catholic” character is less evident. In addition, the huge network of schools, which helped to secure and maintain a Catholic identity, and hospitals, set up to carry out a part of the social justice mission of serving the poor and sick, now risk redundancy. There are plenty of public schools and secular hospitals, why exactly are they needed now? Particularly in the case of hospitals, what exactly is Catholic about them?

It is hard not to get a sense reading Steinfels that, in many ways, the situation of American Catholicism is going through some version of the classic secularization process. In area after area institutionally, Steinfels underscores, in case there was any doubt, the sorry state of American Catholicism. The institutional basis – its workforce – is shrinking, as far as can be seen, permanently. Attendance, already trending downward, is particularly down after the sex abuse scandal. 90% of American Catholics disagree with the Vatican’s position on contraception, and don’t seem that bothered by the dissonance. If anything, it widens the credibility and culture gap between the hierarchy and priests and the rank and file. A clear majority think women should be allowed to become priests, that priests should be allowed to marry, and that abortion should be legal. While there is certainly a bump in church-going Catholics from the recent influx of immigrants from Latin America, there is little reason to believe that this will stem the tide, or not follow the same declining trajectory of previous immigrants. Steinfels argues for overcoming the trench warfare between left and right, to “come together” to examine various ways to “save the church”. He argues, essentially, though without explicitly saying it, that both the national and international hierarchy are in denial, and that, regardless of any outcome, lay people already are and increasingly will need to exercise

more influence in the workings of the church. Yet many “influentials” (as he puts it) do not seem to be paying attention to the opportunities for change the crisis has created.

What is not examined too closely is the impact the smaller, more orthodox cadre of young priests will have on the future of the Catholic church, particularly given the fact that the reforms of Vatican II to make the election of bishops and cardinals more democratic have been completely abrogated for the time being, and that it is these young, orthodox priests-cum-future cardinals who will eventually elect future popes, a bleak prospect. It is hard to be optimistic about change in light of this. Already, the College of Cardinals is top-heavy with conservatives, stuffed by John Paul II, which resulted in the election of the current orthodox pope, and it is hard to see him changing course. If anything, he would seem to be strengthening this trajectory, particularly given his strong ties with the uber-conservative Opus Dei, and the recent election of a young, latino Opus Dei member as archbishop of the highly important Los Angeles archdiocese.

One rather odd aspect of Steinfel’s book, however, is the complete absence of any mention of the Catholic charismatic movement. For it is this movement which partly has come to be associated with, and has motivated many of, these young, orthodox priests, and which has blended in with many of the highly conservative Marian movements (which Steinfels does mention) as well as Opus Dei itself. One outcome could be that the church increasingly makes itself the reserve of the highly conservative, those willing (even eager) to submit to what the larger Catholic public and older, more liberal generation of priests and nuns who experienced the changes of Vatican II and the 60s, (for who, in their youth, pursuing a religious vocation was still a “normal” route to upward mobility) find increasingly unrealistic or off-putting. In this sense, we could see

the Catholic faith shape itself into a form of increasingly fundamentalist Catholicism, which might make it increasingly irrelevant on the lives of Catholics, or rather ex- ie "recovering" Catholics, furthering the processes of secularization. Or, this might lead to some kind of quasi-schismatic situation, if mainstream and liberal Catholics challenge and revolt from this trajectory, creating something akin to the schismatic situation in the Anglican Union. Either way, we will probably continue to see more hemorrhaging to various forms of Pentecostal or other kinds of Protestantism, such as is happening in Latin America.

A development of the first trajectory might see the militancy of this young, orthodox cadre of priests and their highly conservative followers successfully retrench and expand their power and influence, within their own Catholic sphere, and perhaps in conjunction with a broader religious right, the contours of which Chris Hedges outlines in his study of the influence of dominionism and, of which *First Things* journal is some evidence of, as Damon Linker argues. As evidenced by the continual surprise of political pundits to the staying power and increasing influence of religion and religious right leaders in American politics, as the Rick Warren-led forum on values and religion in the 2008 presidential campaign demonstrated, the religious right has one significant weapon in their arsenal which should not be overlooked, underestimated, or forgotten: demographics. Part of the pro-life rubric is large families, which translates into increasing numbers of voters. It is an aggressive political strategy shared by Pentecostals, evangelicals, conservative Catholics, and orthodox Jews, with potentially major future political implications in comparison with the 1.5 child average of the typical secular family. The demographic impact is heightened by the cultural separatism

evidenced in the burgeoning Christian home-schooling movement, of which Rushdoony, interestingly enough, is the intellectual godfather (Hedges 2007). In any case, it is hard not to see Catholicism as indeed a people, or at least church, adrift.. and open to questionable influences as historical influences such as liberation theology or even mainstream Catholicism wane..

Everyday Life, Technology, Abortion

Which brings us back to the question of the "loss" or disconnection from the lifeworld of everyday life and the drive to overcome this or "re-enchant" it is reflected in charismatic practices. It is interesting to consider this the issue of the loss of the lifeworld, or rationalization, to the politics of abortion. Once again, as the Rick Warren forum revealed and McCain's choice of the Pentecostal and adamantly pro-life Sarah Palin revealed, abortion proved to be a major contention point in the 2008 presidential campaign, for both contenders. And certainly for Catholics, who may be open to contraceptives, but are split on abortion. For charismatic Catholics, evangelicals, fundamentalists and Pentecostals, abortion (and stem-cell research) often proves to be a litmus test issue. But to what extent is this anxiety over abortion, and the easy availability and use of modern technology to "end" life, a displacement of anxieties over the threats and fears of a technological society in general? This is something which, psychoanalytically, seems rather obvious on reflection, but which is rarely, if ever, articulated. If we follow Husserl's insight about the loss of the lifeworld, and Lefebvre's on the "terrorism" of everyday life, it would seem a fruitful line of analysis to pursue.

While once nuclear war was the primary technological threat in the public consciousness (Strozier), now arguably, it is that of climate change, global warming, globalization (the replacement of jobs by technology and exportation) and terrorism. These issues, with their global reach, can feel threatening and overwhelming to individuals. What can be managed more directly, where a "line" can be drawn against technology, is at the level of the everyday – that of the sexual and reproductive lifeworld. Combined with the drive for "purification" so prevalent in the religiously reactive lifeworld, and marshaled by the political agendas of religious leaders and their politicians, this drive against abortion, as well as contraception, offers the possibility of "controlling" or "subduing" what is perceived as an "unnatural" technological society gone out of control. This equation of course involves setting aside the irrationality or contradiction of the fact that modern medicine, of which most all the religious partake in willingly, involves manifold "unnatural" and highly technological invasions in the body – from the insertion of animal (cow pig and horse) fluids in which vaccine "cell lines" are cultivated, into the body via vaccine shots, or hormone inducements that aim to increase fertility, implementation of high tech medical gadgets into the body via surgery, psychiatric drugs, even the development of so-called "natural family planning" methods derive from the insights of technological modern medicine. It would fruitful to examine more closely the way in which reactions to modern technology and its biopolitics are inflected in and even motivate the conservative politics against sexuality and the body.

Archaic Modernities and Religious Nostalgia

Janet Afar, an Iranian feminist, and Kevin B. Anderson's *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seductions of Islamism* aim to inform Anglo-American audiences of a hidden chapter of Foucault's political and intellectual career. As they detail, what is well known to French audiences, and little known to Anglo-American audiences is the fascination, support and optimism Foucault had for the Iranian Revolution early on as it unfolded. While many Iranian feminists and leftists sounded the alarm due to the increasingly significant role played by Islamists, and their relative suppression of their secular compatriots, Foucault was fascinated by what he saw as the emergence of a new social force, borne out of the margins of what he viewed as a largely bankrupt secular, scientific, Enlightenment rationalism, referencing different historical traditions and approaches to gender and sexuality than that of the West. As time passed, and the repression of feminists and non-religious radicals quickly became painfully clear, he was forced to drop his support in shame, accompanied by a significant drop in his public status in Europe. This chapter in Foucault's career has been largely hidden from Anglo-American audiences due to the absence (until recently) of translations of these writings into English.

Given the persistence and staying power of the unanticipated rise of conservative, political religious movements, and the desire to understand their motivation, Foucault's interest and study in the rise of Islamism has become more relevant, in a deeply ambiguous way. Afary and Anderson argue that Foucault's desire to find alternatives to modernity and its forms of discipline and control, let him to construct Islamism as an "authentic" and premodern "Other". In the process, they argue, he fell prey to a common form of Orientalism. Like Heidegger with National Socialism, they argue Foucault was

seduced by the “Otherness” and supposed “authenticity” of radical Islamism. What he was blinded to was the fact that Iranian Islamism, rather than being some form of pure premodernity, was deeply involved with modern forms of technology, such as the cassette tapes they pioneered in spreading their message.   Rather than some “authentic” form of liberation, this combination of a premodern ideology, modern technology and radical intolerance of the non-Islamic, they argue, actually resembled most closely a fascist form of political organization.

Foucault, whose work in the history of sexuality is so important for understanding changes in the way sexuality and the body has been viewed from ancient Greek times through its evolution in the Christian era to the contemporary period, famously problematized the Freudian “repressive hypothesis”. Yet, the unexpected emergence of conservative, politicized religious movements, which Foucault could not have foreseen, particularly of the Christian and Islamic variety, but also Hindu and Judaic suggest that a revisiting and re-thinking of the “repressive hypothesis” debate between Foucault and Freud, and well as Foucault and Nietzsche, is now necessary. For in a changing cultural moment like our own, as the “culture wars” of the post 80s demonstrate, new cultural traits and tendencies have emerged which were not evident or even suspected in the 60s and 70s in which Foucault wrote much of his earlier work. The preface to the *Introduction to Sexuality* on the dominant “commonsense” regarding the all-prevailing “repressive hypothesis” story may have rung quite true in 70s France, but sounds murkier in the post-80s US context. One wonders how Foucault would have theorized the rise of these movements as social responses or reactions to changing dynamics of biopower, governmentality and technologies of the self had he lived long enough to see them.

Of course, this debate is relevant is as a cautionary note against the other pole to the demonization of religion – its romanticization, the lure of the nostalgic. One of the remarkable tendencies of the contemporary debate on secularization is the extent to which so many secularization theorists of old, have turned and repudiated their previous support of the secularization thesis – from Peter Berger's celebration of the "de-secularization of the world," to Harvey Cox's interpretation of charismatic practices as an "authentic" re-enchantment of the world. At the same time, the rise of influential Christian social scientists such as Rodney Stark and Roger Finke have challenged the formerly prevailing assumptions of the decline of religion, declaring secularization a "myth". And a variety of thinkers have reveled in and argued for a blurring of the sacred and the secular. While there are major arguments to be made for this, given the co-dependence of the religious and the secular in the history of Christian secularism, for instance, there may also be pitfalls. Charles Taylor in particular, a recent winner of the Templeton Prize, funded by a wealthy investor with the purpose of "furthering" the dialogue between religion and science, also seems to problematically "smooth" over the conflict between religion, science and state, in his recent work. This is quite a contrast with the assessment of the incipient development of a movement of Christian fascism that someone like Hedges makes, where it would seem to be of utmost important to push back against waxing theocratic tendencies. Who is right? Both? Neither? Such assessments seem mutually exclusive. Has Taylor, or Cox for that matter, become seduced by the rise of modern "religiousity" like Foucault temporarily with Islamism? Perhaps in despair of some more radical alternative?

The contemporary debate also seems to vaguely echo that between Lowith and Blumenberg in postwar Europe. John Milbank, the Catholic and postmodern theologian advocate of a "radical orthodoxy," scathingly critiques the oppressiveness of secular and scientific reason and its "othering" of the religious. As a product of the modern ethos of secularism, the social sciences stem from an "ontology of violence". He argues that, in fact, social scientific thought is based on ancient and medieval Christian theology, largely unknowingly, and because of this, lacks legitimacy in its own right. This echoes Lowith's argument that Modernity is simply secularized Christianity. Yet, this is, I would argue, a slippery and dangerous slope. Khomeini also argued that "modern, Western" thought was illegitimate. Yet, as the legacy of the Iranian Revolution shows, there is no turning back to an absolutely "pure," "premodern" other. It seems Blumenberg's focus on the legitimacy of the modern world as a historical occurrence of human self-assertion would do well to be rethought in this context. It would also seem to call for more developed examination of the somatic alienation and alterity of the body such as Csordas identifies in charismatic practices, and rethinking the role and function of sexual neo-repression in an alienated (post)modern lifeworld. In what ways do the contradictions of charismatic practices and charismatic literature, domininist influences notwithstanding, reveal a "negative utopian" desire for a more embodied, somatically and communally connected world, one more in line with Marcuse's articulation of a world ordered by a libidinal-informed rationality? In what ways do both does the more separatist, premillennial outlook of traditional fundamentalism, with its rejection of the world, reflect the prefiguring and desire for a better world? And to what extent does dominionism, with its postmillennial outlook, harbor within its contradictions as well a

“negative utopian” desire to “self-assert” (Blumenberg) human power to “create the world” one wants?

Chapter 5

Immanent Apocalypse: Reading "*Left Behind*"

"Radicals seeking evidence of grassroots disaffection with the structure of modern society have ignored a rich potential source – the torrent of skeptical commentary by premillennialists, whose array of prophetic "signs" included social, economic, and technological processes so broad as to be almost coterminous with modernity itself. Collectively these authors offered a strikingly comprehensive critique of contemporary mass society as dehumanizing and dangerously centralized."

Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More*

Left Behind: The Persistence of Apocalyptic Thought

To secular ears, apocalyptic thought is inevitably anachronistic. It summons up the image of various medieval groups throughout history, famously around the first millennium, that predicted the rise of the Antichrist and the Second Coming of Christ, jumping off cliffs en masse in anticipation, only to be disappointed time and again. How then to explain the unbelievable popularity of the *Left Behind* novels (75 million and counting) which predict just such a scenario with deadly seriousness in the center of the developed world in the early third millennium AD? Elitists of various stripes might write it off as proof of the stupidity and gullibility of the masses. Yet I think such a hasty judgment premature. The persistence of apocalyptic thought in the US and the ignorance (or denial) of it by secular mainstream media and culture, suggests a puzzle worth decoding, actually quite important given the ecological changes facing the planet, where

apocalyptic fatalism is a dangerous prospect. What can explain the power and appeal of apocalyptic thought?

Ironically, as I sit down to write this chapter on the persistence of apocalyptic thinking in American culture, the worst week in the history of the stock market has just concluded, inaugurating what has quickly come to be broadly viewed as the worst systemic financial crisis since the Great Depression. While such an introductory comment might be perceived as prefiguring an emphasis on the economic considerations and socioeconomic conditions of apocalyptic thinking in the US (which is certainly part of the picture to be painted), I want to argue that it goes deeper, indicating on a cultural level, perhaps largely unconscious, that something is "deeply amiss" with modern life.

Obama: Muslim or Antichrist?

In the late summer of the '08 presidential campaign, a new Internet ad put out by the McCain campaign referring to Barack Obama as "The One" earned some media attention for the apparent connection between the imagery and rhetoric of the ad and its portrayal of Obama as the Anti-Christ as depicted in the best-selling *Left Behind* series ("An Antichrist Obama in McCain Ad?" Amy Sullivan, *Time*, August 08, 2008).   As the ad begins, in *Time*'s summary, the words "It should be known that in 2008 the world shall be blessed. They will call him 'The One'" flash across the screen. The Antichrist of the *Left Behind* books is a charismatic young political leader named Nicolae Carpathia who founds the One World religion (slogan: "We Are God") and promises to heal the world after a time of deep division. One of several Obama clips in the ad features the

Senator saying, "A nation healed, a world repaired. We are the ones that we've been waiting for." The ad was designed by Fred Davis, one of McCain's top media consultants, a close friend of Ralph Reed and the nephew of conservative Oklahoma senator James Inhofe. Conservative Christian author Hal Lindsey declared in an essay on WorldNetDaily, "Obama is correct in saying that the world is ready for someone like him - a messiah-like figure, charismatic and glib - ... The Bible calls that leader the Antichrist. And it seems apparent that the world is now ready to make his acquaintance." (Time, Aug 8, 2008). The ad debuted at a height of abuzz in conservative circles comparing Obama to the Antichrist, with various emails suggesting this making the rounds. As Amy Sullivan notes, it is not hard to see why *Left Behind* readers might make the connection. In the books themselves, Carpathia is "a junior Senator who speaks several languages, is beloved by people around the world and fawned over by a press corps that cannot see his evil nature, and rises to absurd prominence after delivering just one major speech". The buzz crescendoed after Obama's well-received speech in Berlin calling for global unity. A google search of the terms Obama and Antichrist, which came up with 700,000 references at the time, less than a year later is 9 million (author's research). The Time's article found 200,000 references between Obama and Nicolae Carpathia: a year later, three times that (ibid).

Yet little of this has made it into the mainstream.. In comparison, there was extensive media reporting on emails and rumors about Obama being a Muslim, including the famed McCain town hall meeting where an elderly white woman from the Midwest said she was concerned about Obama being an "Arab," as well as reporting and analysis of the copious references to him to him being a "terrorist" or at least "palling around with

them",with one McCain ad arguing "Barack Obama. Not who you think he is" backgrounded with 9-11 imagery. Two years later, approaching the 2010 midterm elections, and amidst the Tea Party surge and racist, vitriolic 9-11 "mosque" debate, pollsters and journalists are shocked that 1 in 5 Americans think Obama is a Muslim (Pew Research Center 2010; CSOnline August 23, 2010). Missing in the mainstream media was the additional and perhaps more important subliminal (or not so subliminal) messaging that Obama, as putative Muslim/Arab terrorist, was, quite possibly, the Antichrist as well: "The One"'s ad, with images of Charleton Heston as Moses parting the Red Sea, flashed an altered version of the Obama "campaign seal" with an eagle with wings spread superimposed on it. It clearly references, as Democratic consultant Eric Sapp notes, (who had to plunge back into his bible to figure it out) the apocalyptic book of Daniel, where the Antichrist is "described as rising from the sea as a creature with wings like an eagle" (ibid) – something made plain to anyone exposed to the thousands of pages that make up the *Left Behind* novels. Mara Vanderslice, who ran the outreach campaign for the Kerry '04 campaign, (and founded a Democratic PAC called the Matthew 25 Network in the summer of '08), soon noticed that the negative e-mails she received from conservative Christians fell into two general topical categories: abortion, and the assertion that Obama is the Antichrist (ibid). Where is this belief coming from?

***Left Behind*: Fundamentalism Goes Mainstream**

The *Left Behind* novels, of which there are now sixteen, have sold over 65 million copies (over 75 million including graphic novels and children's versions). They depict the

"Rapture" – a literal reading of Revelation, in which God "raptures" or sweeps up into heaven his true believers, while the rest are left to slug it out with the Antichrist, as he attacks Israel and rises to power over the seven years of the "Tribulation" before Christ returns to triumph in a "Glorious Appearing" and preside over a thousand years (millennium) of peace before the end of the world. The popularity of the first novel encouraged the two authors, Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins to significantly expand and increase the number of novels, of which the first appeared in 1995. By 1998, the first four novels occupied the first four slots of the *New York Times* best seller list and each subsequent novel has hit its top ten list, if not the first slot. It is estimated that three-quarters of the nation's evangelicals (25% of the US population; Pew Report 2008) have read a *Left Behind* novel, and the readership extends into the larger public readership as well, with three quarters of its sales made at locations other than Christian book stores such as Barnes and Nobles, Walmart and Target. The popularity and financial success of the series has spawned children's series, video games, graphic novels, comic books and two movies. With its focus on violent war and high-tech destruction spawned by the Tribulation, some might argue that it is not that different from other popular culture films and thrillers with similar us-vs-them, good-guys vs bad guy themes. On the other hand, as various critics suggest, fundamentalist culture, in a sense, has now become mainstream culture (McAlister 2003).

Secular Denial? Decoding the "*Left Behind*" in No Child Left Behind

One aspect that is particularly significant about the series as a cultural phenomenon is the extent to which those of a more secular bent, particularly of intellectual, academic and mainstream media seem largely unaware of its existence. The huge series is essentially the "Harry Potter" for evangelicals and related religious groups. The big difference however is that *Left Behind* readers are familiar with *Harry Potter,* while *Harry Potter* readers have largely never heard of the *Left Behind* series. I don't want to overemphasis the divide between the secular and the religious, given the historical inter-imbrications between the two such as the argument regarding the Protestant or Christian nature of US secularism made by Janet Jakobsen and Ann Pellegrini in Love the Sin (2004). But it is relevant that it is an ignorance or denial that is largely one-way. Remarkably, as of this writing, I have yet to find any websites, books or scholarly literature mention what seems to be, with a minimum of reflection, a fairly obvious indication of the series' inflection and impact on public policy: the connection between the title of the novel series and the title of the highly-referenced, well-known education bill that, for ten years now ongoing, has been one of the signature initiatives of the Bush Administration, and continues on in the Obama Era: the "No Child Left Behind" act. With a minimum of reflection, it appears clear that this is a direct, hardly even coded, reference to the *Left Behind* series. Consciously and/or unconsciously, it serves as a rhetorical "resonance" (such as in Connolly's concept of the "evangelical-capitalist resonance machine" (2008) meant to reassure the Bush Administration's evangelical and religious conservative base, that, aside from the specifics of the education act, the administration is religiously motivated and engaged, with its best interests for their children at heart. As progressive evangelical pastor Tony Campolo noted in summing up the impact of the *Left Behind* novels, "Those

books have created a subliminal language, and I think judgments will be made unconsciously". (Sullivan, 2008) This rhetorical coding is interesting for a couple reasons.

On the one hand, it reveals the extent to which a significant separation exists between self-identified secularists and non-secularists (leaving aside the question of the Protestant basis of US secularism for the moment), and the way in which this separation worked to the advantage of the increasingly theocratic, Religious Right dominated, turn-of-the-millennium Republican Party in communicating with its evangelical "base" in ways that violate the spirit, if not the letter of the traditional separation of church and state, and enabled them to get away with it, without being directly challenged legally or publicly by secularists. As Chris Hedges (2007), Jakobsen and Pellegrini (2004) and others convincingly argue, mainstream "liberals", or secular "liberalism's," tendency to write off, dismiss or ignore the Religious Right as self-evidently "crazy," or "crackpot" was strategically welcomed by Religious Right leaders, as it provided useful cover for many of their activities and initiatives. Not being taken seriously means not being seriously countered and thereby allowed free reign for their strategies.

As for those who might object that reading in references to the *Left Behind* series in Bush's national education law seems far-fetched if not conspiratorial, let me lead the reader through a few considerations. Given the ubiquity of the *Left Behind* novels and ideas in evangelical, Pentecostal, charismatic and fundamentalist culture and worldview, and the strategic deployment of religious right leaders and megachurch ministers in both of Bush's presidential campaigns, it would simply be impossible for the Bush election team, led by Karl Rove, not to be intimately aware of the *Left Behind* phenomenon – it

would be akin, to say, a secular book publisher's ignorance of the *Harry Potter* series. Indeed, as recent research has documented (McAllister 2003), the premillennial beliefs of the *Left Behind* series have been highly influential in the strategic formation of recent foreign policy initiatives and rhetoric; from the oddly enthusiastic evangelical support for Israel (given the history of fundamentalist and evangelical anti-semitism), where the "return" of the Jews to Israel is necessary to fulfill end-times biblical prophesy; to the manipulation of state rhetoric post-9-11 against the "terrorist" threat; to the eerily strategic and opportunistic targeting of Baghdad (just north of the New Babylon where the Antichrist takes up the seat of his world-government) in the Iraq War; to Bush's remarkable denunciation of the United Nations (pilloried as the precursor to the Anti-Christ's "Global Community") and rejection of its authority in the buildup to the Iraq War. Given the electoral considerations of mobilizing the evangelical "base," any use of the term "*Left Behind*" could not help but have strong rhetorical connotations.

This hidden dimension might also help explain what seemed to perplex so many secular people, who often felt shell-shocked and stunned by the tenor and religious "extremism" of the eight years of the Bush Administration, the portion of the population that often felt distinctly uncomfortable and bewildered watching and listening to an odd and foreign-sounding rhetoric in the Bush presidential and press addresses. While occasionally Bush, particularly after 9-11 and in the run-up to the Iraq War, was more overt in his rhetoric, such as with the much-mentioned and maligned pronouncement of a "crusade" against evil, Bush's speeches often hewed to a more subtle rhetoric, one that used religious language sparingly, but whose moralistic, "secular Manicheanism" (Boyer 1992) purposefully corresponded to *Left Behind* rhetoric. Proof of this point is much

simpler than the reader might think. Immerse oneself in a *Left Behind* novel (or two or three), and, I wager, you will have the "déjà vu" experience that other secular readers of the *Left Behind* series have: a re-living of the stilted, Manichean, moralistic, us vs. them rhetoric of Bush's post-9-11 state discourse about "terrorism" and the need to "hunt down the evil-doers". Such discourse neatly corresponds to the same Manichean worldview of the Tribulation Force's war against the Antichrist.

My point here is to try to demonstrate just how pronounced secular denial is about the cultural realm of the non-secular, a significant portion of the US population, as well as to show its significance, because I do not think this difference can be properly addressed or wrestled with until it is acknowledged. "Knowledge is power" as Foucault says. This is not to overstate the divide between the secular and non-secular, as clearly, the boundaries between the secular and the non-secular is historically quite entangled, (as when thinking of the Protestant history of US Christian Secularism, or the development of secularism out of religion, a la Gauchet or Weber). Yet, there is a regional and cultural difference that I think is not fully recognized by secularists, which leads to a profound ignorance, if not denial, about the manifold cultures, worlds, and worldviews of a proliferating network of religious sects, their core followers, and their expansive peripheries. Not the least of which would be the burgeoning Pentecostal and related charismatic movements, of which two rising "stars" of the Republican party are members – Sarah Palin (Pentecostal), and Bobby Jindal (Catholic charismatic). Indeed, given the failure of the existing machinery of the evangelical-dominated Religious Right in the 2006 and 2008 elections, and the retiring of significant figures (such as James Dobson of Focus on the Family), it is arguable that we might be seeing the decline of the traditional

evangelical apparatus, “victims of their own success” (Lindsey 2008) – tainted from the endless politicking for the Republican Party (charged with “compromising” religious values to get votes), not to mention scandals (Ted Haggard) and the subsequent rise of significant leaders from the burgeoning Pentecostal and charismatic movements (Parker, ‘Political Pullback for the Christian Right? Washington Post, April 4, 2009)

Not to be forgotten as well, of course, are all the well documented, “shock-and-awe” stats that indicate this divide as well– at least shocking to those of a secular mindset: that 80% or more of Americans believe that God works miracles and that they will appear before him on Judgment Day, that 40% believe in the literal truth of the Bible, “word for word”; 50% believe in angels; between 40 and 50% believe in creationism instead of evolution; and one-third firmly believe that Christ will “come again” in the Rapture (Pew report 2007; Strozier 2002), all of which has led the influential “religious economies” group in the sociology of religion to argue for a “new paradigm” that argues for the “rationality” of these beliefs (Stark and Finke 2000).But I want to explore more deeply the cultural implications and the cultural worldviews that “fill in” these shocking statistics, which are “read” by secularists ever so often, then forgotten or dismissed as “incredible”. What might explain the persistence and even increase of such ostensibly “non-modern” beliefs in what is, by most accounts, one of the premier “developed” “industrialized” ie “modern” countries?

When Time Shall Be No More

Paul Boyer, in his *When Time Shall Be No More: Prophesy Belief in Modern American Culture*, highlights the puzzling fact that for all the pervasiveness of apocalyptic thought (both religious and secular, of what some refer to as the "secular apocalyptic") and the conviction that "the cause of history, and the sequence of events that will herald the end of the world, are foretold in the Bible" has received "little scholarly attention". He advances two related arguments: on the one hand, "prophecy belief is far more central in American thought than intellectual and cultural historians have realized". And on the other hand, "in the years since World War II the popularizers of a specific belief system – dispensational millennialism – have played an important role in shaping public attitudes on a wide range of topics from the Soviet Union, the Common Market, and the Mideast to the computer and the environmental crisis" (p. ix). Published in 1992, one could add several more issues, from the response to 9-11 and terrorism to the Iraq War. It is not clear to what extent this lack of scholarly attention is due respectively to denial, ignorance, educational/class separation and/or disdain. But as Boyer convincingly argues, intellectual and cultural historians have perilously missed the boat on a powerful cultural force.

Tracing apocalyptic thought over a 1700 year span of Western history from the writing of Revelation to its contemporary role in American culture, Boyer cites seven important themes: First, one is struck not only by the durability of apocalyptic belief, but also by its enormous adaptability. Second, apocalyptic beliefs, given the right circumstances, can serve radical ends. Third, in the American colonial period, religious and secular themes increasingly intermingled in popular eschatological writings from the Great Awakening to the Revolution. Fourth, prophecy belief has a history and an organic

integrity of its own; while obviously colored by current events, it is not merely a "reflection" of other realities.

Fifth, the welter of interpretive approaches, and their complex interactions, underscore the difficulty of charting a straightforward evolution of prophetic belief systems. Sixth, the related observation suggested by a historical retrospective of this kind (particularly after a scholarly immersion in apocalyptic literature) is the remarkable continuity of basic themes and preoccupations. Seventh, one is struck by discontinuities as well. The most obvious, perhaps, is in the intellectual standing of the expositors of prophecy belief. In earlier eras the interpretation of prophecy challenged the intellectual leaders of successive ages. From the 19th century on, and certainly by the late twentieth century, this was no longer the case. Prophecy remains of absorbing interest to millions of Americans, but those who expound the prophetic scriptures are no longer the era's intellectual and or even theological leaders. (p. 76)

Boyer does a particularly good and fascinating job of tracing the uptick in interest in millennialism after WWI and particularly after WWII and the entrance of the nuclear age, which made palpable to both the religious and non-religious the possibility if not probability of end-of-the-world scenarios of destruction, human-made. But in tracing the roots of apocalyptic thought from ancient (pre-Christian) to modern times, what one is struck by, and which Boyer underscores, is the way in which the apocalyptic tradition, with its basis in the writings of Daniel and Ezekiah, but particularly the bizarre and fantastical imagery of the Revelation of St. John, serves as a sort of "Rorschak" test, into which can be read the projections of the anxieties, fears, hopes and dreams of the social groups that have been attracted to it at different times. While at one time the study of the

end-times attracted the attention of the recognized social elites and top intellectuals of the day (Isaac Newton, who wrote a book on it, Martin Luther, Joachim of Fiore, etc), with the duration of modernity, the study of the end-times has become the purview of popularizers separated from most of the "recognized" intellectual disciplines and institutions. Yet as a technique for understanding the concerns of a certain segment of society, reading and interpreting these "projections" can be a fruitful path to insight into a phenomenon and social reality often rendered "incomprehensible" or "irrational" to the secular and scientific status quo of the day. Interestingly, Boyer's work is written right at the "end" of an era – the early 90s, right after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, which ushered in an abrupt end to the arms race, and an evaporation of the imminent threat and fear of nuclear "Armageddon" and its standard bogeyman – communism - for the role of Antichrist. His work ends with some speculation as to future trends in premillennial interpretation, such as, presciently, the ascendancy of the role of Islam for Gog, particularly given the increase in conflict in the all-important region of the Middle East (an ancient theme that only declined with the end of the Ottoman Empire), as well as the potential role that concerns over pollution and the environment might play.

After the bombing of the World Trade Towers on 9-11, radical Islam and its representation as "terrorism" has clearly moved to occupy the role of Gog and Magog, or the Antichrist, once played by the Soviet Union and communism. Which makes the role of the *Left Behind* series quite interesting and important in charting and understanding the changes and updating in the premillennial outlook.

Rapture Culture: Left Behind in Evangelical America

Amy Johnson Frykholm, in her study of the readers of the *Left Behind* series, notes some interesting changes and innovations it reveals, when situated within the historical genre of premillennial, fundamentalist literature, specifically its novel genre. One change she highlights is its significant about-face on technology. While once technology was seen as a tool in the arsenal of the Antichrist, indeed, the very medium through which the oppressive "one world order" would be instantiated (which correlates with and can be read as a reaction to the oppressive social role of modern technology in the automation of labor, deskilling, outsourcing and the standardization of culture) - an interpretation that Boyer still holds to in his assessment in the early 90s - by the mid-90s and later of the *Left Behind* series, modern technology becomes a tool in the service of Christ. The Tribulation Force (God's chosen warriors and evangelizers, Left Behind after the Rapture, who convert, then slug it out with the Antichrist) relish in the power of their SUVs, their high tech knowledge of airplanes (two of them are pilots), their powerful laptop computers; the Internet (in the mid-90s this was technologically avant-garde); their solar-powered, satellite-driven cell phones, etc). In fact, as Frykholm points out, Tribulation Force's technology rivals and even "betters" that of the Antichrist and his Global Community. What is one to make of this significant change in the fundamentalist perspective on technology? I would like to suggest that it seems to represent or indicate the change in the social and political status of at least certain segments of "fundamentalism" – its change from an outsider, separatist culture, antagonistic towards technology and modernity, to its incorporation into the dominant political order as a

significant and powerful electoral group – as the Reagan Revolution, the Moral Majority, and the W Bush victories indicate. This interpretation would also help explain the emergence of another significant tendency in contemporary evangelicalism/Pentecostalism – that of the "prosperity gospel" such as that of best-selling (and uber-wealthy) Joel Osteen, of further integration of significant segments of middle-class achieving or aspiring evangelical/fundamentalists into the system, as Michael D Lindsey explores in *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite* (2002).

Another significant development that Frykolm notes is the change or "updating" of gender roles in the *Left Behind* novels. Where once gender roles were clear cut and clearly pre-feminist in fundamentalist novels, she sees (drawing on the work of other feminists) significant changes in the *Left Behind* novels. Rapture novels often started with a devout woman being raptured and the ensuring drama centers on the less-than-devout husband as he grapples with the insufficiency of his faith. While the first *Left Behind* novel does start with a variation of this conventional beginning (devout mother raptured, skeptical father left behind), one central female charter, Chloe, "stubborn" like her pragmatic airline-pilot father, is also left behind. While she defers to her smart, capable new journalist husband in the Tribulation Force, Buck, she also stands up for her interests. While she openly submits to her husband's authority, she also challenges him not to misuse his authority and treat her like a "little woman". It can be hard to see this difference, Frykholm notes, given the novels' off-putting framework of patriarchal hierarchy, submission and male authority, particularly for those with a feminist or secular bent, but she argues that these challenges and counterpoints represent an

acknowledgment, conscious or not, of the larger changes in contemporary society, changes that fundamentalist culture and writing, such as the *Left Behind* novels, have incorporated and adapted to in order to stay contemporary and, ironically perhaps, avoid falling "behind the times".

Not irrelevant as well are the accusations of anti-semitism and anti-Catholicism that have been made (and seem apropos) against LaHaye and the *Left Behind* series in general. For instance, the man who becomes Pope after the Rapture (the original Pope is raptured, after recently becoming a born-again Christian) quickly becomes a henchman for the Antichrist and an addendum to his "Global Community". LaHaye has been accused of calling Catholicism a "false religion," (Forbes and Kilde 2004) and it is no secret that Christian fundamentalists have long considered the Catholic church the "whore of Rome". Which makes the seepage of premillennialism into Catholic charismaticism (as I detail below) all the more perplexing or at least, contradictory. Premillennial dispensationalism has an elaborate series of beliefs regarding Israel and the Jews' role in the end-times, and regard the establishment of Israel in 1948 as an important marker in the required "return" of Jews to Israel before the Rapture is to occur. Secondly, another significant belief is that there will be 144,000 Jewish "witnesses" that convert to Christianity and advocate for Christ before his return, many of whom will die as "tribulation martyrs". While several Jews, as well as Israel generally, figure prominently in the novels in various ways, their role is notable primarily for their dramatic conversions to Christianity. It is not hard to conclude the whole set up, theology and all, is based on a pervasive, condescending, if somehow ostensibly well-intentioned anti-semitism. There are also copious mentions of the bitter hatred by Jews

of Christians and converted Jews in the novel, and much of the action takes place in Israel.

It is hard not to conclude that one implication of the changes in the fundamentalist outlook toward technology, authority and status that the *Left Behind* novels evidence in the tradition of fundamentalist literature, even from the time of Boyer's work in 1992, is their (further) "cooptation" or "incorporation" into the system. Their anti-institutionalism, which could be read as an understandable - if not romantic - resistance to the emerging industrial and technological order at one point in time, similar to our contemporary nostalgia for the Amish (less appealing "culture war" positions aside) morphs from more sympathetic "outsider" status to a more oppressive, intolerant, authoritarian stance, or perhaps, a consumerist, "health and wealth" "insider," and hence, inevitably hypocritical, stance.

A "Hidden History"?: Filling in the Gaps, the case of Tim LaHaye

When one looks at the history of someone like Tim LaHaye, the co-writer and chief "conceptualizer" of the *Left Behind* series, one gets the sense that one is being filled in on a (for secularists at least) "shadow" world of religious, political, educational connections and systems. Tim LaHaye is a graduate of Bob Jones University, one of the original fundamentalist schools emerging out of the post-Scopes trial era, founded in 1927. Less well-known and reported on in the secular media than religious right leaders such as Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson or James Dobsen, LaHaye has written dozens of

books, including many on marriage, family and sexuality, and is recognized as the first leader to make a "therapeutic mindset" acceptable in the evangelical worldview. A strong believer in creationism, he founded the Institute for Creation Research (Forbes and Kilde 2004). His wife, Beverly LaHaye, is a founder of *Concerned Women for America*, which claims to be the largest women's organization in the US. LaHaye also founded the secretive Council on National Policy in 1981, which many writers and researchers have noted for its significant role in building the conservative Christian political movement, bringing together religious right leaders and Republican policy makers, and its significant role in anointing each Republican party presidential candidate from Reagan onward.

Within the history of someone like LaHaye, one can stitch together a history of fundamentalism post-Scopes, the precursor to American fundamentalism, something until recently largely off-the-map. "Premillennial dispensationalism" was popularized by Thomas Darby in 1830s England, and exported to the US mid-19th century. Its literal reading of the bible in strict historical time periods, or "dispensations" covering 7,000 or so years, leant itself to a belief in creationism and a strict interpretation of a "premillennial" rapture before the return of Christ. As 19th century America wore on, and Darwin's theory of evolution emerged, the literal beliefs of "premillennial dispensationalism" took shape as one of the most significant resistances to Darwinism and the modernist theology influenced by it as well as the so-called "higher" biblical criticism, which stresses a symbolic and context-based hermeneutic approach to the bible (Marsden 1982). The tension between the increasingly modernist stance of liberal, mainline "Social Gospel" theology and the reaction against it, intensified at the turn of the century, resulting in the publication of "The Fundamentals" in 1905, and reached a

point of no return by the time of the Scopes Trial, when most public, secular analysis of Christian Fundamentalism then drops off the radar till the late 70s re-entrance of Jerry Falwell and the fundamentalists of his Moral Majority into the public sphere. Someone like Timothy LaHaye, however, a significant and prolific popularizer, helps fill in this "hidden" fundamentalist history. Born in Detroit to a Ford auto worker in 1926, he received his BA from Bob Jones University in 1950 after a stint as an airline pilot in World War II. He then received a Doctorate in Ministry from Western Seminary, a conservative evangelical seminary rooted in the Conservative Baptist Association in Portland, Oregon, started in 1927. He then moved to San Diego, preached as a minister for 25 years, and started his own college there. The *Left Behind* series enunciates the return of fundamentalism back into mainstream "popular" culture.

Childhood Chastisements: Immanent Apocalypse

Yet contradictions abound. What is remarkable is the extent to which the apocalyptic beliefs of premillennial dispensationalism have permeated other religious bodies and, arguably, American popular culture at large, in various ambiguous and unknown ways. One of the most remarkable realizations in my own research about the Catholic charismatic movement, Pentecostalism and fundamentalism is the extent to which my own family and its milieu, which considered itself devoutly and distinctly Catholic, harbored fundamentalist beliefs of premillennial dispensational origin. One of the distinctive memories of my childhood is the numerous predictions that our mother would occasionally make about what she called the coming "chastisement," when, as predicted

by various Marian visionaries, the world would move from the current period of “mercy” to one of “justice,” and the world would then feel the wrath of God, and people would know the “state of their souls”.

I remember going to my music class in fifth grade and telling my music teacher (who multi-tasked as the parish music director, choirmaster and organist, and knew my family well) to his bemused harrumphs, that my mother was predicting a “mini”-chastisement by the end of May. As a skeptical ex-Lutheran PK (preacher’s kid), whose own “rebellion” consisted partly of defecting to Catholicism (which made some sense in the progressive, liberation theology-inspired culture of Northwest Catholicism), he and his hippie buddies used to light beef’s tongue with lighter fluid and leave it outside their Lutheran college’s “charismatic” youth group, satirizing the Pentecostal “tongues of fire”. As for the “mini” in min-chastisement, whether this qualifier was added due to a tinge of motherly guilt, her own fear, or a concession to a less dramatic Catholicism, I do not know.

In this distinctly “Catholic” version, derived from the apparitions of Our Lady at Medjugorje and the “interior locutions” of Fr. Gobbi, our mother told us that the only thing that kept God from moving from the period of “mercy” to that of “judgment” were prayers to Mary. The clear implication to us was that we “better get prayin’ and make like we believed it”. Getting spanked in the period of “mercy” was bad enough, we could only imagine what the period of “judgment” involved. It sounded scary. Needless to say, the chastisement never came, at least not with the verifiable “sign(s) in the sky” that our Mom predicted.

What is remarkable, however, years later, is to discover that this belief in the "chastisement" is essentially derivative of the Protestant fundamentalist, premillennial (and essentially anti-Catholic) dispensationalist story of the "Rapture". For while Catholicism does believe theoretically (perhaps I should say "theologically") in the Second Coming of Christ, the fact that he has not returned in over two thousand years has resulted in an institutionalized theological perspective that downplays his return, and which, in any case, places little to no emphasis on it. It is simply taken for granted that the "whence" and "wherefore" of Christ's return is not something that is knowable. Hence the strangeness of the belief in the "chastisement," coming via homegrown American and European Marian mystics and stigmatists, who have kept up a steady flow of prediction about Christ's return. Clearly, this is a sign of some degree of "Protestantization" of some forms of American Catholicism, and in any case, an indication of a strong impact of fundamentalist thought on American Catholicism, or really, Global Catholicism, as much of the apocalyptic thought of the "chastisement" comes from Medugorje in the former Yugoslavia, and from the Italian Fr. Gobbi (whose apparitions started in response to the "leftist" plots of wayward priests and ex-priests to undermine true teaching and the Church itself (Marian Movement of Priests, 2000).

It is still rather bizarre to me to reflect on how this oft-repeated scenario from my Catholic childhood, which included daily mass, daily rosary, weekly confession, instruction in Catholic catechism – all hallmarks of the Catholic faith - was penetrated as well by an essentially "bastardized" form of premillennial dispensationalism. However, any way it is examined, it lends more credence to the power and impact of the history of prophetic thinking and the apocalyptic strain of thought in modern American culture.

In retrospect, when I told my music teacher in 5th grade that a mini-chastisement was coming, in some ways it did, and my mother's predictions, in a sense, were right. Sandwiched between the twin recessions of the 80s, the American economy was in retreat, and the daily paper I delivered (to help out with family finances) spoke of the rise of Japanese and other Asian manufacturers (whose cheap imported electronic keyboards among other factors spelled doom for our Dad's used piano shop), and the decline of US power. Times were bleak. The next year my dad would declare bankruptcy, and life became a living hell. My mother developed Bells Palsy, a temporary condition when one side of her face froze from extreme stress. We fell seriously behind on mortgage payments on our house, and my brothers and sisters and I watched anxiously from the window as people looking for "deals" on soon-to-be foreclosed properties would drive by the house, stop, and peer at us through their windshields. Maybe my mother's beliefs weren't so crackpot after all. A "mini"-chastisement did occur, and we lived through it. At the last possible second, one week away from foreclosure and eviction, my mother and her relatives learned of our predicament, and three maternal uncles pooled money to buy our mortgage, as our father went bankrupt and closed his piano shop. It could have been worse. We could have been truly "chastised," and my eight brothers and sisters and me put out on the streets. It was frightening and embarrassing, and over the next several years we were subject to much fighting as my parents argued over money, my mother placing a priority on repaying "Uncle Tony." When our father would try to take us out to McDonald's on a Sunday trip, our mother would get angry, arguing "McDonald's" was a luxury we could not afford. For a number of years, "Uncle Tony" became the representative of the feared creditor, who we couldn't help but resent somewhat.

It could have been worse. At least we had relatives on one side who were capable of helping to "bail" us out. As markets tank in a round of deflating speculative bubbles, starting with the most significant one of housing, with millions of families on the brink of foreclosure, it is hard not to think of the apocalypses, the "chastisements" coming their way, for little boys and girls without any safety net to protect them from being thrown onto the street.

The Influence of Premillennialism on Catholicism via the Charismatic movement: the Apocalyptic Piety of Marian Apparitions

What is the relationship between premillennialism and Catholicism? What does the rise in apocalyptic imagery in Catholicism, where it has been long dormant, indicate? Sandra Zimdars-Swartz in "Visions of Mary, Wounds of Christ: Marian Stigmatics in the Apocalyptic Piety of Marian Apparitions" in *Gender and Apocalyptic Desire*, (ed Brasher and Quinby 2006), argues that the phenomenon of the stigmata has typically been associated with religious visions had by women. These persons have "been seen as religious virtuosi blessed with a variety of extraordinary gifts" who "in addition to their presumably miraculous wounds and visions – of Jesus, the Virgin Mary, and various saints, have been seen as having gifts of healing, prophecy, and the ability to read consciences". Yet, in more recent centuries, interestingly, increasing attention has been given to their reputed gifts of prophecy (p. 130). Further "in the past two decades the visions, prophetic messages, and activities of some women stigmatics have had a significant impact on the devotees of recent apparitions of the Virgin Mary, confirming

their belief in these apparitions while affecting and dramatizing the apocalyptic world-views that they build around them" (ibid). Together with the more explicit End-Times views of the Marianists of what Christy Cousino defines as the "Catholic Remnant" in "Before, the Cup was Filling Up. Now it is Flowing Over!: the Eschatology of Fluids" (in *Gender and Apocalyptic Desire* 2006), we can see evidence of how some of the beliefs of the premillennial dispensationalist belief system has converged within Catholicism itself.

Cousino, examining a subgroup of Catholics who refer to themselves as the "Catholic Remnant" (echoing the "Faithful Remnant" self-description of what she terms their "evangelical cousins") points out the centrality of the role of the image and symbolism of bodily fluids in their eschatological visions. She notes that Members of the Catholic Remnant a have special devotion to the Virgin Mary and sometimes also refer to themselves or an associated group, person or ritual as "Marian". Drawing on the work of feminists (Kristeva 1982) who locate the instability and impermanence of bodily fluids as the domain of the feminine and a threat to the stability of a masculine, patriarchal order, she argues that "the narratives these Catholics tell about the End implicate sex and reproduction, the defining cultural markers of women's bodies under patriarchy, at the very heart of salvation and damnation. Only by binding women and her sexual/reproductive flows can the spiritual and physical worlds be made safe and bountiful". Through a reading of the "rhetoric of fluids" in contemporary Catholic apocalyptic texts, she tries to show how the "body of woman, reduced to sexual and reproductive fluid, is not only a political, moral, and social battleground, but also an eschatological one [..] in the End Times, violence arises out of the body of woman and

violence must keep it in check. The hostility articulates itself in an overriding image: a militarized Virgin Mary fighting a feminized devil in a final, decisive battle. The aggression ultimately leads to a cult of fertility, which expresses itself in blood." (p. 104). Cousino charts the rise of the "Age of Mary", which originates in reaction to the rise of industrialism in early 19th century France, along with the devotion to the "Sacred Heart" of Jesus and the counter-Revolutionary Catholic movements which resisted Modernism and maintained an ultramontane (papist) stance.

What is quite fascinating about the "Catholic Remnant" is the extent to which it demonstrates the seemingly contradictory influence of premillennialism on American Catholicism. Boyer's work in the early 90s makes little to no mention of contemporary Catholicism in the orbit of premillennialism. Indeed there has been very relatively little analysis of the Catholic charismatic movement at all in "mainstream" works on American Catholicism either. There is no mention in Peter Steinfel's book (2004) on the crisis in the US Catholic church (otherwise very thorough in his institutional analysis), nor in Taylor's magnum opus on the secular age (2007), in which his reflections on his own Catholic belief loom large. Thigpen (1998) discusses the relation between Protestant and Catholic apocalypticism but seeks to stress the distinctiveness of the latter, sidestepping the question of the former's influence. In Boyer's tracing of the history of apocalyptic thought, of course, the early adherents were Catholic, as Protestantism as a movement wouldn't emerge for another 1500 years. While St. Augustine did engage in some End Times prophecy speculation, generally, he is regarded as setting the tone for the dominant Catholic perspective – one that was largely allegorical rather than literal – in fact, his interpretation was engaged in opposing more literal strands. This more

allegorical reading set the tone for the official stance of the Catholic church over the past 1600 years up to the present. While there was a height of millennial fervor at the turn of the first millennium, and, of course Joachim of Fiore, a model for apocalyptic expectation, generally speaking, as Boyer notes, Catholicism has not lent itself to apocalyptic thought. Perhaps the highly institutionalized nature of Roman Catholicism, with its long institutional memory, shied away from any expectation of the Second Coming, as time wore on, and day-to-day institutional needs encouraged a different kind of foresight.

With the rise of the Protestant Reformation comes the desire to return to the biblical "text," in reaction to the perceived excesses, mystifications and obfuscations of Catholic law and practices, among other things. In such a situation, the potential for literalism (as a kind of "over-debunking") starts to become understandable. Of course, the causality of all this is in question, as one can also attribute the rise of literalism and empirical precision (and disinterest in or distance from the allegorical) to the early stirrings of industrialization and the impact of modern science. Richard Neibuhr, in the *Social Sources of Denominationalism* (1965), for instance, argues that literalism arises from the bourgeois interest and respect for "contracts," a reflection of the emerging commercialism (and merchant class position) of the Reformists. With the desire to get back to the "things themselves" in the Bible, a concern with how the early church members actually lived their lives and beliefs comes into play, and along with it a concern with precision and straightforwardness. This can be seen in Calvin's focus on biblical law, and Luther's interest in End Times speculation. Certainly, it is clear that the rise of premillennialism with John Darby's doctrine of dispensationalism is linked with

and fueled by a reaction to the emergence of modern industrialization in the 1830s, as is the "Age of Mary".

In any case, premillennialism has strongly Protestant roots, and to see seepage into American Catholicism of its End Times imagery, even in its own Catholic iteration seems significant. Of course, following along the lines of Herberg's *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* (1983), one might argue that this process is inevitable, that, given the strongly Protestant nature of the United States, everyone is inevitably "Protestantized" to some extent – Catholic, Jew - one might now add Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, even atheist - or in other words what Jakobsen and Pellegrini (2004) call the "Christian Secular". (As Bertrand Russell notes about the boom in atheism at the turn of the century, if people responded that they were "atheist" when asked what religion they were, a common retort was, "yeah, but what kind of atheist? Protestant, Catholic, Jewish?) Yet, to see the seepage of premillennial beliefs of the Rapture (or, for the Catholic Remnant, the chastisement) as well as Pentecostal-influenced charismatic practices into Catholicism is somewhat breathtaking. Certainly, perhaps, the general problems and conflict with modernity that have long plagued Catholicism have perhaps "caught up" with it (ie bearing true perhaps to some extent the secularization thesis) – leaving its members exposed to competitors, as is clearly the case with the rise of Pentecostalism in Latin America. This phenomenon puts Catholicism in the same boat as the "mainline" Protestant denominations, which are also hemorrhaging members to Pentecostalism and other evangelical and fundamentalist sects.

But perhaps most importantly it begs the question as to how to assess and grapple with the power of the premillennial mindset, in particular its remarkable appeal and its

troubling influence in political affairs, not least of which, that of the Middle East. Clearly in a world of never-ending change, which modernity and capitalism and modern technology in particular produce, the certainty of the premillennialist mindset, in which the history, future and meaning of the world, of existence itself, are explained in the bible, gives a form of refuge against disconcerting change. As well, the forces of globalization, change, and the individualism inherent in capitalism have long worked to disintegrate communities and foster a sense of alienation. Pippas and Inglehart argue that religion thrives where there is the highest level of existential insecurity, such as the developing world and the US, with its eroded and minimal welfare safety-net, in contrast to Europe, with its strong social safety system (Pippas and Ingelhart 2004; Habermas 2006). Churches with set structures and set belief systems obviously provide benefits to their members in the form of community, mutual aid, and care, where there may not be other options, even amidst (or even in spite of) their individualist rhetoric. The evangelical focus on "family values" makes sense against this backdrop, and may indeed provide benefits to many members, excluding those who don't fit in, such as gays and lesbians, transpeople, and nonbelievers of course. (Similarly Hamas provides a vast array of health and social services to needy Palestinians in the absence of a real state). But it begs the question why such "community" structures, which provide so many benefits, must cling to such anti-intellectual, rigid, intellectually defeating beliefs. Yet this indeed seems to be the case, and the paradox. Why are such tight community structures so closely linked to conservative religious beliefs? Of course, there are liberal churches with tight community bonds that orient themselves around progressive beliefs and

activism of a “social Gospel” stripe. But their clear decline is precisely the dilemma linked to the rise of the family of premillennial-believing sects under study.

An influential school of Christian social scientists in the sociology of religion utilizing market theory (Stark and Finke 2000) argue that the success of the new conservative evangelical churches is due to the superior “value” of their product in the religious “marketplace” – their product is simply “better” than what their mainline competitors are offering. But this also begs the question of why the focus on community-building in ostensible “resistance” to the alienating and individuating effects of market and global forces need take place in religious environments at all. Aren’t there plenty of secular institutions and groups that build community? Inter-mural sports groups, activist organizations, unions, community boards, professional associations, affinity and interest groups of all types that make up “civil society”? Certainly there are, but they seem somehow miniscule or ineffective in comparison with the power and pull of the conservative religious churches, and their apocalyptic thought. How to explain this?

Gauchet’s Disenchantment of the World: The Power of Transcendence

Perhaps this power can be explained by something latent or harbored in religious structures. Marcel Gauchet’s *The Disenchantment of the World* is a provocative attempt to rethink the political history of religion theoretically. While most famously known for his argument that Christianity’s most significant historical role has been as a “religion for departing from religion” due to the changes in subjectivity and political structures it inaugurates and its subsequent unfolding of internal contradictions, perhaps its most

original contribution is its theory on the motivation of primeval religion. Gauchet argues that primeval religion was "true" religion in a way that contemporaries don't understand, and that, in a way, we can never really return to. Primeval religion was based on the "radical dispossession" of the "instituting" power of human creativity. The pact made, unconsciously, was to accept the "instituted" religion, rituals, beliefs etc. in order to prevent the conflict, danger and chaos that came with the power of human creativity and social upheaval. Primeval society was hence beholden to the "absolute past" instituted previously by the powerful gods, ancestors, aliens etc, yet was able to have a largely democratic, non-hierarchical existence. Essentially, instead of being dominated by a human hierarchy, humans were dominated by the "hierarchy," the "other" of the ancient past. As widely recognized, the emergence of ontological dualism and monotheism around the Axial age fundamentally changes primeval religion. The visible and the invisible no longer co-habitate, but are separated and held distinct.

Gauchet, however, sees the state as the fundamental force that created the conditions of possibility for the transcendence and dualism of the Axial age because it inevitably brought back into play the determinations of power and hierarchy (the split between humans) that primeval religion had relegated to the past (the split between humans and their foundation). Judaic monotheism and later the Incarnational nature of Jesus set off dynamics of dualism that result in the differentiation of church and state, and the separation between the visible and the invisible, which allows science and speculative thought to develop. Once the state has legitimacy aside from the church, the Pandora's Box has been opened, and inevitably the "instituting" power of human creativity comes into play in the public realm and religion, as a public, social entity with its aspect of

"radical dispossession" no longer exists. In a sense, this is a restatement, rethinking and defense of the classic "secularization thesis". It is perfectly possible and likely that some people will continue to be religious, but in a sense, its historical well has run dry and it is something fundamentally different than what it was through much of human history. As Gauchet puts it, "what is currently alive in the Christian faith has no connection with the circumstances surrounding its birth, the conditions that allowed it to assert itself and develop, or the role through which its major themes and variations have been played out." (Gauchet, 4) Further, we are "dealing with an *atheistic society*, made up of and governed by a *believing majority*" (ibid). To not understand this amounts to mistaking religion's "decline for its golden age". (5)

After the state, the next crucial development in the history of religion, and Christianity in particular that Gauchet focuses on that is relevant for our purposes is the unique power of what he calls the "dynamics of transcendence". The emergence of transcendence is associated with what Karl Jaspers termed the "Axial Age," – the period in religious history linked to the emergence of many of the "major" religions, such as Judaic monotheism, Platonism, Confucianism and Buddhism, where good and evil cease to co-habit, and instead are separated – where "good" is raised over "evil". In tandem with this, and unfolding from this dynamic, is the emergence of ontological dualism, where the mind or reason (often associated with the good) gets raised hierarchically over the body and the emotions (which becomes associated with the bad or the evil, or a "copy" of the ideal form, in the Platonic or Gnostic traditions). This devaluation of the body was a development that bothered Nietzsche, and which has spawned endless critical reflections by feminists, postmodernists, and queer theorists.

Yet what is striking is the way that Gauchet draws out the power associated with the emergence of transcendence:

> Initially, the religious division ran between the human order and its foundation. We have just seen how it shifted to run between humans [emergence of the state] and we can now discuss a further shift, this time *within humans*. At the heart of the self lies the possibility of discovering or mobilizing another self, of looking at one's own normal self, and hence immediate reality, from an outsider's viewpoint. The experience of an inner split is more than just a gap. It opens up a *fracture in being*, which allows an illuminating access, from within, to more truth than is given by communal existence. The revelation originating from within this difference is the beginning of contact with a completely different and higher order of reality. (47)

The rupturing of the co-habitation of the visible and the invisible, good and evil, sets off a "fracture in being", dynamics that open up space for "interiority," while also creating a dilemma of how to reconcile the two separate spheres that ultimately ceaselessly drives the production of new thought (for example, reconciling theodicies, ie the existence of evil with a perfect, omnipotent God). Necessity becomes the mother of invention. "Meaning was no longer given by a destiny allocated to you but could now be found here-below in a voyage of inner discovery. It was no longer to be found in the human and cosmic hierarchical chain but now lay beyond it." (47) Gauchet argues that this translates into "distancing God and [thereby] understanding the world," "*reducing otherness* and *promoting interiority* [..] Immanence presupposes severance from the foundation [the instituting power], while transcendence brings it nearer and makes it accessible." (p. 51). Consequently, "during the transition from immanence to transcendence there is [..] a leap from the *past* to the *present*" (ibid).

Setting aside for now Gauchet's drastic depiction of all primeval religion as "radical dispossession," his general suspicion of "communal" forms of living, whether primitive or modern, and his glorification of liberalism and individualism (what Samuel

Moyn characterizes as his "adult response to a juvenile anarchism he overcame as he matured"), to what extent might his illumination of the "power" of transcendent thought, the hoisting of the Good over Evil, help us understand the continuing appeal and power of apocalyptic thought?

Transcendent thought heightens good over evil, the mind over the body, and, in Gauchet's formulation, brings back into "possession" the "instituting" power of human creativity. While it would be a stretch to equate the power of Axial Age thinking directly with contemporary apocalyptic thought, given the quite different historical contexts each emerges out of, perhaps this is a key to understanding the powerful way in which transcendent thought, and the creation of an ideal, or ideas, can be used to drive action, for better or worse, for sophisticated, or crude ends. This is even though Gauchet argues that ultimately modern society is fundamentally atheist, yet with its believing majorities, fundamentally irrational.

The Future of Religion: Rorty and Vattimo's Post-metaphysical religion

By way of contrast, it is noteworthy to compare a quite different take on the power of transcendence. In *The Future of Religion*, Richard Rorty and Gianni Vattimo ponder the implications of the post-metaphysical perspective in pragmatism and hermeneutics respectively. Both agree on Vattimo's advocation of "weak thought" in place of the "strong thought" of metaphysical thinking. As editor and translator Santiago Zabala summarizes:

> Rorty not only says that his essays "should be read as examples of what a group of contemporary Italian philosophers have called 'weak thought' – philosophical reflection which does not attempt a radical criticism of contemporary culture, does not attempt to refound or remotivate it, but simply assembles reminders and suggests some interesting possibilities" (p. 20)

Yet this seems impossibly blasé. Later Rorty, in his dialogue with Vattimo says:

> I agree with Berlin when he says that the romantics were the first people to question the metaphysical notion of grandeur. They suggested dropping the notion of something high and vast and remote and replacing it with the notion of something deep within – the source of poetic inspiration. But from the point of view of postmetaphysical thought, infinite depth is as bad an idea as infinite power. Instead of getting in touch with either, *postmetaphysical thinkers just want to make finite little changes. They are piecemeal reformers rather than intellectual revolutionaries.* Instead of saying that their ideas reflect something grand or stem from something profound, they put forward their ideas as suggestions that might be of use for certain particular purposes. (p. 60 emphasis mine).

Rich as the discussion is at various points, the tenor of post-metaphysical thought here is one intentionally "weak" and low-key, to counter the "power" and "violence" attributed to metaphysical thought. Yet, one wonders, for instance, what Heidegger or Nietzsche would think of such an approach, as two of the most important critics of Western metaphysical tradition. Both were critiquing a certain tradition or trajectory of metaphysics, that of the dominant tradition of Western metaphysics. Yet, there were other understandings of metaphysics, such as Heraclitus' notion of change and becoming, which diverge from this dominant tradition of the metaphysics of presence, of thinghood and stasis. Far from advocating "piecemeal reform," Nietzsche was a militant, intellectual revolutionary of the first order. Whatever one thinks of his various positions, he advocated for a heroic "overcoming" of human deficiency. Heidegger's critique of the dominant trajectory of Western metaphysics was heroic and revolutionary in itself, far from piecemeal, and his understanding of human existence and potential was always intimately linked with a rather militant resoluteness and projection of one's decisions into

the future, a wrestling with the reality of human existence (Dasein) as a Being-towards-Death. One wonders how their critique of metaphysical thought has come to take this rather blasé, low-key post-metaphysical form, and what the ultimate implications are for such idling, if not decommission, of a formerly radical tradition.

Boyer and Progress

One of Boyer's main arguments, subtly made, is that as secularism dropped notions of "progress," (other than of the most banal, deterministic kind) or rather, as secular movements advocating progress have declined, premillennialism has filled the void. "Radicals seeking evidence of grassroots disaffection with the structure of modern society have ignored a rich potential source – the torrent of skeptical commentary by premillennialists, whose array of prophetic "signs" included social, economic, and technological processes so broad as to be almost coterminous with modernity itself. Collectively these authors offered a strikingly comprehensive critique of contemporary mass society as dehumanizing and dangerously centralized." (p. 254) With the disenchantment regarding the notion of progress after multiple world wars, Stalinism, failed socialist and communist revolutions, secular narratives have largely given up the ghost on progress, except as appropriated for use in the most vapid ideas of consumerism and globalization that equate ever expanding consumption with progress. This comes back to the dilemma that Blumenberg delineated in the post-war era – the very real threat that the disenchantment with progress (though certainly understandable given the conditions) would lead to, for lack of a better word "passivity" – a fatalistic, deterministic

viewpoint that sees human action (struggle) for "betterment" as an illusion. Have we not in some ways reached a similar juncture after the "failure" of the social movements of the 60s? Does not the "fire in one's belly" that the premillennial outlook has, ("health and wealth gospel" pragmatism aside), in comparison to the passionlessness of any "left" movement become more understandable in its appeal? As Boyer summarizes "radicals seeking evidence of grassroots disaffection with the structure of modern society have ignored a rich potential source – the torrent of skeptical commentary by premillennialists, whose array of prophetic "signs" included social, economic, and technological processes so broad as to be almost coterminous with modernity itself. Collectively these authors offered a strikingly comprehensive critique of contemporary mass society as dehumanizing and dangerously centralized."

Further, prophecy provides a connection with history and religious tradition that science lost with Darwin:

> "The enduring appeal of prophecy belief for evangelicals testifies to its value as a quasi-empirical, 'scientific' validation of their faith. In the 18th century, when natural theology found evidence for God in the order and symmetry of nature, prophecy belief harmonized well with prevailing religious thought and coexisted comfortably with some strands of Enlightenment ideology. As Nathan Hatch observes, 'The study of prophecy offered rational men the opportunity to see God's plan unfold in history and produced tangible and coherent proof of religious doctrine.' With the erosion of natural theology under the corrosive effects of Darwinism and other nontheistic explanations of the physical order, prophecy remained a historicist alternative, providing evidence for God's oversight of the world in the order and symmetry of past, present, and future events." (p. 293)

In a secular, scientific world where prediction and predictability is much valued, though for what reason is often hard to discern; where the past, present and future can often seem to be random and without "meaning," the lure of a predictable, known future can be all the more appealing, particularly if the sense of purpose facilitates comraderie with other

believers. Apocalyptic expectation creates, essentially "great expectations", it heightens the bar. It is unfortunate that one player has come to monopolize this impressive heritage. What if matters were different?

Chapter 6

Beyond Liberalism's Secularism:

Disenchantment, Taylor and the Radical Imagination

"Is that.. all there is?" -

Peggy Lee (quoted in Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*)

What changed in the past 500 years, such that we (Western European Christianity) went from a society where it was almost impossible not to believe in God, to a society where it is difficult to now believe in him? What have we "lost" in this process, in the transition to a secularized Modernity? Focusing on the decline of religion in Europe and his native Quebec, this is the question Charles Taylor poses in his 800 page magnum opus, *A Secular Age*, where he proposes a "paradigm shift" in the traditional view of secularization, at least that of Western Christianity and the form it takes in the "North Atlantic" world. Seeking to "get beyond" the two usual indicators of secularization that sociologists use - the decline in beliefs and practices, and the decline of religion in public spaces and influence, via the modern "differentiation" of spheres and the relegation of religion to a "private" rather than public matter, he focuses on a third, more phenomenologically oriented aspect of secularization, the changes in the background "conditions of belief". He is critical of what he considers the reductive "subtraction stories" of secularization that attribute the decline of religion to science or Darwin – ie that "science proved Darwin wrong" and seek to tell a more complex, nuanced story, a new "master narrative" of Western secularization. Yet Taylor's attempt to critique the more "vulgar" or "reductive" aspects of the more materialist "subtraction

stories" of secularization leave him subject to his own critique – oversimplication and the creation of a new "subtraction story" – an idealist one.

For instance, while religion may be in decline in Europe and Quebec, this is far from the case in other parts of "North Atlantic" world, notably the US, where it is alive and well. This and the consideration of highly important material factors – such as the impact of industrialization, urban living and social movements, particularly radical ones, hobble Taylor's argument.

The central issue that Taylor examines is that of what has been "lost" in modernity – the process of disenchantment and disembedding from a more communal, unified cosmos to an individualized, instrumental, exclusive humanism of what he terms the "immanent frame". In trying to trace this process of disenchantment, and counter it to some extent, Taylor seeks to show how the metaphysical commitments of science and modernity - the ideal of mutual benefit and benevolence of what he terms the "Modern Moral Order" are inspired by Christianity and its ideals of agape. Yet, his critique of individualism and the "immanent frame" is inhibited by his ultimate commitment to liberalism as the legitimate path that the secularization of Christianity has taken. This leaves Taylor, I argue, ensnared in his own dialectic. Are we really to understand, for instance, free market capitalism as inspired by Christian love? For Taylor, the challenge (and solution) is for disenchanted seculars to try to re-engage with a sense of the transcendent, which for Taylor personally means God. Presumably this is not the only sense of the transcendent available, but this is not clear in Taylor's work. "Immanent" approaches are inferior for Taylor, and radically immanent perspectives are prematurely dismissed or not examined. Radical notions of the social and the communal, of both

secular and religious variants, get sidelined and "othered" in his master narrative. This, I will argue, cripples the attempts by Taylor to truly grapple with the problem of what has been "lost" in the modern world.

"Subtraction" Theories of Secularism

One of Taylor's intentions is to show the poverty of what he terms the various "subtraction" stories of secularism – of which Weber's is a primary representation - that simply attribute religion's decline to "science" or "modernity". He thinks that things are both "more complicated" and "more interesting" than these stories would lead one to believe. Taylor examines these changes with a rather long view. He proposes, essentially, a new, better (or at least 'less bad') "master narrative" of Western secularization.

In showing the rise of what he will ultimately term the "immanent frame" – the reductive scientism which he argues is "closed off" to otherworldly transcendence, Taylor aims to show how the metaphysical structure of contemporary science and modern subjectivity, now largely obscured to itself, emerge dialectically out of the various religious reform movements which arise to purge religious practice of its more magical elements. Following Foucault (1990), he examines the role in this process of the 'reform' movements of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, when movements of monks and orders went out to spread a "higher" form of religious devotion, reducing the barrier between the clerical "elite" and the common people. He reads this as an essentially democratizing reform, which sought to connect with the everyday life of the common

public through a Christological focus. While Taylor views the focus on "higher" forms of religion and a more democratic approach as positive, Taylor is more critical of the more ambiguous elements of the imposition of universal confession and attempts to purge or at least curb the more chaotic and wild aspects of the Carnival festivals, viewed by the clerical elite as the avatar or repository of paganism. In this view, the Protestant Reformation is simply another step in this line of reform.

The central paradox that Taylor focuses on is the unintended consequence of these reform movements. On the one hand, the more "rational" naturalist focus of Aristotelian-inspired Thomism, was perceived as potentially undermining God's autonomy, resulting in a reaction that sought to "protect" the power of God by a strict distinction between the supernatural and the natural realms. Yet, further down the road, this rigid distinction between the natural and the supernatural ultimately, and ironically, undermines the supernatural realm, as the separate sphere of the natural expands due to naturalism's successes at the supernatural realm's expense. Much of this follows and extends territory already pursued by Marcel Gauchet's *Disenchantment of the World*. Essentially, Taylor argues that a number of factors – particularly the "disembedding" of the world from the traditional, ancient cosmos, is transformed over time into the "Providential" God of Deism (with the help of the influence of what he terms "stoic" Christianity – the influence of Roman stoicism on Christian thought). Later the universe comes to have clock-like mechanistic properties, and God hovers over as Creator, but not necessarily sustainer. This of course, is one perilous step away from getting rid of God altogether, which happens later. As well, these more "rational" forms of thinking and living – originally inspired by the "Incarnational," more democratic Christological focus,

paradoxically result in an “excarnational” approach to the body and the realm of the Carnivalesque that contribute problematically to a sense of “loss”.

But one crucial argument of Taylor in excavating a sort of genealogical history of modern science (the immanent frame) is the way in which the “substance” of Christian (stoic) morality has been preserved and has helped to create what he terms the “Modern Moral Order” (MMO). It is a revision of Weber’s idea that Calvinism created capitalism as an unintended byproduct. Rather, Taylor seeks to hold together the somewhat precarious balance of two ideas that are in constant tension throughout the many pages that follow – on the one hand, that contemporary society/civilization – as he terms it, the “the Modern Moral Order of mutual benefit and benevolence,” continues the tradition (or is an unfolding of) Christian agape and fellowship. On the other hand, Taylor seeks to draw out the ways in which what the Modern Moral Order has give birth to – the “exclusive humanism” of the Immanent Frame – excludes consideration of something “higher,” which for Taylor means God. So he is caught between on the one hand, praising and endorsing contemporary society/civilization as a fulfillment of Christian morality (of which the tracing of the metaphysical connections between the two is in many ways a rather convincing account), and on the other, he is critical of its tendencies to exclude God or something “transcendent” via its more reductive, scientific immanent frame. Partly this reductiveness is due to the “slippage” towards a more practical, functional approach, a largely unintended outcome of the Providential Deist phase of early modernity. If God wants and therefore we deserve to flourish and be good, then it is right and appropriate that we focus on how to bring this about – which “slides” for Taylor into a more functional concern with mutual aid and benevolence.

But this hewing to a favorable reading of the impact of "enlightened" Christian morality on the Modern Moral Order (MMO) consistently leads Taylor to look at contemporary society from a generally upbeat, positive perspective, that takes the claims the MMO makes about itself as generally accurate, if not simply at face-value.

Undoubtedly this is a heartfelt and rich analysis – however as an attempt to "correct" for or "debunk" the more "materialist" subtraction stories, Taylor ends up leaving out crucial phenomena necessary to understand the phenomenon of modern secularization and modern secularisms. (Though even here the framing of "subtraction stories" is problematic - can Weber's story of rationalization really be called a reductive, "subtraction story?) In his concern to critique these "subtraction stories" or at least their more "vulgar" materialist elements, he goes to an extreme of idealism – throwing out the baby with the bathwater. For instance, he refers at various points to the processes of industrialization, urbanization, the rise of modern technology – but downplays their effects in shaping the "conditions of belief". One reason he gives for this is that they have been duly if not overly articulated elsewhere in other secularization "subtracted" stories. This perhaps wouldn't matter so much if he wasn't explicitly trying to create a new master narrative of Western secularization. He foresees this criticism to some extent, devoting a chapter early on to the "specter of idealism". Yet, this just highlights the work's main weakness. Taylor becomes subject to his own criticism – oversimplification and a new "subtraction story" is created. The real story of secularization, I would argue, is indeed, "more complicated" and "more interesting" than we are ultimately led to believe by Taylor's account.

For instance, Taylor makes much commentary out of what he terms the expanding "nova" of belief perspectives that bloom out of the decline of the common "embeddedness" in a particular cosmos. He charts the various perspectives that develop between orthodox belief and the emerging disbelief of the Modern Moral Order, focusing on the variety of "fragmented" positions that develop between traditional belief and non-belief. Ultimately, though, the more scientistic, Deist-influenced, but essentially post-Deist perspective comes to dominate. He argues as a result that something has been "lost" – that the immanent frame is "closed off" to anything "higher". Born out of the "this-worldly" concerns of Providential Deism, the "immanent frame" cannot get "beyond" a concern with human flourishing – the order of mutual benefit and benevolence.

While he attempts to show "both sides" of the debate between belief and disbelief, in the attempt to "bring together" and show the metaphysical commonalities and common Christian heritage of belief and disbelief, it is clear by his rhetoric that his ultimate affinities lie with the side of belief, and he is not beyond using it to stack the deck a bit. The rhetoric of "closure" - exemplified by his repeated use of the term "exclusive" humanism (where what is excluded is a sense of the transcendant) is reserved primarily for disbelief, not "belief" (though he admits "believers" can also be "closed" in their thinking, such as with the orthodox religious right) and the repeated use of the world "sliding" towards a solely immanent realm and "sloughing off" belief in the transcendent has clearly negative connotations. Given the dominance in the "modern social imaginary" of the "therapeutic mindset," we all know being "closed off" is bad, but being "open" is good. Ultimately, he is to argue that it is a "disability" of the modern mindset

to be “closed off” to the possibilities of the transcendent “higher” realm of God, and argues repeatedly that those steeped in the “immanent frame” would be better off to “stand in the open field” as it were and be “open to the possibilities of transcendence – God. While one needn’t necessarily believe in such, it would still be “unbiased” and “good thing” to be open to. Because (as he ultimately believes and therefore feels compelled to argue) they might be “missing out” on something “higher,” something that might make their lives more “fuller,” something that would take them beyond the “mere” realm of human flourishing, which Taylor seems to equate with the idea of “self-interest”. The problem is he confuses and conflates “believing in something” beyond the immanent frame, ie one’s own self-interest, with God. On the contrary, one need only look at a manifold of historical social movements, which Taylor auspiciously doesn’t, to see there are manifold ways to get beyond one’s own self-interest in ways other than a simple appeal to God.

I agree with Taylor that many in the “immanent frame” of a reductive scientism and technologically mediated society are “closed off” to something “higher,” something more “transcendent,” though I would not choose those words to describe what they are closed off to. By focusing primarily (if not obsessively) on the dichotomy between belief and disbelief, Taylor ends up sidelining other important issues – intentionally or unintentionally – as well as re-inscribing a troubled binary it is the ostensible point of his long work to undue.

For example, American Catholics – except for the conservative core, for better or worse, don’t really care or at least think too much about whether God exists – this focus on belief is ultimately more of a Protestant thing – they focus on ritual, works, action,

belonging, culture. Many are only occasional church attendees, where the religion has cultural-historical-ethnic symbolic and nostalgic value rather than literal-belief value. What conservative Catholic critics call: "Match, hatch and dispatch Catholics" or "Lily-Poinsettia" Catholics (I thank my mother for relaying these witticisms). If one starts to interrogate your average "Catholic" – ie someone raised Catholic, about doctrinal issues, such as whether Jesus truly was the Son of God, or whether Mary really was a virgin when she gave birth to Jesus, much less the specifics of Trinitarian theology, a typical reaction will be discomfort, squeamishness and a more or less clear indication that they would rather not think about it, that it's not something they think about much. As Harry Connick Jr, said on TV during the Pope's visit in 2008, after years of doubt about his Catholicism, a fellow Catholic celebrity friend told him to not worry about his doubts and just go to church anyway, explaining "we're Catholics – we go to church – that's just what we do". In contrast, your average evangelical, when asked doctrinal questions, generally has quick, snappy literalist answers, said with conviction.

Consequently, one major aspect missing in his account is the variety of secularisms and religious practices that focus on issues other than belief/disbelief; issues that, I think, ultimately, Taylor is also concerned about, but which are paradoxically marginalized in his account, or de-emphasized in comparison to his focus on the central belief/disbelief binary that he highlights. While he tries to "blur" this binary with the plethora of positions "in between" these two "extremes" or positions (poles) he calls them - that "we" are all "cross-pressured" by, at least in terms of being forced to define ourselves in relation to these poles - whether we have any sympathy for either one, as a result of Taylor's framing, one is still largely enclosed within the belief/unbelief binary,

blurred or otherwise, as a primary focus of the discussion, rather than say, focusing on practices or community.

Taylor and the various stages of Durkheimian Society

Not that the issue of community is ignored by Taylor is ignored by any means, specifically its disintegration by modern individualism. Taylor, widely know as a "communitarian," of course is well aware of this issue and spends much of a chapter talking about the various stages of what he calls "Durkheimian" society – paleo-Durkheimian, or those societies which "traditional" religion holds together; neo-Durkheimian, ie modern religious revival movements and religious-infused nationalisms which make attempts to bring society back together; and post-Durkheimian societies, the typically secular, de-religionized, more individualistic contemporary society so prevalent for Taylor in most (but not all) countries.

While critical of "post-Durkheimian" societies of the Modern Moral Order (MMO), at the same time, Taylor spills much ink defending the contemporary MMO, discussing examples of evidence of Durkheimian bonding in contemporary society – such as the mourning of Diana's death, football games and rock shows. Taylor makes extensive reference to the "event" of Diana's death and the "public" mourning over it to show the Durkheimian bonding that still exists. Yet this example in particular seems particularly problematic for me, as a questionable vestige of "premodern" aristocratic cultural prerogatives, situated in a "postmodern" mass media context. Was Diana's funeral, for instance, an "event" or a "spectacle"? What is troubling is the way in which the

"bonding" he seeks and identifies is that which reverts to a top-down, hierarchical framework. Why should I care about the death of a foreign nation's royalty? Of my nation's former colonizer, no less? And if this is all the solidarity and community we have, ie that of the spectacle, this is a problem.

Further, his equation of the decline of the community with the inevitably more "individualistic" stance of the secular immanent frame is, I think, not helpful, as it tends to equate individualism with secularism, and religion with community, which is not always true and excludes other important variations. On the contrary, there are plenty of modern "religious" such as evangelicals, that are quite individualistic. The "inward" focus of much contemporary evangelicalism is widely recognized for this aspect. While they may foster community within their own church, the focus on being "born again," conversion and "saving souls," has much more of a focus on personal piety and "pelvic issues" than the Social Gospel era or Catholicism, as the dominion of the "health and wealth" gospel and the "culture war" issues of the religious right in the US demonstrate. This may be changing with the "New Evangelicalism", but this, I think, really remains to be seen – a little public chagrin and a lost election do not a trend make. While the "mainline" denominations have more of a social focus, they are far weaker and less influential by all accounts, from left to right.

On the other hand, not all "secular" people are ensconced in an individualistic worldview. There are various traditions of secularisms – tending to the left of center, generally, that have consistently articulated visions of a society that, if one wants to use the word - "transcend" - the interiorizing tendencies of modern individualism. This is the case with a number of social movements – the ecological movement, the labor

movement, communism, anarchism, socialism, radical feminism, Marxism, black liberation, gay liberation, and queer movements among others. And this is not only a secular thing – there are also lots of religiously-inspired movements with similar aims as well – liberation theology, the black church, the Social Gospel etc.

But unfortunately, social movements other than a few religious ones do not get included as players in Taylor's "master narrative". Apparently this is because he doesn't see them as being strong factors or forces in the history of Western secularization and secularisms. By far the most space given to social movements in Taylor's narrative are the religious reform movements – the early Medieval reform movements in Catholicism, the Reformation, Counter-Reformation, and the various revivals and Great Awakenings. And certainly, Taylor gives us here a rich analysis of parts of history often left out.

But one central problem, which from to his tendency for idealism, is that too much of the narrative and struggle is vertical in a top-down way. From the religious movements of struggle for a purer and "higher" form of religion that originate with the clerical elite and move downward to the peasants; to the dispersal of norms of "civility" and "decency" in early modernity of aristocratic, knightly and later bourgeois culture; to the spread of "unbelief" which he clearly sees as taking shape in the more "educated" classes and gets dispersed down to the workers and the common folk (which he frowns upon), agency is with those at the top of the social structure. He even argues that the more widespread disbelief in Europe compared to the US can be explained by the higher level of respect accorded to intellectuals in Europe than in the US! In other words, secularization occurs because people in Europe (who are apparently more gullible)

believe their intellectuals' secularization "subtraction" stories more than in the US. If this isn't a frightfully top-down perspective, I don't know what is.

Taylor does refer to the various strands of radical secularism that have percolated up in the processes of secularization, but they largely get written off as "Utopian Illusions". He goes out of his way to counter the typical "subtraction" story of secularism – that it arose out of a desire to get "beyond" the disastrous "wars of religion" of the 17th century, as well as such classic bad phenomena as the Inquisition, crusades, silencing of Galileo, resistance to science and modernity, etc (none of which get discussed in depth at all – a major problem for anything striving to be a "master narrative" of secularization), by "proving" that secularism has produced more violence and destruction than religion ever has – hurling names and historical phenomenon such as Pol Pot, Stalin, the gulags, the Holocaust, and the World Wars to supposedly "prove" his point, as though no further explanation or examination were necessary. Yet, this approach is highly questionable. For example, his argument that WWI was "secular" is highly dubious if not flat wrong, given the widespread apocalyptic, Godly fervor generated on both sides – particularly the English, but also the German (see Boyer 1992, Phillips 2007, Israel 2002). He even contradicts himself on this, as he spends a section previously arguing that the evangelical mobilization on the English side and its subsequent disenchantment with the role of the church contributed to the decline of religious practice and secularization in early 20th century England.

The Modern Moral Order =… Capitalist Free Market?

Taylor wants to critique contemporary society, but is beholden to it by his own argument that it – capitalism – is the inheritor of his beloved Christian values. When he is buttressing his argument over the validity of the Modern Moral Order (crucial to his argument of its metaphysical inheritance from Christianity) he distinguishes the mainstream tendency toward mutual aid and benevolence and tolerance from the "extremes" of "fascism" and "communism" which he lumps indiscriminately together. And there he doesn't distinguish between Stalinism and communism, which comes off polemically as anti-leftist. While at other points, he does read Marxism and socialism as valiant attempts to pursue a less individualistic form of "mutual aid" (coming out of the romantic expressivism of Rousseau and Marx), by far the weight of the experience of these movements is lumped into the extremes – with fascism. Yet, do a few bad apples require one to quarantine apple trees forever? Hitler was democratically elected, does this mean democracy should be done away with? Or that it is a Utopian Illusion? The ideas of Marxism, communism, socialism and anarchism, which have made great intellectual as well as practical contributions (is Taylor against social security? The 40 hour workweek? Weekends off? Vacations? Unions?) should ultimately be distinguished from the bad forms that "really existing" communism often took historically. In comparison, very little that is positive or of intellectual value can be gleaned or preserved from fascism. So why lump them together? (Badiou 2010).

Indeed his revisionism at points starts to dovetail eerily with that of the revisionist religious right. For instance, in his upbeat assessment of the role of the Catholic Church in mobilizing its members and creating the more democratic "organization of laypeople in new bodies" as opposed to the "re-enactment of existing orders in age-old hierarchies"

in the 19th century, he cites positively the "gigantic campaign" to build Sacre Coeur de Montmarte. Yet, as Raymond Jonas in *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart* (2000) argues, the origins of the Sacred Heart devotion were decidedly counter-revolutionary. The mobilization of the bourgeois and aristocratic elite in building Sacre Coeur on the site of the Paris Commune was an attempt to purge and eliminate its memory. There is no discussion of this in Taylor's work at all. By writing off all these radical secular movements as "Utopian Illusions" doomed to fail - to be relegated to the "round file" of history - Taylor is throwing away ideas and historical experience vitally necessary to get "beyond" the reductive, scientistic individualizing "immanent frame" that he so desperately wants to overcome. Taylor appears trapped in the "immanent frame" of the "end of history"and TINA theses - for better or worse, this is the "best of all possible worlds" or as Thatcher famously stated "there is no alternative" for the capitalist Modern Moral Order.

I have little beef with much of the substance of his depiction of the reductive, confining scientism of what he calls the "immanent frame" – in a sense, his critique of modern society is a bit "Frankfurt School Light". But in many ways he himself seems eerily trapped in its photographic negative – the only way to get "out" or to get to something "higher" or more "transcendent" is faith in God. This to me eviscerates many of the complex and nuanced ideas, social movements and social formations that emerged historically in response to and in dialogue with this problem. To be sure, "scientific" socialism (and anarchism, Marxism and communism) often have internalized an instrumental relationship to nature. But many thinkers within "radical" secular traditions point this out and have developed nuanced critiques of it, such as the Frankfurt School.

Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of the Enlightenment*, Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* and *Eros and Civilization* are classic examples. Yet why do these ideas get no play in Taylor's account?

These ideas are crucial, I would argue, for a number of reasons. One glaring one is the way in which Taylor, again, trapped into viewing the "Modern Moral Order"'s claims to mutual benefit and benevolence at face value for his argument of modernity's debt to Christianity, articulates the idea uncritically that we are so lucky to have a "direct-access" society. Huh? Many, if not most people, on some level, would articulate something quite different about their experiences with the "Modern Moral Order" – just ask the Tea Party, for starters. Canada may have a more direct-access society but here in the US, we are beset, I would argue, with the problems of a "mass" society. People generally feel disenfranchised more than franchised, as the anti-globalization movement of the pre-"War on Terror" years gave momentary voice to. Guy Debord's "Society of the Spectacle" seems more apropos.

But this reveals a deeper problem. Without the traditions of radical "social" critique, and because he marries the moral claims of Christianity with capitalism in his representation of the Modern Moral Order, Taylor is left accepting at face value the claims of laissez faire capitalism – Adam Smith's "invisible hand" of the market – the fiction that one's own individual self-interest somehow translates into the best possible social good. Are we to believe and accept that capitalism is a system of "mutual aid" and "benevolence"? Without a critique or even analysis of capitalism (and I can find none in the 800 plus pages) this seems a fatal flaw of Taylor's "master narrative". How are we to really understand Western secularism, much less the modern appeal of religion without

any analysis of capitalism? For Weber, an analysis of capitalism was central to his understanding of modernity, secularism, Protestantism and secularization. And he is often considered an idealist! Yet Taylor counts Weber in among the "subtraction" theorists who he seeks to counter – "subtraction" theories that rely, for Taylor, too much on a materialist approach. When these are all edited out, we end up, unfortunately, with a historical, yet hyper-idealist, non-materialist perspective whose criticism is relegated mainly to questions of belief vs. unbelief, where larger questions of material social justice, the economic order and freedom are edited away and we are left with a romanticized, uncritical endorsement of the claims of the Modern Moral Order of capitalism and its reality.

This "closing off" to what I would call radically "immanent" ideas and traditions (such as Spinoza) – perhaps the "radical imagination" would be an appropriate term, deprives Taylor, I think, of necessary tools of critiquing the worst effects of the dominant "immanent frame". The immanent/transcendent dichotomy can mean different things in different contexts, depending on what it is defined against. For instance, one could see attempts to get "beyond" modern individualism as an attempt to "transcend" it to the level of the social and communal – transcend in a Hegelian sense. I am not sure, though, this is helpful as both terms "higher" and "transcend" have metaphysical baggage from feudal, aristocratic times that refer to hierarchical relations – this-worldly or other-worldly – "resonances" of hierarchy which I would explicitly like to reject or help put into retirement. Yet Taylor's constant use of the term "higher," "transcendence," something "beyond," constantly re-imposes this hierarchical imagery. It doesn't seem to be accidental either. His uncritical recycling of the term "kingdom of God" at various

points is also troubling. It reveals the limitations of the Catholic language he often uses (an intentional choice to reveal his own particularity, it seems, which also aims to reach out to a Catholic, even traditionalist Catholic audience in his readership). While it is a language he is obviously comfortable and familiar with, its highly feudal imagery is jarring when "translated" or "transferred" to a "modern" "industrial" context and re-imposes troubling hierarchies.

Indeed it seems sometimes that Taylor is intentionally trying to marry a critique of modern individualism with an explicitly "transcendent" option that is specifically religious, such that something like a Frankfurt School critique is elided. The only counter-example to this is his treatment of Martha Nussbaum's attempt to articulate a notion of secular transcendence which needn't be religious. However, one gets the feeling that Taylor's short treatment of the idea is ultimately lip service as he argues that any such attempt inevitably gets folded back into the confinement of the "immanent frame" to "simple" "human flourishing". Yet, why is "simple" human flourishing so looked down upon by Taylor? In a world with gross inequality and serious challenges to human flourishing on many levels, it is strange and somewhat revealing that he "poo-poos" such a concern as "inferior" to more "transcendent" concerns. At the same time, eerily and ironically, Taylor ends up defending individualism's worst aspects given his commitment to this interpretation of the birth of the Modern Moral Order out of Christianity, where modern individualism, from a Smithian and Lockian perspective, is viewed as the optimal functional order for ensuring a society of mutual benefit and benevolence.

Another way of approaching what I sense is Taylor's being "closed off" to the radical imagination (both secular and religious), is his analysis of the modern "malaise" and his related analysis of the expressive individualism of what he calls the contemporary "age of authenticity," which flowered in the 60s but had roots in the 19th century Bloomsbury Circle and before that, the expressivism of the German Romantic era of Schiller, Goethe, and later Wordsworth – an analysis in many ways very rich and informative.

He articulates the "malaise" of modernity as the "modern" sense that something has been "lost". Taylor captures this sense amusingly in Peggy Lee's song "Is that all there is?" Where once we were "embedded" in a more unified cosmos, whether of the ancient Greco-Roman cosmos or the Christian, the successive waves of disenchantment; first religious, against the repository of magical thinking, and later the scientific, against the religious, has left us trapped in a reductive, scientistic "immanent" realm or frame. Consequently, movements arise to try to "recapture" what has been lost, or more accurately, to "re-imagine" something to take its place. He gives a lot of room for considering Schiller's ideas for the uniting of the aesthetic or the beautiful with the sense of freedom in the concept of "play," against the reductiveness of the emerging Naturalism, on its way to becoming the instrumental scientism of the "immanent frame".

They in turn inspire Rousseau's notion of liberty and fraternity and Marx's notions of solidarity. Yet, in his narrative the "telos" of these latter tendencies end up either in "communal" Utopianism, where (as he articulates in another section) this "utopianism" (which he makes analogous to the Manichean potential of the heightening of the "good" over evil in the Axial Age) gets projected outward onto external or internal

enemies malevolently. This projection takes shape in the paradox or performative contradiction of the murderous use of violence by Robespierre during the French Revolution to ostensibly usher in a peaceful era of non-violence (citing Robespierre's schizoid opposition to the death penalty), or the demonization of the bourgeois or imperialist countries by communist nations during the Bolshevik Revolution and the Cold War period. But Tayor's form of "transcendence" is somehow exempted from this dynamic?

Sexuality and Gender in Taylor's "Age of Authenticity"

On the other hand, Taylor charts the emergence of another, for him ultimately more influential, trajectory of expressive individualism. He charts its development through Matthew Arnold's reflections on culture and the rise of the cultural experimentation of the Bloomsbury Circle – citing Virginia Wolf's famous quote "on or about December 1910, human nature changed" – an indirect reference to an exhibit of post-Impressionist painting from the Continent, which made a big cultural impact in London at the time. He charts the rise of sexual experimentation within the Bloomsbury Circle of writers and intellectuals – the "play" of non-traditional relationships – the "coming out" of homosexuals.

Decades later, in Taylor's narrative, this experimentation with finding one's "authentic" self "trickles down" to the popular culture at large, finding expression in the "sexual revolution" of the 60's, which he considers another classic "Utopian Illusion," with often "devastating" results for individuals and families, arguing "Utopianism has its

costs" (p. 477). This "devastation" is implied, but not articulated by Taylor. What is meant? Sexual promiscuity? Single-parent families? This strategic "inarticulateness" or "silence" seems to be one of Taylor's main strategies to maximize his audience. Religious conservatives, of course, will fill in the blanks, and by not explicitly saying what he means, he minimizes the collateral damage with him from more liberal, secular readers, but only at the cost of coming off moralistic, preachy and ultimately, repressive. One can see here the limits of trying to be all things to all people.

And here, once again, his narrative is troublingly top-down. There is no discussion of the role of the urban experience of the emerging industrial "masses" of peasants-turned-workers and urban dwellers on changing sexual mores. And, while he discusses elsewhere the impact of the "guerre Franco-Francois" and the strong anti-clerical movements linked to the experience of the complicity of the "ancien regime" and absolutist state, where the church often sided with the state (ie ruling class), first in its monarchical phase, then in its bourgeois phase, there is no discussion, for instance, of the way the state inherits the repressive morality of the church and rehabilitates and utilizes it to fuel the increased productivity of workers. Taylor does comment at length, critically, on the role of the French clerical, religious-institutional reaction to modernity, such as Mauras and Mauritain – but largely leaves out the role of various working class, feminist, and radical movements, which give voice to and articulate resistance to the prevailing ancien-bourgeois morality of sexual repressiveness. Wilhelm Reich and Herbert Marcuse, for example, are instructive in filling in this history – largely left out of Taylor's account. Nowhere is there a discussion of the role of bohemian resistance to bourgeois morality (such as captured in Puccini's *La Boheme*), that arises out of the

“masses” as well as the working class movements and intellectuals that give intellectual expression to it. Significantly, there is no treatment of the role of feminism at all in the whole book!

In Taylor’s account, by contrast, he lets a conservative cultural critic like David Brooks frame the terms of the debate. He relies heavily on Brook’s interpretation of the 60s and its sexual revolution in his book “*Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper class and how they got there*”. Bobos (conjuring up baboons or idiots) stands for the “Bourgeois Bohemians” of the 60s generation. Brooks argues that the radicalism of the 60s inevitably floundered on its own narcissistic individualism – ie the drive for authenticity. A self-expression, he argues, that inevitably devolved into a “higher selfishness,” (p. 477) relegating its generation of progenitors to a self-indulgent, IT working, latte sipping class of liberals of the 80s and onward. The upshot: the whole project was doomed to failure as the “telos” of any radical or utopian–driven movement is doomed.

This seems a particularly bad choice of an “intellectual” to rely on for interpreting the sexual revolution and its associated political and cultural ferment. There are plenty of criticisms to be made of the 60s and the sexual revolution, individualism one of them, but why leave out the numerous criticisms and consideration of those most honestly influenced and inspired by its ferment – the feminists, leftists, gay liberationists of its time? Why rely on someone undoubtedly unsympathetic to the original goals of the period? Brooks, while far from stupid, as a mentee of William F. Buckley, comes from a conservative, aristocratic-high bourgeois tradition unsympathetic and critical from the start of the experimentalism of the 60s. It seems at worst bad scholarship and at the minimum unbalanced to leave out the interpretations of the successes and pitfalls of the

era – as widely documented and analyzed by feminists and other radicals. It's not clear to what extent this is intentional or just indicative of Taylor's distance from radical social movements generally. But it seems part of his plan to appeal to religious conservatives and bring them together with the mainstream secular. "Radicals" of any stripe (unless they are the religious right, which seem to get a pass) get excluded as a result.

In any case, who, other than the religious right and a core of conservative thinkers, would argue that the sexual experimentations of the 60s is simply reducible to a "higher selfishness"? What about the clear gains that have been achieved in sexual freedom, gay and lesbian rights, feminism, more equitable and playful gender roles? Of course, one could argue that these freedoms have been increasingly under erosion in some ways, but few, I think, would write them off as a complete failure. One problem in Taylor's analysis, as I will elaborate later, is that he ties sex and violence too tightly together I think – this may partially explain his aversion to appreciating the advances of the sexual revolution.

The Incarnational and the Excarnational Body

On the other hand, one of the most insightful and progressive elements of Taylor's narrative, I think, is his analysis of the paradox of the dueling "Incarnational" and "Excarnational" tendencies in Christianity. With a rather dialectical approach, he details how the original medieval reform movements were partly inspired by a desire to "Incarnate" the higher forms of religious piety and devotion through the Christological images of Christ as an everyday, common embodied person, but which paradoxically gets transformed into its opposite, the "Excarnating" tendencies of the drive for

disenchantment and purging of the magical, body-centered, carnivalesque realm. Taylor seeks to show how this dialectic also gets played out during the Counter-Reformation through movements that seek to reach the common person through devotion to the "Sacred Heart" of Jesus and the devotion of St. Teresa (Liseieux) of the Little Flower (a devotion I myself grew up with). As Taylor details, this results paradoxically, however, in further disenchanted "purging" of the magical, carnivalesque and the bodily, all of which get conflated by the reforming age.

So Taylor is insightful in problematizing this tendency of "Excarnation" – so obvious in the Protestant Reformation's fixation on belief, faith and grace, and its demotion of concern with "good works" – which tend to involve more body-oriented practices and rituals. (And introducing a split between the sacred and the profane that Tawney [1954] argues allows capitalism to develop).

How to resolve this conundrum? Easier said than done, and I think that Taylor helps shed light on a powerful tendency in Christianity today – the widespread "reaction" to the disembodied "belief-oriented" focus of much traditional mainline and evangelical Protestantism, indicated in the widespread growth of Pentecostal and charismatic movements, a theme that Bryan Turner (2008) also articulates. But my point is that there are other resources – from the feminist, queer, psychoanalytic and phenomenological traditions (secular, but not always so) that have a lot of insight on this phenomenon as well.

Sex and Aggression

It is too bad that Taylor shies away from these traditions – traditions and ideas that should and must be included in any "master narrative" of Western secularization.

Taylor does discuss some Freudian ideas – reflected in his ideas linking sex and violence for instance. Yet, his reading of Freud is highly problematic in that he links sex and violence too tightly together – one often gets the sense that he "explains away" the Utopic "illusion" of the sexual revolution and sexual freedom, by arguing that any social attempt to get rid of violence involves the Manichean projection of violence onto an "other" – whether it be an individual or another society. But need this be the case for sexuality? Perhaps it is true that violence and aggression could never be gotten rid of, hence the need to be aware of and acknowledge our inevitable capacity for it, but just because aggression and sex are linked together as drives in a Freudian or Nietzschean framework doesn't mean that a "release" of one (ie sex) necessarily need translate into a "release" (in a harmful way) of the other (ie aggression or violence). Freud himself and Reich in particular saw one potential response to the predicament of the ever-increasing repression of the instinctual drives by the civilizing process via a conscious "loosening" of libidinal regulation and repression. Marcuse developed the idea of "libidinal rationality" as a possible solution.

It is also interesting to note that, in discussing the paradox of what has been "lost" from the pre-Axial, more magical, pagan acceptance of good and evil, chaos and the festive as part of everyday life, as precisely the "incarnational, embodied practices, which took such form, as he puts it, of "sacred" marriage and temple prostitution," he leaves out an extended analysis of fertility cults and "sacred" orgies – more libidinally positive and communally friendly than the more curtailed reference to "sacred marriage" – especially given that marriage historically was also a much more aristocratic ritual, organized primarily around the preservation of private property and political power, or "temple

prostitution" which sounds, to many ears, inevitably exploitative. In any case, these pre-Axial "resonances" of more embodied practices are dismissed by his tightly linking them with the violence of sacred sacrifice and "holy" war. "Sexual freedom" translates into uncontrolled aggression and violence, making it, for Taylor, an Utopian Illusion. Did Taylor miss the sexual revolution?

An interesting omission in his otherwise complex and nuanced reading of the dialectical paradoxes of various waves of reform and disenchantment, Incarnation and Excarnation, is the role of the Medieval Church in instituting mandatory celibacy for clergy. This is a significant omission given that for most of church history clergy were allowed to marry and have sex. Taylor mentions at various points the largely "lost option" of celibacy, or what can be achieved through renouncement of sexual desire, either in the Catholic or Buddhist articulation. Yet what he leaves out is an examination of some of the original material factors behind the imposition of required celibacy – its entanglement in the realm of private property and power. A primary reason for the imposition of celibacy was to safeguard the church's growing empire of private property – a priest's responsibilities to families and children were a conflict of interest in this regard. Mandatory celibacy took care of this problem. So mandatory celibacy, rather than "simply" a desire to minimize distracting sexual desire, was driven primarily by the property interests of the church in early capitalism. Not to mention the dubious demands of the "ascetic" temperament in repudiating the more "animal" aspects of the body and sexual desire, as Nietzsche argues so convincingly in the Third Essay of the *Geneology of Morals*. While treated in relation to the carnivalesque, it gets dropped in the discussion of celibacy. How this asceticism gets transmogrified and sexuality re-regulated in the

development of bourgeois morality and the needs of emerging capitalism for productive, disciplined citizens and docile bodies is left out. Neither is discussed the role of this "originary" sexual repression in the priest class that inevitably creates weird dynamics that are still playing out in the Catholic Church today. What are the effects, unintended consequences, perhaps of instituting celibacy on priests, and their repression and resentment at the sexual enjoyment of the common people whose lives they are expected to "guide"? But this more materialist analysis is left out in Taylor, leaving us with a top-heavy, idealist analysis more concerned with what might have been "lost" in an era where sexual practice is widespread and celibacy is the exception. Instead, Taylor is more bothered by Freud and Nietzsche's implication and that of other more materialist "subtraction theories" that overcoming religion is linked to a "developmental" process of maturation – the idea that overcoming "God" as a parental figure will make things "better" in the after life. Seeking to relegate Nietzsche to what he polemically calls a radical "counter-Enlightenment", Taylor engages only indirectly with some of Nietzsche's most compelling ideas, and not at all with others – such as the notion of *le resentiment* and Christianity's history as a "slave religion".

Taylor emplores moderns, those trapped in the immanent frame" to be "open" to the "sublime" – the sense of awe, for instance, he argues one can get in nature, that lets one be open to going "either way" towards belief or unbelief – something he thinks the "immanent frame" closes one off to. Yet why must the "sublime" necessarily be a "supernatural" or "transcendent" experience of "God"? - which always seems to be the pointed implication of Taylor's discussion. (Taylor didn't win the million dollar Templeton Foundation Prize, which rewards an "exceptional contribution to affirming

life's spiritual dimension" and whose funding interests seek to "establish the necessary conditions for the success of profit-making enterprises," as well as to "foster" dialogue between religion and science, environmental issues specifically excluded – for nothing (Templeton website, 2010). I can't help but take issue with this binary – which seems to me to be a "false" opposition between being open to "belief" and being "closed off" to it in the "immanent frame". There are plenty of people who are "trapped" in the "immanent frame" but believe in God. The widespread belief in biblical literalism is one instance of this. This implies that other resources are needed to critique or "get beyond" the limitations of the "immanent frame" than simply a belief in the transcendent. Look at all the natural scientists or positivist social scientists who take the bible literally, or deny evolution – Rodney Starke a prime example – whose methodological outlook, I would argue, is clearly scientistic and reductive. And they still believe in something "transcendent" – God. So this opposition between the "immanent frame" and the "transcendent" seems highly dubious, if not binarizing, all attempts by Taylor to "blur" the boundaries between the immanent and the transcendent in a transgressive way. Instead, the binary seems to be re-inscribed all the more starkly by Taylor.

As a counter example, it is interesting to note the reluctance of literalist bible – believers to more cultural, historical, and theoretical interpretations – the "higher" biblical learning, for instance, a reluctance oddly or ironically shared often by more positivist natural and social scientists. There seems to be an odd "family resemblance" between these two groups – groups that Taylor would usually separate between those locked in the immanent frame and those "open" to transcendence.

My point is to suggest that there are other ways to critique the "immanent frame" or at least the instrumental, reductive tendencies of it. I contend that the resistance to cultural, historical and theoretical ideas – widespread in the prevailing "anti-intellectualism" in American society, widely noted by scholars and critics of American studies, is an aspect of the "immanent frame" - the one-dimensional reality that can't get beyond our mediocre contemporary reality. Again, Taylor seems trapped in the immanent frame of Fukuyama's "end of history" thesis – that liberal democratic capitalism (the Modern Moral Order of mutual benefit and benevolence – the "direct-access" society) is "all there is" to answer Peggy Lee's question. Or as Margaret Thatcher put it "there is no alternative" (TINA). Taylor's escape from this is transcendence to God.

The question is whether "transcendence" if that's what one wants to call it, or more radical forms of immanence other than those of the reductive "immanent frame", should be confined to that of "otherworldly belief". Many radicals of both secular and religious persuasion thought otherwise. The Social Gospel movement of evangelicalism, the liberation theology of Catholicism, and the civil rights movement of the Black Church tradition were not content to leave the matters of human and social progress to "faith" in God. Works were essential, as the old adage says, invoking the image of a floating duck, "Pray like it all depends on God" (the calm duck floating on the water) and "work like it all depends on you" (feet paddling furiously underneath). The labor, anarchist, environmental, civil rights, gay liberation, feminist movements also sought to radically get "beyond" the "immanent frame" to radically change society, within a secular, non-theistic context most of the time.

Needless to say, the whole aim of radical secular traditions and social movements is to change society, not interpret it, much less defer a resolution to the next life. These movements and ideas one might call born out of the "radical Enlightenment" or radical immanence (ie Spinoza) – one could call them transcendent if one wished, but "radical immanence" is perhaps preferable in order to "slough off" the metaphysical baggage of a hierarchical, "feudal" imagery. Some things are worth "sloughing off".

But for Taylor, "radical immanence," when not written off as dangerous Utopian Illusions, is for him consigned to the warped trajectory of the "immanent counter-Enlightenment" – what he commonly refers to as "post-modernism in the academy" – Foucault, Lyotard etc, inspired by Nietzsche, above all, which he believes dangerously and erroneously challenges the universal claims to democracy, human rights and the Modern Moral Order through an open celebration of heroism, elitism, and the pursuit of a godless warrior ethic of violence and pleasure – which, among other bad things, Taylor believes, produced fascism as an unintended consequence.

What he leaves aside in this relative demonization is a more enlightened reading of Nietzsche, which reads him in his historical context – the decline and upheaval of late 19th century Europe. Nietzsche's claim that "God is dead" can be read as a prescient realization that the European idea of "God" which undergirded the metaphysics of most European thought and society, was decaying and dying and that Europe was about to go through an unprecedented crisis because of it. For instance, the Catholic Church was at its height of anti-modernism at the time – Piux IX had recently published the infamous "syllabus of errors" (writing off modernity, democracy, etc). Two (or three) world wars and a Holocaust later, one could say in many ways Nietzsche got it on the mark. As the

son of a Lutheran minister, he (like Weber, with his strongly Pietist mother) was well-placed to discern the hypocrisy and crisis of European Christianity. His elitism can be understood as typical emanations of his clerical-bourgeois-academic-aristocratic origins, distasteful as they may well be. But this needn't invalidate all his ideas – if great thinkers' errors, such as Kant's racism, Hegel's phrenology, Heidegger's fascism, Marx's homophobia and Freud's sexism required the elimination of all their ideas, Western thought would be quite poorer off indeed. Rather, Nietzsche's plea to "overcome" the slavish morality and human-all-too-human tendencies can be read as an enlightened call to better (ie "transcend") oneself, very similar in a way to "enlightened" religious ideas (Buddhist) of betterment – or secular ideas of "human potential".

But Taylor here writes these off as dangerous illusions – "heroics" – dangerous in the sense that they inevitably raise oneself as "good" or "better" over others, projecting violence onto the "lesser" outward – so apparently we are to renounce all heroics as dangerous. But does this even fit, for instance, the Catholic tradition of which Taylor speaks so much of? What kind of saint or prophet wasn't heroic, at least in their own way? How can one aim to change society, to overcome the limitations of the "immanent frame" without a burst of energy and belief/inspiration? Inadvertantly or not, Taylor seems to imply that we should settle for, I would argue, a "middling" or as Simon During (at *Varieties of Secularism* conference, Harvard, 2008) argues, a "mundane," existence. In many ways, the heroism of the saints (St. Francis, Joan of Arc, St. Theresa of Avila) are among the things I cherish most about Christianity – as the Good Book says – " be ye hot or cold, for the lukewarm I shall spit out of my mouth".

Radically “immanent” ideas are then tarred, feathered and ostracized in Taylor’s account, to the detriment of his master narrative. Indeed, it seems rather odd that Taylor uses the term “*master*” narrative (as opposed to what, a “slave” narrative?) so uncritically in the first place, as it underscores the metaphysical baggage of “transcendence,” the hierarchical feudal imagery in his writing. It seems ironic that for all his discussion of his “master narrative” Taylor doesn’t grapple with Nietzsche’s theory of the “slave” origins - the “slave narrative” - of Christian morality, of the problematic origins of the distinction between “good and evil,” - of the notion of “morality” in general. For a work so heavily involved in interpreting Christianity, and given his searing critique of Nietzsche, this seems a glaring omission.

The other question I think is crucial to ask is what is left out or avoided by not taking the tragedy of existence – of mortality - more seriously – the idea that when one dies, that may be it. “Living on” may mean living on (or not living on) in the memories and the influence one had (or didn’t have) in friends and family and the world at large. It is a central idea of existential thought (as well as psychoanalysis) that one must come to grips with and face that we are Beings-toward-death (Heidegger 1962), that essentially, one hasn’t really lived until one has faced death (or risked life Hegel 1979). Isn’t Being-towards-death an important aspect of an embodied incarnational existence and perspective? One starts to wonder about Taylor’s “Mary Poppins” tendencies – that his dislike of Freud and others’ implication that religious belief is “childish” may have steered him, or at least his master narrative away, too far from this existential insight. At what cost is this avoided?

To his credit, Taylor does consider seriously the argument that atheism, in one sense is of a higher order than religious belief – that to be motivated to do "good" without getting "paid back" in heaven, is ironically, a more Christian and ethical position then the Christian one. He finds this a problematic quandary, but it is unclear what his answer to it is.

Similarly, the uncritical idea that "we" in the Anglo-Continental world have "direct-access" societies needs to be examined more critically instead of taking at face value the Modern Moral Order's "ideology" that our society is currently designed around benevolence and mutual benefit. Foucault's ideas of biopower and biopolitics certainly question this belief. Marxism, environmentalism, anarchism, radical feminism, black freedom, and liberation theology and queer movements do it as well. At a time of global economic and ecological collapse, a more critical stance on the claims the powers that be tell us about "ourselves" would seem to be highly in order, especially given the economic and ecological challenges globally.

Taylor admits he is ultimately puzzled by the differences between US and European secularism – the so-called "debate" why religion in Europe has declined and why religion in the US it hasn't. Until recently, this has been considered one aspect of "American Exceptionalism". Given the increased evidence of the global revival of various religious movements after the decline of socialism and communism many have begun to question whether indeed it is Europe that is the exception (Berger et al 1999). Taylor admits he is puzzled by the difference between the US and European trajectories, in which his native Quebec fits into a European style decline of religion. He ventures this might be due to the greater influence and respect given to intellectuals in Europe

compared to the US – that, in essence, the promulgation of secularization theory (born out of a more anti-clerical mindset) arguing for a link between higher "development" and secularism has become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Yet, clearly, this is a woefully top-down, idealist perspective – the ideas of social scientists create public popular opinion.

One of the pitfalls of an overly pluralistic, multi-cultural, politically correct "can't we all get along" kind of view is that it downplays or can deny the reality of conflict – lets all hold hands and sing "Kumbaya" and overcome our differences. Taylor, I think, against all his putative efforts not to do so, by his own criteria, falls into the trap of creating his own post-Axial ideal of the "good" – in this case, pluralism and multi-culturalism – where "violence" and conflict get projected outward onto "radicals".

Taylor seems to have difficulty with the idea of conflict – Marx, Weber, Schmitt, Foucault, Nietzsche, Freud – all disagree. Schmitt argues conflict is inevitable – one can't get away form a friend-enemy distinction in politics. Foucault makes a similar argument with the emergence of the state-level organization and manipulation of biopower and biopolitics – in order to resolve the paradox of the claims of the Modern Moral Order to benevolence and human flourishing, how does the state justify violence? Through "racism" (understood in an evolutionary, social Darwinist sense). Similarly, Chris Hedges (2007) argues that Christianity has always involved the struggle over differing – often radically opposed – interpretations of it. Indeed, he argues there is no way out of this struggle (barring the death of one of the versions, which, of course has happened - Christian history is littered with the remains of dead heresies – whether they were better or worse than what survived another question) . As he puts it, when he was in divinity school decades ago, one of his professors, Dr. James Luther Adams, reading the tea

leaves, argued that decades from now, they would be fighting the seeds of a pernicious Christian fascism – at that time not much on the public or political radar. Hedges believes his professor was quite prescient. Hedges argues it is the job of every conscientious believer nonbeliever to fight against perversions of the Christian message.

Along similar lines, Jakobsen and Pellegrini critique the moderate pluralist status quo option of defining a "tolerant" middle against two "extremes" – whatever that is, they argue "that's not freedom" (paper, Social Research Conference, *The Religious-Secular Divide: The US Case,* March 6, 2009, New School). They argue that tolerance isn't enough – one must go beyond mere "tolerance" to actual "acceptance" to live up to the best ideals of freedom and liberty, secular or Christian defined. Hedges similarly argues, in a somewhat Schmittian vein, that pluralistic "tolerance" is actually dangerous – if you "tolerate" the intolerant, you may wind up dead (literally, figuratively or politically) – which is exactly what happened after the democratic election of fascists in Germany- they proceeded to dismantle the democratic state, intolerating the tolerant.

Taylor is susceptible to this criticism because in seeking to bring he poses two dominant poles together – orthodox religion and the reductive scientism of the "immanent frame" – he ends up with a "middling" position. The problem with this approach has been evident in the context of the American political system for a while – two parties (which supposedly define the "extremes" of the "poles") define the spectrum. The truncated one-dimensional logic of the conformist status quo is to pick whatever is most "moderate" and least extreme. Politics becomes the race-to-the-center - "middling" to get the most votes. However, if one "pole" digs in its heels and pulls its pole in one direction, like some bad or surreal soccer game with lenient referees, the other side is

pulled toward it – as arguably what has happened in the rise of the "Republican Revolution" and the rise of the evangelical right in the US- when the supposedly liberal "Democratic party" is pulled to the center-right. Or citizens "split the difference" – vote Democrat for their local official and Republican for President for "balance". This is freedom?

One major factor that seems to be operative in Taylor's thinking is his Canadian context and specifically his location in Quebec, which has followed a more European-style decline in religious belief and practice and a rise in secularism. Hence his lament for what has been "lost". However much of his analysis, perhaps for this reason, seems not to ring true for the US context. We actually have endured a theocratic era – with the Bush administration. Faith-based funding, cancellation of science funding, "crusades against evil" etc as well as the fact that every President in the past four decades has had a significant connection with evangelicalism (as Lindsay, 2008, points out). In contrast, religion is in decline and perhaps under "hard-to-believe-in" conditions in Canada or Europe – particularly for an academic perhaps. But this is not true in the US. Believers abound.

As well, while there may be a certain secular dominance in certain realms of society, this doesn't exclude there being two centers of power – a politically powerful evangelical elite, with its religious network of churches, and a secular, more specifically scientific or instrumental, scientistic mindset which dominates, though there is plenty of "blurring" between the two, especially of late in the US. Given that one of the best critiques of the "instrumental" mindset comes from the secular radical tradition – Weber and the Frankfurt School, it is unfortunate that Taylor excludes them. Any attempt to

“overcome” what has been lost in Modernity needs to grapple with how the “social,” “bodily,” and “communal” dimensions could be re-imagined and re-created in concrete ways in the modern/postmodern world – a simple appeal to the “transcendent” is not enough.

But Taylor seem more focused on replacing the “bogeyman” of religion with the “bogeyman” of secularism, or at least radical secularism, even though this does exactly to secularism what he claims secular critics have done to religion – ie in creating a new, reductive “common sensical,” line of thought. For the reductive, secular chain of thought: “given these bad religious things - the Inquisition, the crusades, Galileo, Osama bin Laden, etc - religion *therefore* is bad,” he mirrors this reductively by: “given these bad (radical) secular things - Pol Pot, Stalin, the World Wars.. sexual revolution, “higher narcissism,” etc - *therefore* (radical) secularism is wrong”. In a sense, he counters the secular subtraction theory of the decline of religion by creating a new subtraction theory of secularism. While his complexification, expansion and elongation, (if not exponential multiplication) of the role of religion’s encounter and entanglement with modernity provides many interesting and valuable insights, he seems to does it at the expense, or marginalization of the complex and interesting history of secularisms, particularly the role of radical social movements and thought, creating a double standard: why are radical secular movements Utopian Illusions but “God” isn’t? To counter the essentializing of religion, or at least the story of Western Christianity, Taylor essentializes Western secularism. The real story, I think, is both more complicated and more interesting than Taylor’s “immanent frame” would have you believe.

Chapter 7: Re-enchanting the World: Desire and Utopia

"Man, the bravest of animals and the one most accustomed to suffering, does *not* repudiate suffering as such; he *desires* it, he even seeks it out, provided he is shown a *meaning* for it, a *purpose* of suffering. The meaninglessness of suffering, *not* suffering itself, was the curse that lay over mankind so far – *and the ascetic ideal offered man meaning!* It was the only meaning offered so far; any meaning is better than none at all... man was saved thereby, he possessed a meaning…he could now *will* something.. *the will itself was saved*.."

Nietzsche, "What is the meaning of Ascetic Ideals?"

***Geneology of Morals** (p. 598)*

The selection by president-elect Obama of the ostensibly "moderate" evangelical megachurch minister Rick Warren to give the presidential inauguration address sparked controversy by gay rights advocates, liberal churchfolk and atheists, among others. Does it matter that Warren doesn't believe in evolution, thinks people from other faiths are going to burn in hell, compares gays to pedophilia and incest, because he is vaguely less fundamentalist than the religious right leaders of the Bush regime and is interested in some social issues such as global warming? (Goldberg, Guardian, Dec 18, 2008) Obama's elevation of Warren to such a prominent role should give pause to those who think that the election of Obama augurs a significant, or permanent, change from the dilemma of the political role of conservative religion at the turn of the millennium in the United States.

In light of the unanticipated religious revivals across the globe, some recent theorists, such as Habermas, have turned to a focus on how secularists and the religious might fruitfully communicate with each other, and specifically how secularists might

learn from what the religious have to say and contribute. Yet I am not so sure that "communication" gets to the heart of the problem. Rather, I think the central problem that the "return" of religion indicates, especially in its more ecstatic forms, is (as Taylor intuits to some extent) an attempt to recuperate what is perceived as having been "lost" with the modern condition: a sense of the social or communal experience, an embodied connection with the world, and a sense of hope and purpose that religion traditionally offered. Disenchantment results from the experience that a rationalized modern world offers instead: the stale, lifeless, individualized disembodiment of a scientistic, biopolitical, technologically administered world. A world which some religious movements, particularly the self-declared "fundamentalists" at the turn of the century, once attempted to resist through disavowal and separation, but who now seem irredeemably incorporated into its structure of power, as evidenced by the high tech, monied, power hungry imaginary of the *Left Behind* novels and the prosperity gospel. At the same time, charismatic practices seem to demonstrate the urge to throw off the "iron cage" of rationalization through an attempt to "re-enchant" the world through social, embodied, ecstatic practices, such as speaking in tongues, being "slayed" in the spirit through the "laying on of hands," healing masses and prophecy (Csordas 1994). Yet this attempt seems illusory and doomed, if for no other reason than because of their inextricable binding to the rationalized world which they help to perpetuate through consumerist, postmodern, pragmatic "health and wealth" religion (Adorno 1994; Cho 2002).

Any insight to be found from the contemporary field of the sociology of religion seems woefully precluded by the dominant paradigm of the "religious economies"

(Starke and Finke 1993; 2002) model, which triumphally celebrates the "return" of religion and the "decline" or "failure" of the secularization model, with minimal differentiation between the quality and substance of different forms and practices of religion. Rather, all forms are reduced the "bottom line": what sells. One might as well be a financial analyst comparing the latest quarter's earnings at Walmart with Home Depot. The amenability of religious phenomena to market analysis seems to evidence the commodified nature of postmodern religiousity – the penetration of the logic of capital into religion (Adorno 1994). In this sense the approach of the progenitors of the prosperity gospel, such as the Pentecostal Joel Osteen (*Your Best Life Now: 7 Steps to Living At Your Full Potential*) and "America's pastor" Rick Warren (whose *The Purpose-Driven Life* is the best-selling non-fiction book since the bible) dovetail with that of the "religious economies" model.

In fact, the recent book *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* (2002), by Rodney Starke and Roger Finke, highly influential sociologists of religion, argue that the "new paradigm" of the religious economies model has been so successful precisely because of its utilization by "people of faith" – Christian social scientists – who could measure and evaluate religion "objectively," unlike the "biased" perspective of non-believing secularization theorists. Remarkably, the book literally writes off the field and history of cultural anthropology as a "conspiracy" of atheism. This is science?

Instead, I argue that a more historical, critical, hermeneutic understanding of religion is imperative for any deeper understanding of the role and significance of religion in contemporary life, as well as its role in the formation of human history and culture, something all humans, religious or non-religious, have investment in. A

genealogy of the Scopes Trial affair in the US, for instance, reveals the biopolitical underbelly of its time in a way that can shed light on historical continuities and changes in contemporary debates, such as that of Intelligent Design. Precisely such a lack of historical understanding is what seems to fuel the puzzling rage of the recent "scientific backlash" against religion in the aftermath of the attacks of 9-11, the rise of Intelligent Design's challenge to Darwinism, the Bush Administration's attempts to influence and control science funding, etc. Such anger and frustration at the interference of "religion" seems all the more severe the more the expectation in modern "progress" is uncritically maintained. In this sense, the literal positivist belief in progress and empirical certainty eerily and ironically mirrors the fundamentalist belief in the literal truth of the bible.

Getting a more historical, critical grip on the modern revival of religiosity as well as maintaining a "spontaneous" relation to the object (Adorno, 1983) is essential to grappling with and attempting to comprehend what its revival signifies about contemporary society – the "crisis" of modernity it implies and its putative, if unconscious resistance to it. It is quite remarkable to see the extent to which the two major beliefs of the original self-declared "fundamentalists" at the turn of the 19th century: the premillennial, dispensationalist belief in the literal truth of biblical history – literalism- and what follows from this – millennialism – (belief in the "Rapture," the imminent Second Coming of Christ), have had a huge resurgence, as the huge popularity of the *Left Behind* series shows. Tellingly, Pentecostal and charismatic movements, beneath all their ecstatic and "experiential" aspects, rely directly on this original fundamentalist theology. During the course of my own research, I made the startling discovery that the apocalyptic rhetoric of my own family's Catholic Marianism

(intermixed with the Catholic charismatic movement), what was termed the "chastisement" was derivative of these fundamentalist Protestant beliefs.

What to make of such "postmodern" developments? While they certainly inspires anger and frustration in many seculars and scientists, simply referring to "science" as a refutation, or relying on science's empirical "self-evidentness" does little good. If indeed science is so self-evident and compelling, why has science done such a poor job of convincing and education the general American public on such matters? Why do such huge numbers of the US population maintain religious beliefs in opposition to science?

The answer, it would seem, goes deeper than harrumphs about ignorance and superstition and fingers pointed to the holy grail of progress. There seems to be a deep, disenchanted malaise about modernity, which I think inevitably must be traced back to the rationalization of the lifeworld and everyday life. This disenchantment with what Weber called the "iron cage" of rationality is what I argue motivates and inspires the various charismatic practices of prophesy, healing, speaking in tongues and exorcisms. While some might claim this is simply age-old, premodern superstition, things are not quite so simple, as Adorno (1994) argues. Rather, such beliefs may be viewed as "secondary superstition," – a regression to a pre-modern mode of thinking only possible after the development of modern science and knowledge (and thereby postmodern) (Cho 2002). In a sense, this echoes Subramanian's (2000) argument about "archaic modernities" – that there is no such thing as a pure "return" to a premodern past – as much as various conservative, politicized religious movements (in his case, Hindu nationalism) adamantly may wish to. On the contrary, there is no going back to the "garden of Eden" of a premodern world. Once expelled, forever expelled.

The belief and desire for enchanted charismatic practices seems to indicate a strong discontent and disenchantment with the modern world. Husserl's insight in the *Crisis of European Sciences* (1970) that the idealization and abstraction of mathematics from the realm of the lifeworld, beginning with ancient geometry and increasing with Galileo and the development of the modern sciences and technology, has resulted in a sense of science's removal from and lack of consideration for the lifeworld and the embodied practices of everyday life. All is means with no consideration of ends, ie means becomes ends. Consequently, this "loss" of the lifeworld as mediated through the rationalized experience of modern science and technology – the "bureaucratic rationality" of the "totally administered society" is experienced as a painful sense of disorientation within the body politic. This sense of disconnection and disenchantment from a rationalized, idealized world helps, I think, partially to explain the attraction of charismatic practices. Practices that offer the chance to dispel or bracket the rationalized world and its frameworks of "meaning" (or "meaninglessness"), and engage in what feels like a more somatically connected and grounded approach – to health (healing masses), history (prophecy), truth (the bible), good and evil (angels, devils and exorcism), and ecstatic, somatic release (speaking in tongues, being "slayed" in the spirit). Yet, I believe, these practices ultimately do not succeed in attaining what they aim for, and in this regard I disagree with Harvey Cox's (1995) contention that they should be viewed as a legitimate, "authentic" experiences of "primal" or "primordial" spirituality. Given the biblical literalism that inspires the practices, it is hard to believe in their "authenticity," without swallowing as well the rest of the theological perspective that comes with it, which, increasingly with the "third wave" of Pentecostalism, is driven neo-Calvinist

worldview of dominionist theory, shaking off "experiential" charismatic concerns or the traditional "separatism" of traditional dispensational fundamentalism for the pursuit of power and domination in the image of God on earth.

Yet, charismatic practices, and religious structures in general, offer social, communal experiences that may otherwise be unavailable to participants. This is not to downplay the profound individualism and individualistic perspective in the Pentecostal and charismatic penumbra, as David Martin (2002; 2005) articulates and defends as a major "metanarrative of Modernity". Yet paradoxically, at the same time, megachurchs, charismatic youth groups and the like offer opportunities for social bonding, interaction and belonging that are hard to come by in an advanced capitalist world. Capitalism thrives and depends on the creation of new markets, and an economic system based on seventy percent consumption, such as the current one, demands the constant replacement of social, cooperative, less-consumptive practices with individual, more-consumptive practices (from eating a home cooked meal with others to eating fast food on the go by yourself). So the social structures that religion, particularly those that the new religious movements facilitate, provide cohesion and community where otherwise one might face the world and its suffering alone.

But this still begs the question of why the desire and search for community takes these specific forms. Why religious? Of course there are secular equivalents to religious community: community gardens, unions, intermural sports teams, community theatre, but one is pressed to locate anything with the seeming power and expansionary drive of the megachurch phenomenon. And why this specifically more individualistic form of religion rather than more socially oriented religious groups, such as the base communities

of liberation theology? What to make of the significant "revival" of the original fundamentalist belief of the Apocalypse, the Rapture revealed by the seemingly unbelievable appeal and success of the *Left Behind* novel series, with over 65 million copies sold; that a third of US citizens firmly believe in the imminent coming of Christ?

Paul Boyer, in *When Time Shall Be No More* (1992), in his study of the paradox of the history and remarkable resurgence of apocalyptic thought and its deterministic, literal understanding of the world, provides, I think, an important clue to its flowering. He argues that fundamentalist thought has thrived in the absence or retreat of the radical aims of progress associated with Enlightenment thought. With the absence of these aims, varieties of fundamentalism, with their strong claims, have filled the void – providing purpose and meaning for those without any. Or, one might say, the failure of the Enlightenment has "produced" varieties of fundamentalism, or that its adherents have "produced" it as a way to channel their "negative utopian desire" as a form of "bricolage" – making do with what is available.

While a critique of the assumptions of inevitable progress have certainly been necessary, if not inevitable, given the aggrandized role and power of modern science and technology for destruction – clear in the 20th century's history of world wars, failed utopian communist regimes, the threat of nuclear destruction, and the mobilization of science and technology in creating an often conformist, standardized, bureaucratized world, dare we give up the belief and expectation in the possibility of progress, or the radical secular imagination, itself? (Blumenburg 1985) The growth of conservative, politicized religious movements with strong, rigid belief systems seems to be directly linked to the decline of progressive social movements offering competing ideals,

practices and community structures. For better or worse, I argue that the power of apocalyptic thinking is linked to the powerful potential of "transcendental" or "ascetic" ideals to inspire action, linked as it may be as well at the same time to other, more earthly realities such as guilt or masochism, as well as its role as a repository of anger and desire.

At the same time ecstatic forms of religious practices of Pentecostalism and charismatic movements in Christianity as well as radical Islam offer an engagement with the body (Cox 1995, Csordas 1994, Mahmood 2006) in communal structures that often seems lacking in the individualized, postmodern world of everyday life. In comparison, modern science and technology rarely seem to offer genuine alternatives to the status quo (the ecological movement perhaps an exception), and rather seem to be tightly bound to the existing structures of domination. The feminist and sexual revolution of yesteryear and the queer movement of today offer ideals and alternatives but seem limited in the impact reached in many circles where conservative religious movements dominate, who in turn often seem poised to undo whatever non-patriarchal alternatives that exist.

The remarkable and unpredicted revivalism of religion in the US and globally seem to point to the functional failure of liberalism and "cowboy" capitalism as well as "scientific" or "economistic" socialism to meet people's inherent "desire" or "spiritual" needs. The rampant excess and extreme of unmitigated market forces, now unleashed on a global level, seem to have driven vast amounts of people into the protection of intellectually crippling, but comforting community structures oriented around an illusionary, appropriated sense of "tradition," hybridized with modern science and technology. Rather than celebrate and romanticize this state of affairs (as David Martin (, Harvey Cox (1995)and Charles Taylor (2007) seem to do at times) or deny, capitulate or

bemoan them (as the scientific backlash seems to do at others) I believe that what is needed are strong, viable alternatives to provide competition to ultimately regressive religious forms, to provide alternate, more progressive structures of community fellowship, and solidarity, oriented around ideals of science, art and education, rather than fear and resentment. In a time of ecological, economic, social and cultural crisis, those interested in offering alternatives should think about how to re-integrate the "limited" (Bataille 1992) return to intimacy that the festival once offered, to supplant the violence of capitalism and the war machine. And how science, technology and reason could be re-formulated around a more "enchanted" "libidinal" rationality (Marcuse 1962). The bold attempt by the participants of the French Revolution to sever links with an outmoded and stagnant past and create new festivals, short-lived as they were, still seems remarkably prescient. Can one blame those without who retreat (or "cling") to regressive social ideas articulated through the medium of "family values," to security in prophetic predictions when no real alternatives exist?

Those who advocate piecemeal reforms, much less celebrate the "desecularization of the world" or the "blurring" of the sacred and the secular without stopping to examine thoroughly just what blurred forms are taking shape, or those who harangue about the need for the imposition of the empirical and evidence-based criteria of modern science are in denial, I would argue, about the current cultural "crisis" at hand. What is needed is a renewal of the radical Enlightenment, an attempt to re-think what it means to create and think, an "overcoming" of modern stagnance (what Nietzsche termed decadence) - the sense that "its all been done before," - and move instead to a more Spinozian self-affirmation of being; to the production of new festivals; new forms of community

structures and communal being; new ethics of sexual freedom (Jakobsen and Pellegrini 2004); acceptance of our "animal" nature (Nietzsche 2000); a renewed somatic engagement with the "flesh of the world" (Merleau Ponty) and more ecologically sustainable infrastructures and economies; or face further productions of regressive, irrational social structures based on fear, resentment, radical dispossession and nihilism. One place to start in re-imagining such a radical Enlightenment, I argue, should involve a "spontaneous", non-deterministic relation to the "cultural object" that makes up the huge upsweep in apocalyptic and charismatic religious movements, which seeks to discern their contradictions as well as the resistances of their "negative utopian" desire, towards the possibility of channeling it towards some more radically imagined direction..

> We can no longer conceal from ourselves *what* is expressed by all that willing which has taken its direction from the ascetic ideal; this hatred of the human, and even more of the animal, and more still of the material, this horror of the senses, of reason itself, this fear of happiness and beauty, this longing to get away from all appearance, change, becoming, death, wishing, from longing itself – all this means – let us dare to grasp it – *a will to nothingness*, an aversion to life, a rebellion against the most fundamental presuppositions of life; but it is and remains a will! … And, to repeat in conclusion what I said at the beginning: man would rather will *nothingness* than *not* will.
>
> *Nietzsche, "What is the meaning of Ascetic Ideals?"*
> ***Geneology of Morals*** *(p. 599)*

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