The Politics of Disenchantment

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What is it that makes us "modern"?[1] When we think of ourselves as "modern people" —and thus distinguished from medieval or ancient or primitive peoples what are we in fact saying about ourselves? I wish to explore the suggestion of Max Weber that an important element in our being denizens of modernity is the "disenchantment" of our world. Further, I wish to explore some of the connections between Weber's notion of disenchantment and his understanding of mysticism as a response to this disenchantment, in order to argue that the relegation of religion to "the mystical" is not so much a *response* to disenchantment as it is the condition for the very *possibility* of disenchantment. In Weber's sociology, mysticism becomes the irrational "other" of the rational, bureaucratic use of coercive force that we, in our disenchanted world, call "politics." In his work we can see clearly a process whereby the categories of the mystical and the political mutually create each other in such a way that mysticism—a private and irrational religious experience—becomes the only viable future for religion, and politics—the rational administration of territory through violence—becomes statecraft. In this respect, Weber seems a paradigmatic modern interpreter of religion and politics, one whose interpretive categories continue to shape our discourse. Finally, I will argue that the power of Weber's story of disenchantment can be seen in current political and liberation theologies, even when they explicitly seek to reunite the "mystical" and the "political."

I beg the important question of whether it is helpful to speak of "modernity" at all.[1] Certainly Weber presents us with no consistent theory of modernity, and uses the term "modern" in a variety of ways.[2] Thus I will not address the question of "mysticism and modernity" but rather the narrower question of the relation of mysticism and disenchantment, while at the same time presuming that "disenchantment" is a powerful description of whatever this thing is that we call "modernity."[3]

Being Modern, Being Disenchanted

Weber claims that human history, at least in the West, has been the story of the progressive rationalization of life. Yet exactly what this claim amounts to is unclear since rationalization itself is a complex notion in

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Weber, divided as it is into value-rationality, which is concerned with ends, and instrumental-rationality, which is concerned with means.[4] Value-rationalization might encompass the supplanting of custom or mores (*sittlichkeit*) by rationally derived ethical values (*moralität*), as in the moral philosophy of Kant. But it might also include something like Plato's positing of the realm of the forms, for, according to Weber, value-rationalization involves "an increasing theoretical mastery of reality by means of increasingly precise and abstract concepts."[5] Instrumental-rationality, on the other hand, has to do with the development of methodical procedures for obtaining a goal, and thus can encompass everything from magical spells to utilitarian moral calculus to strategic business (or military) planning.[6] For instrumental-rationality what counts is not the end that is sought but "the methodological attainment of a definitely given and practical end by means of an increasingly precise calculation of adequate means."[7]

Weber believes that rationalization has not always been opposed to religious belief and, in the case of instrumental-rationality, has in fact been advanced through religious asceticism. As he first spells out in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, the reason that the West attained a rational form of capitalism was through the "inner-worldly asceticism" of certain forms of Protestantism, notably Calvinism. Protestantism inherited from medieval Catholicism a suspicion of the world, yet rejected the asceticism of the monastery. With the Calvinist emphasis on the visible difference of the lives of the elect, a new form of asceticism arose that sought the methodical, godly ordering of one's everyday, worldly existence. In Weber's words, Christian asceticism "strode into the market-place of life, slammed the door of the monastery behind it, and undertook to penetrate. . . [the] daily routine of life with its methodicalness, to fashion it into a life in the world, but neither of nor for this world."[8] Capital was no longer acquired for the sensuous delights that could be obtained with it, but as a sign of the methodical holiness and soberness of one's life. Thus freed from being squandered on sensual pleasures, capital could be reinvested, resulting in modern, rational capitalism.

Weber's "Protestant-ethic thesis" has been much contested, both on the empirical grounds that it is not borne out by the evidence, and on the theoretical grounds that it posits what Alasdair MacIntyre calls a "facile interactionism" between beliefs and actions.[9] One might defend Weber by pointing out that he himself denied that he was claiming that "capitalism as an economic system is a creation of the Reformation."[10] But without, I hope, being myself too facile, I would prefer to say that whatever its empirical or theoretical merits, what is interesting in Weber's discussion of

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ascetic Protestantism is the way in which it displays the dynamics of disenchantment in the thought of a paradigmatic modern thinker. In other words, whether Weber was right or not about Calvinism and capitalism, what is most interesting is what he shows us about how we think about religious belief in the modern world.

There is an incredible irony that accompanies Weber's account of rationalization in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.*[11] This is because, as Weber points out, from the perspective of instrumental-rationality, "value-rationality is always irrational." Thus these two forms of rationality tend to pull apart. What Puritanism provided was an instrumental-rationality—one of means rather than ends—that could be applied regardless of the end for which it was used. Indeed, it can seem to become an end in itself. In Weber's analysis, the modern Western world of rational capitalism and the bureaucratic state that was created by ascetic Protestantism has becomes severed from its spiritual roots (or, perhaps better, from its supernatural end); the worldly care that the Puritan ascetic took up with a sense of vocation has become a prison—in Weber's famous image, an iron cage in which the modern subject is trapped:

> The Puritan wanted to work in a calling; we are forced to do so. For when asceticism was carried out of the monastic cells into everyday life, and began to dominate worldly morality, it did its part in building the tremendous cosmos of modern economic order. The order is now bound to the technical and economic conditions of machine production which today determine the lives of all the individuals who are born into this mechanism, not only those directly concerned with economic acquisition, with irresistible force. Perhaps it will so determine them until the last ton of fossilized coal is burnt. In [Puritan Richard] Baxter's view the care for external goods should only lie on the shoulders of the "saint like a light cloak, which can be thrown aside at any moment." But fate decreed that the cloak should become an iron cage.[11]

Weber goes on to say that "today the spirit of religious asceticism whether finally, who knows? has escaped from the cage."[12] The rational world no longer needs a religious foundation; it has become an autonomous mechanism of coercion, a spirit-bereft prison for the modern soul.

Rationalization, being a progressive and evolutionary process, has therefore gradually extended itself to the point where the world has become "disenchanted" in such a way that all things become subject to abstraction and calculability. By bracketing the question of ends and focusing on means, instrumental-rationality issues in "a morally sceptical type of rationality, at the expense of any belief in absolute values."[13] We might say that instrumental-rationality erodes value-rationality.

Another way of describing this change is as a loss of metaphysical vision. What religious belief provides, and what the modern world has lost, is "a unified view of the world derived from a consciously integrated and

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meaningful attitude toward life."[14] This desire of reason to see the world as a "cosmos" is undercut by reason's own rationalization of the world. Disenchantment means that "there are no incalculable forces that come into play, but rather one can, in principle, master all things by calculation."[15] However, the key feature of a disenchanted world is not simply the absence of gods and demons, but the loss of the world as "cosmos"—the loss of meaning. As instrumental reason progressively strips the world's processes of their magical qualities so as to more methodically manage them, these processes "henceforth simply 'are' and 'happen' but no longer signify anything."[16]

Politics as Violence and the Refuge of the Spirit

The exemplary inhabitant of this disenchanted world of means without meaning is the bureaucrat who fulfils his function competently and efficiently without inquiry into the ultimate meaning or purpose of his role. Thus Weber writes that in the modern world,

> the *homo politicus*, as well as the *homo oeconomicus*, performs his duty best when he acts without regard to the person in question, *sine ira et studio*, without hate and without love, without personal predilection and therefore without grace, but sheerly in accordance with the impersonal duty impose by his calling, and not as a result of any concrete personal relationship. He discharges his responsibility best if he acts as closely as possible in accordance with the rational regulations of the modern power system.[17]

Or, as Weber says in his famous essay on "Politics as a Vocation"

> The honor of the civil servant is vested in his ability to execute conscientiously the order of the superior authorities, exactly as if the order agreed with his own convictions. This holds even if the order appears wrong to him and if, despite the civil servant's remonstrances, the authority insists on the order. Without this moral discipline and self-denial, in the highest sense, the whole apparatus falls apart.[18]

The bureaucrat is one who occupies himself with the rational efficiency of means, not the question of ends. Or rather, the bureaucrat is one who has segregated his manipulation of means and his concern for ends into separate "life spheres."[19] In his personal relations he may be vitally concerned for the moral significance of his actions, but his public role (and the salary he receives for fulfiling that role) requires that he be concerned not with significance but with efficiency, not with ends but means.

What is the arena, the "life sphere," in which the bureaucrat enacts his role? It is the state or the market. Though Weber equivocates on this point,

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as he does on so many, the general tenor of his image of the iron cage implies that the modern bureaucratic state and the culture of rational capitalism have consumed the agora, so that one who takes up a public role must do this in the space define by modern politics and economics. This is important because for Weber both the state and the market are defined not by their ends (i.e., it is not the pursuit of a particular goal that makes a state a state or a market a market) but by their means. For my purposes I will bracket the important question of the market and its relationship to the state (i.e. of economy to society) and focus on the state. What then, we must ask, are the distinctive means that define the state? For Weber the answer is clear and simple: violence.

In the definitions of basic sociological terms at the outset of *Economy and Society* Weber says that "a 'ruling organization' will be called 'political' insofar as its existence and order is continuously safeguarded within a given *territorial* area by the threat and application of physical force on the part of the administrative staff."[20] More pointedly in "Politics as a Vocation" Weber says that "the state is a relation of men dominating men, a relation supported by means of legitimate (i.e. considered to be legitimate) violence."[21] It is the state's monopoly on physical force as a legitimate means that defines it. The bars of the iron cage turn out to be the threat of violence, or perhaps the allure of being the one who administers that violence.[22] The bureaucrat, the new minister of the public realm, is the one who rationally—*sine ira et studio*—carries out this task. No wonder the world seems disenchanted.

But where has the spirit fled? It has not simply been eradicated, because Weber's narration of the process of rationalization turns out to be a dialectical one in which the history of the rational is chiefly registered as its overcoming of its antithesis through the "routinization of charisma."[23] By "charisma" Weber means "a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional power or qualities." Charisma is "specifically irrational in the sense of being foreign to all rules." This means that it exists only in *statu nascendi*; the teaching of a charismatic figure is not sustainable beyond his or her immediate, personal presence and thus always requires for its perpetuation subsequent rational regulation.[24] Thus one might say that the transmission of charismatic teaching is parasitic upon rational routinization. On the other hand, there is a sense in which rationality is parasitic upon charisma, in that it finds its genesis in the overcoming of charisma through routinization. Charisma functions for Weber as a kind of safety-valve—a permanent possibility that sustains the hope that the bureaucratic state will not attain complete hegemony and that history will be constantly renewed

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through new infusions of charisma.

Thus, Weber presents a vision in which the modern world has increasingly rid itself of the traces of its charismatic source in sectarian Protestantism and as a result has become spiritless and impersonal: *Gesellschaft* has replaced *Gemeinschaft*, the state has replaced the *polis*. In the face of this, "religion has been shifted into the realm of the irrational"[25] and thus into the realm of the apolitical. In the modern world, "[h]e who seeks the salvation of the soul, of his own and of others, should not seek it along the avenue of politics, for the quite different tasks of politics can only be solved by violence."[26] The public realm is now construed as the realm of constraint by violence, and religion has retreated to its origin in charismatic individuality.

Mysticism is the example par *excellence* of charismatic individualism that can exist at a total remove from the "pragma of violence which no political action can escape."[27] Weber writes:

> The unity of the primitive image of the world, in which everything was concrete magic, has tended to split into rationalistic cognition and mastery of nature, on the one hand, and into "mystic" experiences, on the other. The inexpressible contents of such experiences remains the only possible "beyond," added to the mechanism of a world robbed of gods Where this conclusion has been drawn without any residue, the individual can pursue his quest for salvation only as an individual.[28]

Similarly, in *Economy and Society*, Weber identifies "mysticism and an acosmistic ethic of absolute goodness" as one of the chief forms of an "increased tendency toward flight into the irrationalities of apolitical emotionalism."[29] Mysticism is safe from the kind of transformation that ascetic Protestantism underwent, and in fact Weber sees mysticism and asceticism as fundamentally opposed (ideal) types of religion.[30] Weber takes mysticism to be a distinctive type of experience: "that subjective condition which may be enjoyed as the possession of, or mystical union (*unio mystica*) with, the divine."[31] Whereas the inner-worldly asceticism of Calvinism is rational in its essence, "[t]he religious experience as such is of course irrational, like every experience."[32] Weber recognizes that mysticism is often associated with certain ascetical practices, but while true asceticism values the rational ordering of life as a godly end in itself, in mysticism "rationalization is only an instrument for attaining the goal of contemplation and is of an essentially negative type, consisting in the avoidance of interruptions caused by nature and the social milieu."[33] With its negative valuation of rational order, mysticism seems to provide an invulnerable refuge for the spirit.

It is important to understand here what Weber is saying about

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disenchantment. He is *not* saying that individuals have ceased to believe in God. What he is saying is that religious faith has become a private (and irrational) set of beliefs held by individuals. The former capacity of religion to organize social life has withered, being replaced by the instrumental rationality of the bureaucrat. In the early 1960's Alasdair MacIntyre commented on "the combination of atheism in the practice of the life of the vast majority [of the English population], with the profession of either superstition or theism by that same majority."[34] Even in a country like the United States, where such indicators of religious commitment as church attendance remains relatively high, it is widely taken as axiomatic that one should not bring religion into politics. To do so is to practise a "politics of division," and religious beliefs are divisive precisely because they can be authoritative *only* for individuals. So even if everyone in the United States professed belief in God, this would not mean that they did not live in a disenchanted world.[35]

Roland Robertson has noted that this relegation of the religious to an inward and private realm shows Weber's indebtedness to what Robertson calls "a Lutheran epistemology and ontology," by which he presumably means Luther's sharp distinction between the inner man" and the "outer man" as delineated in, for example, *On the Freedom of a Christian.* Robertson goes on to quote Marcuse: "German culture is inseparable from its origin in Protestantism. There arose a realm of beauty, freedom, and morality, which was not to be shaken by external realities and struggles; it was detached from the miserable social world and anchored in the 'soul' of the individual."[36] While this is perhaps a bit much to lay at Luther's feet—it is a viewpoint not restricted to Germans—it does alert us to the presence in Weber (and indeed in modernity) of what we might call "two kingdoms." Contained in the inwardness of "mystical experience," the religious virtuoso attains a kind of autonomy that renders him immune to the vicissitudes of the vocation of politics and free to pursue the private project of salvation and of universal, acosmistic love. Likewise, the world of politics also becomes autonomous, so as to be freed from the irrational moral constraints that religious beliefs might impose upon the rational use of violence. "Mysticism" arrives on the scene at the same time as disenchantment.

East of Eden

Another way of thinking about how "mysticism" relates to the disenchanted politics of modernity is provided by Edward Said's influential analysis of "Orientalism." In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, writers on mysticism seek to expand the horizons of "mysticism" (which hitherto had by and large been taken to be something

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specifically Christian) to include the religions of the Orient; in fact, the East is seen as the source of mysticism in its purest form. This, of course, was not completely new. The East, perhaps because it was the direction of the rising sun, had long been seen as the direction from which would come spiritual renewal. Bernard of Clairvaux's friend and contemporary, William of St. Thierry, had spoken of the Carthusians of Mont-Dieu as introducing "to our Western darkness and French cold the light of the East and the ancient fervor of Egypt for religious observance."[37] Later, spiritual writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries appealed to Dionysius the Areopagite as an Eastern source who was at the same time exotic and of unimpeachable authority.[38] Nor were all identifications of mysticism with the East positive. While the early Jesuit missionaries to Japan were not quick to identify the Zen Buddhist monks as mystics,[39] the Anglican bishop Edward Stillingfleet noted the similarity between the "Mystical Unions and Raptures" of "the Gentiles of Indoostan" and those of the Roman Catholic "fanatics" who espoused mystical theology.[40] Thus despite the long standing appeal of the East, the non-pejorative identification of Christian and non-Christian mystics, especially by Christians, was largely an innovation of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But very quickly, for good or for ill, "mysticism" was possessed of an Oriental animus.[41]

"Orientalism," as described by Said, is both an academic discipline with roots stretching back to the Middle Ages, as well as a metaphor for a larger phenomenon by which Europe, the Occident, defines its identity through the imaginative construction of the Orient as its "other." Discourses about "the Orient" are less about the lands and peoples of Asia and the Middle East than they are about Europe: "the Orient and Islam are always represented as outsiders having a special role to play *inside* Europe."[42] In particular, the Orient functions as a way of circumscribing a site in which "mysterious" and "irrational" forces hold sway. As Said puts it:

> The Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, "different"; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, "normal." But the way of enlivening the relationship was everywhere to stress the fact that the Oriental lived in a different but thoroughly organized world of his own, a world with its own national, cultural, and epistemological boundaries and principles of internal coherence. Yet what gave the Oriental's world its intelligibility and identity was not the result of his own efforts but rather the whole complex series of knowledgeable manipulations by which the Orient was identified by the West.[43]

We might expand the metaphorical boundaries of Orientalism so as to speak of the "Orientalizing" of mysticism: the process in which the Orient functions as a code that, when applied to mysticism, delineates it as an autonomous sphere of religious experience that nonetheless can only be

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brought to articulation by the rational discourses that are exterior to it. This simultaneously guarantees a realm of private religious experience—mysticism—and a realm of public, utilitarian rationalism—politics.

The Orientalism that pervades the modern discourse on mysticism can be seen in a relatively benign form in the British and American infatuation with the mystical poetry of the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore [1861–1941]. Tagore was from an elite family and his education had included a broad exposure to English literature and philosophy. In the years immediately before the First World War he presented those in the West who were interested in mysticism with a vision of the mystic East that was eminently palatable—so much so that he was given the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913 and knighted by George V in 1915. His serene appearance and long beard and robes fed English anxiety that, as one author put it, "India knew something that England did not know and ought, for her own good, to learn."[44] Fortunately for England, however, this secret mystic knowledge was not of much use in running a country; the Indians still needed the British for that. This Eastern wisdom was delivered in a form (lyric poetry) that testified simultaneously to its sublimity and its impracticality.[45] The Oriental mind, mystical and mysterious, was suited for poetry but not for politics; the European mind, rational and logical, was alas inferior in its spiritual sensibilities but was ideal for organizing such things as colonial empires.[46]

Given Said's analysis of the logic of Orientalism, it is not surprising that Weber often casts the contrast between rationalism and irrationalism in terms of the opposition between Occident and Orient. In Weber's general introduction to his *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* he repeatedly identifies the Orient with irrationality in the process of asserting that only in the West has a rational state and a rational capitalism arisen.[47] And in *The Protestant Ethic* Weber speaks of the "Oriental eroticism" of the Song of Songs that gave rise to Bernardine piety,[48] as well as of the "Oriental quietism" of some verses from the Psalms and Proverbs.[49] More explicitly, in *Economy and Society* he says,

> The decisive historical difference between the predominantly oriental and Asiatic types of salvation religion and those found primarily in the Occident is that the former usually culminate in contemplation and the latter in asceticism.[50]

The Oriental mystic functioned for Weber as an "ideal type"—perhaps rooted in genetic structure[51] —against which the ideal type of the rational, inner-worldly ascetic could be defined. As is typical of Orientalist rhetoric, the invocation of the Orient signals an irrational element that is subject to regulation and ultimately exploitation by its "other"—the rational, secular

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Occident—but also an irrational element that the Occident somehow needs for its own identity.

Weber's attitude toward mysticism is fundamentally ambiguous, but in a way that is entirely fitting for the "Orientalist" role he assigns it. On the one hand he admires the ideal of mysticism as engendering a loosely structured brotherhood of acosmistic love.[52] Indeed, in the record of a conversation between him and his wife, Marianne, he indicates that he at times thought of *himself* as a mystic:

> **Max:** Tell me, can you think of yourself as a mystic?
>
> **Marianne:** That would certainly be the *last* thing I could think of. Can you conceive of it for yourself?
>
> **Max:** It could even be that I *am* one. Just as I have "dreamt" more in my life than one really ought to be allowed, I am also not really *quite* securely at home anywhere. It is as though I could (and wanted) to pull myself back from everything, and completely.[53]

On the other hand, as indicated above, Weber most often saw mysticism as simply a reaction to the disenchantment of modern life—a retreat into the "irrationalities of apolitical emotionalism"—and thus not a viable option for those whose vocation was to the intellectual integrity demanded by the modern world. It was more a pathology of modernity than any kind of realistic alternative for one's life. However, it was a pathology with which both society and the individual could live, provided it was managed with the right therapies. One might well be a mystic and a politician, so long as each identity was kept within its proper sphere. In Weber's own life, whatever tendencies toward mysticism and acosmic brotherhood that he might have had were kept firmly in the private sphere; his own politics were conservative and nationalistic.[54]

In the end, Weber's presentation of "mysticism"—understood as a radically apolitical faith grounded in the charismatic individual's private experience—as the only viable religious option in the face of the world's disenchantment serves to define its antithesis—politics—as the sphere of coercion through the rational administration of violence. Just as the Orientalist images of the East tell us more about Europe than they do about Asia, so Weber's understanding of mysticism tells us more about his understanding of politics than they do anything else. The construction of mysticism as the "other" of politics shows us the simultaneous construction of politics as the spiritless management of force.

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Mystical-Political Theologies: The Case of Edward Schillebeeckx

The tendency to construe religion as a "mystical" realm of inwardness that abandons any relation to the disenchanted world of politics, which we see exemplified in Weber, has not gone unresisted. Various political and liberation theologies have attempted to argue that Christian faith necessarily implies political engagement and thus cannot be seen simply as a private matter. Some theologians have construed the task of relating "faith" to "politics" as one of constructing "mystical-political" or "mystical-prophetic" theologies.[55] I cannot but applaud such attempts to maintain the political character of Christianity. However, as one might suspect from the invocation of the category "mystical," the best intentions of these attempts are thwarted by an account of religious belief that is still only extrinsically or, at best, consequentially political, and an understanding of politics as governed by the "real" (i.e. violent) workings of power. In many of these theologies, religion still finds its ultimate ground in an interior realm of experience and thus is not in itself political, historical, and communal, but can only have "consequences" in those realms. Such a construal replicates Weber's conviction that the relationship of the "ideal" realm of religious faith to the "real" realm of politics is necessarily one of compromise at best and irrelevance at worst.

As in so much modern thought, the use of the word "mystical" in liberation and political theologies is vague. "Mysticism" is a cipher that signals the "purest" or most essential aspect of religion, but to which it is impossible to attach any positive content. However, its hyphenated linkage with the world "political" seems to indicate a dialectical relationship between the two, thus implying that whatever mysticism is, it is the antithesis of politics. In this dialectic each term has its role. "Mysticism" usually functions to ensure that Jesus is seen as more than "just a political reformer," while "politics" counters the privatizing and ahistorical tendency inherent in mysticism.[56] I do not claim that all the theologians who invoke the phrase "mystical-political" explicitly intend such an antithesis—indeed, their overwhelming desire is to overcome a privatized and apolitical account of Christianity. However, their choice of this formulation registers the force of the very impulse towards a disenchantment of the public realms and the privatizing of religious faith that they seek to overcome.

One writer who has increasing invoked the dialectic of mysticism and politics is Edward Schillebeeckx, whose work can serve as an example of the way that the desire to construct a political theology can be vitiated by the dual movement in which religion/faith/mysticism is interiorized and essentialized as "experience" and politics is construed as management by

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the state through the (threatened) use of violence. Such an interiorization of religious experience is counter to Schillebeeckx's stated intentions to stress the mediated, and thus political, character of religious experience.[57] Indeed at times he makes contradictory statements that seem to reflect his desire both to develop a political theology as well as to endorse the modern secularization of ethics and politics. I would argue that such contradictions are built into his very understanding of the concepts "mystical" and "political."

More than some others who invoke some version of the "mystical-prophetic" dialectic, Schillebeeckx makes an effort to define what he means by "mysticism." His use of the term seems to vacillate between two understandings of mysticism. On the one hand, the Dominican Schillebeeckx rejects what he calls "a primarily Jesuit" understanding of spirituality, which stresses the extraordinary character of mysticism, and identifies himself with the "Thomistic-Carmelite" perspective, which sees mysticism in continuity with the ordinary life of faith and the theological virtues of faith, hope and love.[58] Thus Schillebeeckx in places identifies "the mystical" with "the religious" and "the theologal" (*sic*) as "everything in Christian life that has God himself as an explicit object."[59] In this understanding, the mystical is simply explicit religious experience. On the other hand, while mystical experience does not differ in kind from the experience of the ordinary believer, Schillebeeckx speaks of it in places as a particularly "intense" form of that experience. Just as all Christian experience is mediated by concrete, historical objects and structures,[60] so too mysticism must be characterized as "mediated immediacy." However, contrary to normal religious experience, it is a form of prayer "in which an attempt is made to transcend the elements of belief which are also mediated through politics, ethics and concepts, in order to place just oneself in the immediate presence of God."[61] Because of the mediated nature of experience, however, any such attempt is bound to fail and thus God is experienced by the mystic as a "dark night." In this way, mysticism might be seen as a "limit situation"—something extraordinary. Thus Schillebeeckx's usage of the term "mysticism" seems to shift between two meanings: 1) the mystical as simply any explicit religious experience, and 2) the mystical as a particularly intense form of explicit religious experience that struggles against the mediations of politics and reason.

When found in opposition to the term "political" it seems to have the more general meaning of the explicitly religious, though with overtones of the "intensity" of the more specialized meaning. Schillebeeckx, noting that "[t]erms like mysticism and political are both ambiguous, even suspect," offers the following definition:

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> I use the term mysticism here to denote an intensive form of experience of God or love of God, and politics to denote an intensive form of social commitment (and thus not the political activity of professional politicians *per se*), a commitment accessible to all people.[62]

These definitions, while they do not exactly clear up the ambiguity, do reveal the fundamental tension that runs through Schillebeeckx's work. As William Portier has noted, for Schillebeeckx "mysticism and politics" is a "conflictual theme."[63] He seeks to overcome a sharp distinction between the two by relating them dialectically; however they still remain basic poles in his interpretation and thus continue to reproduce the very antinomies between sacred religion and disenchanted politics that he wishes to overcome. The antinomy of mysticism and politics is related to two more basic antinomies found in Schillebeeckx's theology: interiority versus exteriority and love of God versus love of neighbour.

In his book *Church*, Schillebeeckx explicitly criticizes the "modern liberal distinction between interiority (the private sphere) and externality (the public sphere)," which he identifies (correctly) with Weber's sociology. According to Schillebeeckx, this distinction "distorts the problems surrounding belief in God."[64] However, while he criticizes Weber's particular construal of the relationship between the two, he retains inner and outer—"individual" and "social"—as the antinomies that define the problem. He writes:

> I myself in no way want to reduce the individual to a sum of social relationships, far less reduce society to the total of individual actions. The critical question is whether this sharp dividing line between an inside and an outside in human beings is justified, and whether it does not saddle us with the wrong picture of what it is to be human.[65]

Schillebeeckx wants to blur the line between individual (interior) and social (exterior) but he still has a stake in the terms of the distinction. It is the sharp line between "inner" and "outer" that is the problem, not the distinction itself. Hence one finds him repeatedly speaking in terms that seem to posit an original religious experience that suffers a subsequent "fall" into communal expression.

This can be seen clearly in the way Schillebeeckx utilizes Weber's routinization thesis in his ecclesiology. Belief in God is inevitably institutionalized, and this is "a sociological and also a religious necessity, and. . . at the same time it results in a degree of alienation from the original religious experience." Thus while institutionalization of religious faith is not only inevitable, but even "necessary for the good of this faith," it is simultaneously a process of alienation from an original and pure (though

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unbearably intense) realm of experience.[67] Schillebeeckx is careful to maintain that this original experience is always one of "mediated immediacy" in which we encounter God through concrete, historical people and events. He even goes so far as to say, "everything about a person, including his or her inwardness, is social."[68] Yet the experience of mediated immediacy seems to acquire a kind of ineffable purity within the interior of the individual, so that its subsequent expression and institutional mediation becomes a "taming of the overwhelming power of this experience."[69] It is difficult to see how this differs from the Weberian sociology that Schillebeeckx criticizes.

The "tension in unity" of mysticism and politics is also related to the tension between love of God and love of neighbour.[70] Again, Schillebeeckx wants to hold the two together, to maintain with the First Letter of John that one cannot love God without love for the neighbour (1 John 4:20–21), as well as positing love of the neighbour as an implicit form of the love of God (Matthew 25). At the same time, he wants to ascribe autonomy to the love of neighbour in its political form. For Schillebeeckx, one of the great achievements of modernity (of which he sees Aquinas as the herald)[71] is the creation of an autonomous ethic in which human beings live not by divine mandates but by self-imposed norms. Christian faith adds nothing to this autonomous ethic.[72] As a result of this, human beings have a purely immanent notion of the human good, which means that the question of human salvation—of human flourishing—is no longer an exclusively religious question, but a human question.[73] One can know what it means to love the neighbour (and thus wish for the neighbour's "salvation") without loving God—at least not explicitly. This "autonomy of political reason" is not simply a fact to be accepted by Christians, but something to be actively affirmed as a part of the Gospel. As Schillebeeckx writes: "the Christian message has freed us for freedom, rationality and morality; it has disarmed any attitude which is dictated by anxiety and unreason."[74] In other words, disenchantment is Good News.

What place then for the love of God in this disenchanted world? In Schillebeeckx's view, secularization has freed God from being a "god of the gaps," a necessary postulate. Once the world is autonomously intelligible, belief in God once again becomes gratuitous.[75] This gratuity of belief is the reverse side of God's freedom, and as such manifests itself politically in the form of an "eschatological proviso" that prevents the identification of God's liberating activity with any particular political program and thus "desacralizes" politics. Schillebeeckx does not believe that this makes love of God irrelevant in any positive sense to love of neighbour. He strongly rejects a purely formalized eschatological proviso that simply condemns all political activity in the face of God's judgement.

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Rather, he argues that God's proviso has been given a positive content in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.[76] However, at the same time he is worried that too specific a positive content will lead to a return to the "classical political theologies" of the past.[77] Thus his unwillingness to identify God "with any particular historical liberation event" extends not only to current political events, but also to Israel's exodus from Egypt, and even to "the redemptive appearance of Jesus."[78] Despite his own warnings about a formalized eschatological proviso, Schillebeeckx consistently speaks of love of God as simply providing an "orientation" or "direction" or "inspiration" to political activity.

This results in a gap between the way in which Schillebeeckx theorizes the relationship between "faith" and "politics" and his actual theological reflections on specific issues. For example, during the days of the Cold War he went so far as to write that a "risky trust in unilateral disarmament seems to me to provide an extreme possibility, but at the same time it would appear to be the only concrete possibility for anyone who really believes in Jesus as the Lord of history."[79] Certainly to claim that unilateral disarmament is the only choice for Christians seems to move beyond a simple "orientation" or "inspiration." And to base that choice on Jesus' lordship over history would seem to violate the autonomy of secular history, for Schillebeeckx must surely realize that unilateral disarmament based on the lordship of Christ does not fall within the reason of *realpolitik*, but is rather rooted in "the mysticism of Christian surrender."[80] However, to follow out the implications of this would seem to consign Christians to a theological ghetto in which the position demanded by faithfulness to its crucified Lord prevents the Church from making "realistic" policy recommendations to the state.

It seems to me that Schillebeeckx's dialectic of the "mystical" and the "political" reflects his desire to have it both ways: he wants to have a politically engaged and relevant Christianity while at the same time respecting Lessing's "broad, ugly ditch" between the necessary truths of reason and contingent historical events.[81] The actual content of the political praxis of Christians cannot be grounded in historical particulars such as Israel or Jesus if it is to provide universally valid ethical norms. It must be secularized, disenchanted, so as to become available to all people, at all times, in all places. Thus the very secularization that Schillebeeckx celebrates is predicated on the interiorization and depoliticization of Christianity; as with Weber, religion must become "mysticism" so that politics might become autonomous and rational. Religion, in the form of "experience of God," can "ensoul" politics, but it cannot embody politics.[82]

Schillebeeckx's desire for a mystical-political theology is not only

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marked by modernity's desire for secular liberation; it is also marked by theology's desire to be "spiritual" in such a way as to transcend politics. Thus for Schillebeeckx, "mysticism" functions as a remainder outside of the walls of the *polis*—and hidden within as an inexpressible experience — that serves to preserve the transcendent character of theology and keeps Christian discipleship from being mere politics. The underlying concern in the construct "politics and mysticism" is not simply to secularize politics, but also that theology not be reduced to political activism. This is a valid, and even vital, concern if one assumes (as Schillebeeckx seems to) that politics must take the form of the coercive use of power by nation states. However, if one thinks of politics in the more classical understanding of the formation of communities that make possible the shared pursuit of the good, then not only is it not wrong, but it is vitally important to see theology and theological discourse as "nothing more"—or, better, nothing less—than politics.

Re-Enchanting the World

What I have tried to do thus far is to show that Weber's construal of the politics of modernity depends on his construal of the paradigmatic form of the religion of modernity as one of mystical inwardness and to show how this weberian scheme continues to inform attempts to construct a mystical-political theology. But such attempts are doomed to fail because, if I may put it somewhat combatively, the modernity game is rigged. In the vicious circle of modernity, religion *must* take the form of mystical inwardness because the public realm is disenchanted, and the public realm is disenchanted precisely *because* religion has become mystical inwardness. In Weber's rule book for modernity, the one thing you *cannot* do is to bring the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount into the public realm. Thus despite the seriousness with which Weber takes that ethic, it is politically irrelevant. Indeed, *because* of the seriousness with which he takes it, it is politically irrelevant. He writes,

> By the Sermon on the Mount, we mean the absolute ethic of the gospel, which is a more serious matter than those who are fond of quoting these commandments today believe. This ethic is no joking matter. The same holds of this ethic as has been said of causality in science: it is not a cab, which one can have stopped at one's pleasure; it is all or nothing.

But because the ethic of the gospel is at absolute variance with the means proper to politics—violence—then it can have *no* political relevance. If one wishes to play by the rules of modernity, religion can *only* be a matter of mystical inwardness, it can *only* be an ethic for the saint as an individual. Thus Schillebeeckx's appeal for unilateral disarmament on

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the basis of the mysticism of Christian surrender is from the outset rendered apolitical by the standards of Weber.

Weber has in fact proved to be a very prescient prophet of our world. I cannot help but see in the current rage for "spirituality" exactly the kind of retreat into inwardness that allows the everyday workings of state and market to continue as usual. Such a retreat is sounded, perhaps inadvertently, in the introduction to an anthology of medieval English mystics edited by the popular writer on religion, Karen Armstrong. She writes:

> Today we have less confidence than before in the power of more external, socially oriented ideologies to change the world. We have watched the demise of enthusiasms like nationalism, Marxism, and Thatcherism, which promised a salvation of sorts. Many people feel that a deeper solution is necessary and seek the interior transformation of psychotherapy or counseling. In the late twentieth century, therefore, people may find the mystical experiment, which also urges the adept to look within himself for the truth and warns against the danger of simplistic ideas and projections about God, to be a more attractive form of religion than the more conventional and dogmatic types of faith.[83]

Clearly, Armstrong wants to say that "the mystical experiment" has greater transformative potential than nationalism or Marxism or Thatcherism, but note where this transformation takes place: *inside*. But what happens *outside*? Can we presume that there will be an inevitable movement from the inner to the outer, or should we rather accept the analysis of Weber that disenchanted modernity has a load-bearing wall of separation between inner and outer?

I have no desire to deny the importance of inner transformation, nor do I wish to banish the writings of Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross for their pernicious complicity in the violence of the nation state. However, I do wish to say that much contemporary talk about "inner transformation," "spirituality," and "mysticism" does serve the interest of politics as usual. It is what allows us to go to our jobs on Wall Street or the Pentagon while practicing yoga on the weekends to relieve our stress. While a thinker like Schillebeeckx clearly wishes to challenge such perversions of the Gospel, the very use of the language of "mysticism and politics" continues to play by the Weberian rule book.

I wish to challenge the rules of the game as Weber sets them out. What if, for example, we do not see in the Sermon on the Mount an ethic for individual saints, but the law by which a community lives? What if we try to take it seriously as a "politics"? I would argue that several things result. First, the notion of politics is "deterritorialized" because the community to

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which Jesus addresses the Sermon on the Mount is in not a "state" defined by control of territory, but rather the community of those who follow the Son of Man who "has nowhere to lay his head" (Mt. 8:20). He speaks to those who are to provide the world with an exemplary form of human community, yet who have no stake in any particular location, who are citizens of no particular city but who "are looking for the city that is to come" (Heb. 13:14). This deterritorialization of the *polis* severs the connection between politics and violence because, without territory to defend or manage, the followers of Jesus are not bound to the means of violence. In fact, there may well be an intrinsic connection between such deterritorialization and our ability to take seriously the command to turn the other cheek or to give to those who ask.

One might contend that this is not "realistic" politics, but it is only the Weberian rule book that says that a city without territory is not a true *polis*. Whether one wishes to use the word politics or not, what is crucial is that lives shaped by the Gospel—and lived in continued repentance for our failures to let them be so shaped—are just as "public" as the life of the bureaucrat. However its public markers are somewhat different. Rather than monuments and institutions, it possesses "a house not made with hands" (2 Cor. 5:1), that is "the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone" (Eph 2:19–20). Rather than the rationalized procedures of bureaucrats, it possesses the foolishness of the cross (1 Cor. 1:18–25), by which love transforms all our calculations and turns social programs into works of mercy. Rather than a rationalized economy, it possesses an economy of Eucharistic gift. My point is simply that all of these things serve as markers that are just as "real" and "public" as the markers of modernity.

Such a politics can never be theoretically relevant to the state because the state has its own theory. Schillebeeckx writes that "[t]he task for us (for me, now, as a Christian theologian) is to combine the spirit of the gospel with political wisdom and thus to honour the truth in the intuition of both views'.[84] However, such a view fails to realize that the "spirit" of the gospel is itself a political wisdom and thus operates, as it were, within the same conceptual space as any secular wisdom. It fails to see the degree to which a theology is already a politics, and a politics is already a theology.[85] The distinction between secularism (ideological) and secularization (non-ideological) is specious. The state conceives itself as (*pace* John Courtney Murray) omnicompetent and its laws do not simply manage interaction between individuals and groups, but serve a pedagogic function so as to form us into certain kinds of people. As Antonio Gramsci wrote: "In reality the State must be seen as an 'educator,' in that it aims precisely to create a

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new type and level of civilization."[86] Schillebeeckx and other political theologians do not appreciate the degree to which "political wisdom" in the modern, secular nation state—precisely because it is not desacralized—comes into conflict with the spirit of the gospel. By restricting Christianity's role to one of providing "inspiration" or "direction," the mystical-political model hands over the actual material existence of Christians to the pedagogic shaping of the state.[87]

By showing the world a way of life without violence that is not simply an ideal for exceptional individuals, but the common life of a historically-embodied community, the followers of Jesus trace a path of re-enchantment through our world. Theology must find a way to make peace with Christianity's "others" that is different from one of state-regulated coexistence as interest groups within a pluralistic civil society. For such a peace is a false peace, secured through violence, and builds only a false city—some version of the city founded by Cain. Yet to seek another sort of city, another sort of politics, will require Christians to rediscover a theological imagination that can think beyond the antinomy of mysticism and politics. In our modern, disenchanted world perhaps the most pressing task of this politics of the Gospel is to break out of the mystical confinement in which it has been placed, so as to re-enchant the world, to restore the world's status as cosmos, to found a pilgrim city.

1 The fact is that "modernity" is a term that is much used but seldom defined, and any definition offered is subject to controversy and refutation. Because it appears to refer to a time period, *what* modernity is, is intrinsically related to *when* modernity is; whole academic careers have been built on pushing back the dating of the advent of "modernity." Did it begin with the Reformation? the Enlightenment? Immanuel Kant? Marcel Proust? Are we still in the modern period, or have we now moved into something called "postmodernity?"
2 See Charles Turner, *Modernity and Politics in the Work of Max Weber* (London: Routledge, 1992).
3 On "modernity" and "disenchantment," see Leszek Kolakowski, "Modernity on Endless Trial" in *Modernity on Endless Trial* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 3–13.
4 See Max Weber, *Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 24–25.
5 Max Weber, "The Social Psychology of the World Religions" in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, ed. and trans. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 293.
6 On the rationality of magic see *Economy and Society*, 400.
7 "The Social Psychology of the World Religions," 293.
8 Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 154.
9 Cited in Bryan Turner, Max Weber: *From History to Modernity* (London: Routledge, 1992), 42.
10 Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 91. For a fuller discussion of this issue see Turner, 41–47.
11 Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 181.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid., 30.
14 Weber, *Economy and Society*, 450.
15 "Science as a Vocation," 139.
16 Weber, *Economy and Society*, 506.
17 Ibid., 600.
18 "Politics as a Vocation," 95.

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19 Ibid., 123.
20 *Economy and Society*, 54.
21 "Politics as a Vocation," 78.
22 Here is a place where the separation, for purpose of discussion, of "economy" from "society" raises some difficulties. Most bureaucrats do their jobs not because they lust after the administration of violence, but because they have a mortgage and a car payment.
23 In making this claim that rationalization is a dialectical process of overcoming, I am aware that rational authority and charismatic authority do not stand in a simple relationship of thesis and antithesis, since they are supplemented by a third type of authority, "traditional authority" (see Weber, *Economy and Society*, 215). However, it seems to me that traditional authority is in fact a mediating type in which rational procedures ("routinization") are developed on an irrationally founded authority. In Weber's terms, traditional authority represents technical rationalization without theoretical rationalization, and thus simply is an incomplete moment in the dialectic of disenchantment.
24 Weber, *Economy and Society*, 241, 244, 246.
25 Weber, "The Social Psychology of the World Religions," 281.
26 Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation" in *From Max Weber*, 126.
27 Weber, "Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions," in *From Max Weber*, 336.
28 Weber, "The Social Psychology of the World Religions," 282.
29 Weber, *Economy and Society*, 601.
30 Weber first develops this dichotomy in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, but there it is largely subordinated to the distinction between inner-worldly and other-worldly. It is only later, under the influence of his friend Ernst Troeltsch, that the ascetic-mystic distinction assumes an important place in Weber's sociology of religion.
31 Weber, *Economy and Society*, 545.
32 Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 233, n. 66.
33 Weber, Ibid. See a similar comment by Friedrich Heiler: "Mysticism does not value moral action as a thing good in itself, an absolute aim, that is, as the realization of values in personal and social life, but as a means to deaden the senses and suppress the emotions" (*Prayer: A Study in the History and Psychology of Religion* [1918], S. McComb, trans. (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 157–158).
34 Alasdair MacIntyre, "God and the Theologians," in *Against the Self images of the Age. Essays on Ideology and Philosophy* London: Duckworth, 1971), 26.
35 One might argue that in a liberal polity like the U.S. religion has not been relegated to the inwardness of private belief, but has simply been excluded from the realm of the state. Religious belief is free to organize forms of social existence in that middle realm between the state and the individual: civil society. Thus civil society is the proper place for religious societies such as churches. This claim deserves more serious attention than I can give it here, but let me note briefly that political liberalism has tended to foster increasingly individualistic notions of religious belief, even among traditions, such as Roman Catholicism, which are thought to place a great emphasis on authority and community. Most U.S. Roman Catholics are indistinguishable from their Protestant or Jewish or agnostic neighbours. One might recall Hilaire Belloc's comment that American Roman Catholics were Protestants who went to Mass on Sunday.
36 Roland Robertson, "On the Analysis of Mysticism: Pre-Weberian, Weberian and Post-Weberian Perspectives", *Sociological Analysis* 1975, 36/3, 245–248. The Marcuse quotation is from *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory*. Robertson also notes that this "Lutheran epistemology" has in turn been transmitted through Weber to much American sociology of religion. Robertson writes: "the easy, undialectical acceptance among many American sociologists of the idea that religiosity is primarily a private, internal matter, a stance strongly facilitated by methodologies which commit the individualist fallacy, testifies further to the amorphous impact of traditional Lutheranism."
37 William of St. Thierry, *The Golden Epistle*, Book I, 1 [Theodore Berkeley O.C.S.O., trans. (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1980), 9].
38. Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable*, Michael B. Smith, trans. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 102.
39 See Heinrich Dumoulin, S.J., *A History of Zen Buddhism*, Paul Preachy, trans. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1963), 204–210.
40 Edward Stillingfleet, *An Answer to Mr. Cressy's Epistle Apologetical* (London, 1675), 81–83.
41 For the History of Religions School, mysticism was commonly taken to be Oriental in its essence:

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an importation from Greek mystery cults or from neoplatonic philosophy, and ultimately rooted in Indian religion. This often played into the apologetical interests of Protestant scholars who wished to see in Christian mysticism an alien "hellenization" and corruption of pure biblical faith. For example, Adolph von Harnack presents mysticism as the wholesale importation of Neoplatonism into Christian thought, primarily through its influence on Augustine and Pseudo-Dionysius (*History of Dogma*, Vol. I, 360–61. See also Vol. VI, 97–108). One finds this same view expressed a generation later by Friedrich Heiler, for whom mysticism could be traced from Pseudo-Dionysius back through Plotinus and Plato, to Orphic-Dionysiac mysteries. These in turn could, in his view, probably be connected with a strand of Indian mysticism stretching back to the Upanishads (Heiler, *Prayer*, 116–117). For both Heiler and Harnack, this essentially Oriental mysticism was set in stark contrast with prophetic, biblical religion which was active and vigorous and masculine. Mysticism was a kind of passive, feminine corruption within Christianity which could be isolated, if not excised. For the characterization of mysticism as feminine, see Heiler, *Prayer*, 146.

42 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 71.

43 Ibid., 38–40.

44 Mary M. Lago, Introduction to *Imperfect Encounter. Letters of William Rothenstein and Rabindranath Tagore*, 1911–1941 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 19.

45 One wonders how Tagore would been received if he had written the Indian equivalent of Homeric epics.

46 Regarding the relationship between Orientalism and colonialism, one should note Said's comment: "To say simply that Orientalism was a rationalization of colonial rule is to ignore the extent to which colonial rule was justified in advance by Orientalism, rather than after the fact" (*Orientalism*, 39).

47 Translated as the Introduction in Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Talcott Parsons, trans. (New York: Scribners, 1976), 13–31.

48 Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 238, n. 97.

49 Ibid., 164.

50 Weber, *Economy and Society*, 551.

51 Weber expressed some hesitation on this point. See his general introduction to his *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 30.

52 See particularly his remarks about Russian mysticism in "Max Weber on Church, Sect and Mysticism," *Sociological Analysis* 1973, 34/2, 140–149.

53 Recounted by Eduard Baumgarten, *Max Weber, Werk und Person* (Tübingen, 1964), 677, and quoted in Arthur Mitzman, *The Iron Cage. An Historical Interpretation of Max Weber* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), 218.

54 For a discussion of Weber's personal attitude toward mysticism, see Mitzman, *The Iron Cage*, 190–230; Robertson, "On the Analysis of Mysticism," 248-253; and William R. Garrett, "Maligned Mysticism: The Maledicted Career of Troeltsch's Third Type," *Sociological/Analysis* 1975, 36/3, 209.

55 See, for example, Claude Geffré and Gustavo Gutiérrez, eds., *The Mystical and Political Dimensions of the Christian Faith, Concilium* 96 (New York: Herder and Herder, 1974); Johannes B. Metz, *Followers of Christ: Perspectives on the Religious Life*, Thomas Linton, trans. New York: Paulist Press, 1978); and David Tracy, *Dialogue with the Other. The Inter-religious Dialogue* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990). These authors have all obviously been influenced by each other in their choice of this formulation. However (coming out of left—or right?—field), see Michael Novak's early work, *A Theology for Radical Politics* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), which comes complete with a back cover photo of the author in his turtleneck and groovy love beads.

56 Thus David Tracy writes: "Without the prophetic core, the struggle for justice and freedom in the historical-political world can too soon be lost in mere privacy. Without the mystical insistence on love, the spiritual power of the righteous struggle is always in danger of lapsing into mere self-righteousness and spiritual exhaustion" (*Dialogue with the Other*, 118). It is interesting in this particular quotation to see the mystical-political dialectic read through Reinhold Niebuhr's love-justice dialectic. See Reinhold Niebuhr, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1935).

57 See, for example, *Christ: The Experience of Jesus as Lord*, John Bowden, trans. (New York: Crossroad, 1983): "It is precisely this break with an 'immediate' relationship with God in faith which has opened the doors of our churches to political theology, to the origin of critical

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communities and to a better, and above all a happy, world" (809).

58 Edward Schillebeeckx, Church: *The Human Story of God,* John Bowden, trans. (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 68-69.

59 Ibid., 90.

60 Ibid., 40–45.

61 Ibid., 70.

62 Edward Schillebeeckx, *On Christian Faith: The Spiritual, Ethical, and Political Dimensions*, John Bowden, trans. (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 71–72.

63 William Portier, "Mysticism and Politics and Integral Salvation: Two Approaches to Theology in a Suffering World" in *Pluralism and Oppression: Theology in World Perspective,* Paul F. Knitter, ed. (New York: University Press of America, 1988), 268.

64 Schillebeeckx, *Church*, 46.

65 Ibid., 47.

66 In some ways, such a view can be seen to underlie his whole project in the books *Jesus* and *Christ* whereby, in the former, historical-critical scholarship is used to reconstruct the original *Abba* experience of the charismatic figure Jesus and, in the latter, the story is recounted of how this original experience came to be routinized by the early Church.

67 Schillebeeckx, *Church,* 59–60.

68 Ibid., 48.

69 Ibid., 59. It is tempting to give a biographical explanation of this tension between interior experience and exterior institution, given that Schillebeeckx is a theologian who has suffered much at the hands of "the institutional Church" (see in particular his remarks in *Church*, xiii–xv). His positive remarks in *Christ* about the "community-centered" approach of Latin American liberation theology, in which theology becomes "the theory of living church communities" (759) indicate that his assessment of the "institutionalization of belief' might be different given different institutions. However I believe that, even given this, one must also see how Schillebeeckx's work reflects a fundamental theme of modernity: the opposition of subjective interior and objective exterior.

70 Schillebeeckx, *On Christian Faith*, 71.

71 Schillebeeckx, *Christ*, 655.

72 Schillebeeckx, *Church*, 30–31.

73 Schillebeeckx, *Christ*, 790–791; cf. *Church*, 232.

74 Schillebeeckx, *On Christian Faith*, 82.

75 Schillebeeckx, *Church*, 99–101.

76 Schillebeeckx, *Christ*, 776–779.

77 Schillebeeckx, *Church*, 100.

78 Ibid., 10.

79 Edward Schillebeeckx, "Eager to Spread the Gospel of Peace," David Smith, trans., in *Church and Peace, Concilium* 164 (New York: Seabury, 1983), 80.

80 Ibid.

81 See G.E. Lessing, "On the Proof of the Spirit and of Power," in *Lessing's Theological Writings*, Henry Chadwick, trans. (Stanford, 1956), 54–55.

82 See Schillebeeckx, *On Christian Faith*, 74.

83 Karen Armstrong, *Visions of God. Four Medieval Mystics and Their Writings* (New York: Bantam Books, 1994), xxv.

84 Schillebeeckx, *On Christian Faith*, 76. Michael Novak expressed a similar sentiment in the late sixties: "Politics and mysticism, mysticism and politics. Be wily as serpents, innocent as robins" (*A Theology for Radical Politics*, 126).

85 I have attempted to argue this in more detail in *Julian of Norwich and the Mystical Body Politic of Christ* (Notre Dame: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), 3-12 and "Theo-drama and Political Theology," *Communio: International Catholic Review*, XXV/3 (Fall, 1998), 532–552.

86 Antonio Gramsci. "The Modern Prince' in *The Modern Prince and Other Writings*, Louis Marks, trans. (New York: International Publishers, 1957), 187.

87 This point is powerfully argued, using the example of the Catholic Church in Chile prior to and during the Pinochet regime, by William Cavanaugh in *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics and the Body of Christ* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998).

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