11
Encompassing Religion, privatized religions and the invention of modern politics[1]

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No tribe has a word for 'religion' as a separate sphere of existence. Religion permeates the whole of life, including economic activities, arts, crafts and ways of living. This is particularly true of nature, with which native Americans have traditionally a close and sacred relationship. Animals, birds, natural phenomena, even the land itself, have religious significance to native Americans: all are involved in a web of reciprocal relationships, which are sustained through behaviour and ritual in a state of harmony. Distinctions between natural and supernatural are often difficult to make when assessing native American concepts.   (Cooper 1988: 873–4)

... Religion and Policy, or Christianity and Magistracy, are two distinct things, have two different ends, and may be fully prosecuted without respect one to the other; the one is for purifying, and cleaning the soul, and fitting it for a future state; the other is for Maintenance and Preserving of Civil Society, in order to the outward conveniency and accommodation of men in this World. A Magistrate is a true and real Magistrate, though not a Christian; as well as a man is a true and real Christian, without being a Magistrate.   (Penn 1680: 4)

The two quotations above give us the outlines of two profoundly different meanings given to 'religion'. The first talks about religion as permeating the whole of life, and it bears comparison with religion in early modern England. I will call this holistic concept 'encompassing religion', since all practices and institutions are, in the final analysis legitimized in terms of it.[2] As such it is virtually impossible to distinguish religion from culture in the use of many anthropologists. The second quotation conveys a concept of religion as privatized and essentially distinguished from an area of life defined in non-religious terms. It is this kind of religion that is protected in modern constitutions as a human right; however, such constitutions also protect politics and the state *from* religion. It was encompassing

religion against which William Penn and others such as John Locke objected, and their claims abut the essential differences between religion and politics were prescriptive, a rhetorical demand for change, rather than a description of reality. This concept of religion can be seen as the product of 'secular' thinking and also as a condition for the realization of secularity in the first place. A non-religious domain of politics, for instance, could not have been thought of unless 'religion' had been siphoned out of the totality and placed in a special essentialized category. I shall refer to this as 'privatized' or 'essentialized' religion and religions. These can be treated as two ideal ends of a spectrum, with various empirically confused examples sitting at different positions along it. However, this is not only an abstract model, but a claim about historical change.

This chapter is the small beginning of a larger enquiry into the changing meanings since the sixteenth century of categories such as 'religion', 'superstition', 'politics', 'civil society', 'secular', 'sacred', 'profane'[3] and 'economics'. One aspect of this enquiry is the influence of the colonial context on ideas. Given that these historically constituted categories do change in meaning and context, it would be methodologically inconsistent to organize the historical argument presented here *in terms of* these categories. It would be unhelpful if I was to claim, for instance, that religion impacted on politics differently in the fifteenth century as compared with the nineteenth, because this very form of words, "religion impacted on politics", smuggles in a tacit assumption that in the fifteenth century 'religion' and 'politics' were conceived as essentially separate entities or domains capable of having an impact on each other.

For example, in his interesting book on the radical Reformation, Baylor states that "Politics for the radical reformers was inseparable from religion, as it was for the vast majority of 16th century Europeans" (1991: vii). He continues:

> it would be false to stress the religious characteristic of their thinking in opposition to the political. The Christian faith and church were so integral to social life that thinking about religion was also inherently political thinking. Religious discourse in the sixteenth century had an unavoidable dimension of political reference, just as ideas about political authority and the polity were articulated in religious language.
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> (*Ibid.*: xvii)

Here Baylor is (correctly) denying the separation of religion and politics in the thinking of the reformers; but he is doing it by employing those very same categories.[4] To organize the argument about the categories 'religion' and 'politics' *in terms of* those very same categories would inevitably be circular. The words 'politics' and 'politicians' hardly existed in anything like the modern sense until the late seventeenth century;[5] and 'religion' had a less generic, more specific indigenous meaning of Christian Truth. To analyse historical change as though these terms have an intuitively apprehensible constancy of meanings tends to build into the argument the tacit assumptions of our contemporary language. The most important example of this tacit modern assumption is that 'religion' is a private non-political assent to a belief in God and a future state that is essentially separated from

a public non-religious domain of 'politics'. This assumption is not always merely tacit; it is made explicit in constitutions, in the laws on freedom of religion as a right, and also in academic subjects such as philosophy, sociology and political theory.

This assumption about religion has packed into it an essentialization of both domains, each having different defining characteristics that demarcate them from each other: for example, that religion is essentially non-political, spiritual rather than materialistic, other-worldly rather than this-worldly, and concerned with private faith and the salvation of the individual soul rather than the organization of the state; and that politics and the power of the state are essentially non-religious, based on legitimized violence, this-worldly rather than other-worldly, and concerned with the public organization of civil authority and the protection of private property and bodies. One result of this separation has been the interminable debate, arguably going on since the seventeenth-century deists, about the correct definition of religion, because this has implications for where the boundary between religion and non-religion is to be drawn. Frequently these debates and definitions rely on further dichotomies with slippery boundaries, such as that between nature and supernature, matter and spirit, body and soul, or scientific knowledge and pious faith. Since all of these terms are unstable in usage, they provide the possibility of an endless deferral of meaning, one set of dichotomies being implicitly or explicitly defined by another set, which in turn is defined by another set, and so on indefinitely.

This reified separation between religion and politics also allows for some kind of problematic *relationship between* them, as when we talk about the politicization of religion or the impact of religion on politics. The idea that religion can under specific circumstances become political; or that religion can have an impact on politics, only makes sense under the prior assumption that they are essentially separate and different. In modern thinking the relationship is construed in various ways, but the construals usually assume that there are two essentially distinct things that can be related in some way. It is therefore assumed to be the task of theorists and researchers to show us how in fact the relation works out in any specific cultural context. And without this assumption, it would be difficult to see how 'the secularization thesis', discussed at great length by sociologists, could be expressed (see Introduction, references to Berger 1999).

The essentialization of religion and politics as two distinct domains has been clearly imagined in some of the eighteenth-century North American state constitutions. These constitutions make religion a private and personal right, but by doing so they also establish the centrality and rationality of the non-religious state and politics. By turning religion into an object, or several objects, of constitutional legislation, the high ground of 'secular'[6] rationality is set out and enacted, and this in turn is strongly linked with the production of secular discourse in various forms, such as history (see Chapter 2). But what was it that produced secular discourse? In Chapter 2, Trevor Stack argues that it may have developed within the church in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and in the attempts of the Spanish to look in on the practices and institutions of American Indian culture from a higher ground, whereby to subordinate the 'data' to dominant Christian categories. Such 'looking in' on the Indians and many other colonized peoples from the

'higher ground' of European classification is consistent with the idea that the ideology of the secular as natural reason has been made possible in the first place by the construction of an essentialized idea of religions as a key aspect of colonial classification. Rather than standing on firm ground and looking out at problematic objects called religions, we are in an Alice-in-Wonderland circularity where our own secular positionality has been made possible by those religious objects themselves. We could not imagine ourselves to be occupying an essentially non-religious space unless we had been able to siphon out of that space whatever we deem to be 'religious'.

Another point to note is that, across the humanities, 'religions' are assumed to be universal both in time and place. For modern discourses on the religions of the world are ubiquitous, and there is, of course, a large publishing industry, produced by academics and others in departments of religious studies, social and cultural anthropology, sociology, philosophy and history. These discourses claim to provide knowledge of these entities. Even some historians seem comfortable with the idea that religion somehow can always be identified in ancient, medieval or modern history, in any society speaking any language (although see Bossy 1982, 1985).[7] But this sits awkwardly with the observation that, for much of the period leading up to the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, and arguably for long after, the English term 'religion' stood for Christian Truth, usually Protestant Truth,[8]as revealed in the Bible. And during much of the same period, 'politics' was not conceived as an independent domain separated from religion, and therefore in that modern sense was not articulated. How, then, did we arrive at the modern generic usage?

THE ORIGINS OF THE MODERN RELIGION–SECULAR DICHOTOMY: THE CASE OF JOHN LOCKE

Probably the most famous theorist of the essential difference between religion and politics was the philosopher John Locke (1689). He was by no means the first writer to articulate a distinction,[9] and he was adding his voice to a long-running, complex argument among the European elite concerning the nature of the state and civil society. But his formulation of the problem has had the greatest impact, not least in the North American colonies.[10] Similar to the quote from Penn with which this article started, Locke defines the two domains: "The care of Souls cannot belong to the Civil Magistrate because his power consists only in outward force: But true and saving Religion consists in the inward persuasion of the Mind, without which nothing can be acceptable to God" (*ibid.:* 10). People make an "inward judgement" about truth and salvation, and on such matters one cannot be compelled to believe by outward force. There is this assumption of the inner mind as distinct from the outer body, religion being aligned with the inner working of the mind, and civil society with the outer, with the body. The magistrate has nothing to do with religion in this sense, because it is harmless to the state: "the Magistrate's power extends not to the establishing of any Articles of Faith, or Forms of Worship, by the force of his Laws" (*ibid.:* 11).

By privatizing religion as the individual's relationship with a transcendent God it became possible to think of it as a distinct domain separate from the public arena. In his *Letter on Toleration* Locke insists: "the Church is a thing absolutely separate and distinct from the Commonwealth" (*ibid.*: 25). Churches are "religious societies" and are (or ought to be) entirely private and voluntary. Locke distinguishes clearly throughout between "a Religious" matter and "a Political" one (*ibid.*: 46). The private, individualistic nature of religion is expressed in the often repeated argument that "the care of each Mans [*sic*] Salvation belongs only to himself" (*ibid.*: 58).

For Locke, as for Penn (1680), religion has nothing to do with violence, but is a peaceful, private matter. Only the state is concerned with violence. The general assumption in Locke's writing is that "religions" are Christian, voluntary churches, or private "religious societies",[11] and the only power they hold is to eject someone from membership of the society according to the rules that its membership voluntarily agreed to. But a religious society cannot use force, "For all Force belongs only to the Magistrate" (Locke 1689: 20).

Locke seeks to legitimize his argument about the meaning of religion and its essential difference from the civil government in terms of Biblical evidence, and largely on the assumption that 'religions' refer to Christian confessions. Yet at the same time he is using religion in a more generic sense. He is aware of the possibility that some will not be Christian: "No violence of Injury is to be offered to him, whether he be Christian or Pagan" (*ibid.*: 20). Pagans are described as 'superstitious' in most of the writing of the time, but, in contrast to the privacy and freedom of religion, which is concerned with the salvation of souls – "the care of each Mans Salvation belongs only to himself" (*ibid.*: 58) – the civil authority has an entirely different nature and function. For "the Political Society is instituted for no other end but only to secure every mans [*sic*] Possession of the things of this life" (*ibid.*). The expression "the Political Society" is here being newly forged. I do not mean that this is necessarily the first time the expression has ever been used, but that it is a relatively new coinage of late-seventeenth-century rhetoric. It is also here being used to refer to a non-traditional and profoundly revised idea of the Commonwealth: *"The Commonwealth* seems to me to be a Society of Men constituted only for the procuring, preserving, and advancing of their own *Civil Interests. Civil Interests* I call Life, Liberty, Health, and Indolency of Body; and the possession of outward things, such as Money, Lands, Houses, Furniture, and the like" (*ibid.*: 58).

The possession of "*outward* things" (my emphasis) implies the distinction from the *inward* things of the soul and its salvation. The duty of the civil magistrate is to defend through the fear of punishment and the possession of force, the civil interests of his subjects "by the impartial Execution of equal Laws". It seems clear to Locke that: "the whole Jurisdiction of the Magistrate reaches only to these civil Concernments ... and that it neither can nor ought in any manner to be extended to the Salvation of Souls" (*ibid.*: 9).

Political society is based on a contract between the rulers and the people, who are the supreme power in the final analysis. Again, the idea of a contract between the people and the civil magistrate is itself not new in theories of the polity, but Locke places it in a clearly separated political domain. In practice the people establish a legislative power,

which "is not only the supreme power of the Commonwealth but *sacred* and unalterable in the hands where the community have once placed it" (quoted in Browning 1953: 169; emphasis added). The sacred is here extended to the central institution of the non-religious, political domain, the legislature, which in England would be the king in parliament, but which in the future American states would be the constitutionally defined arena of politics.[12]

This idea of religion as a private, non-political assent to a belief in God and a promise of a future life has become a dominating trope in contemporary discourses on religion. Its opposite, which Locke refers to as civil government or the civil governor, as the commonwealth, and as political society, does not on its own give us full access to a modern idea of the non-religious, *the secular*, for the latter needs to be combined with a number of other factors. These would include the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century, with new ideas about objectivity, time, space and matter; the importance of mathematics and measurement in the transformation of a basically Aristotelian view of the world; a new kind of distinction between the natural and the supernatural as different ontological domains; and the development in the second half of the eighteenth century of an idea of political economy as a secular domain. The separation of fact from value within this transformation has been a necessary aspect of the formulation of an idea of secular objectivity. But all of these aspects of modern ideology were in the process of being formulated in the seventeenth century and throughout the eighteenth on the basis of a number of oppositions, such as that between scientific rationality and religious faith, and Locke was one of the most important English contributors to their formulation, along with his contemporary Isaac Newton and the other members of the newly founded Royal Society.

It is not difficult to realize that Locke, among many others, was engaged in rhetorical argument to try to persuade powerful contemporaries to use terms in a certain way and to demand that these terms become transformed into legal and constitutional enforcements. There are a number of reasons why Locke should have a deep interest in this issue. One pressing issue of the day was toleration; toleration was the way that late-seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-century writers were beginning to talk about the right to practise one's 'religion' without interference from the state.[13] It is obvious that Locke was driven by this issue. But he was also a high-ranking member of a nation that was becoming a centre of colonial trade. Locke himself was appointed a member of the Board of Trade and therefore had a role in appointing governors and members of the Governor's Council of the American colonies (Clarke 1955: 335).

I am not directly concerned here with the interesting and important historiographical argument concerning the degree to which Locke did or did not directly influence the American colonial elite in their writing of state constitutions or the American Constitution itself (see Hartz 1955; Macpherson 1962; Bailyn 1965; Pocock 1975, Dworetz 1990). I want instead to clarify why the essentialization of religion and politics as separate domains was historically significant, what it was intended to achieve, what unintended ideological consequences it had, and the route by which this essentialized and reified dichotomy has passed into current uncritical ideology. Penn had very similar ideas about the need for the

separation of church and state in order to relieve his Quakers from persecution, and that led him to reconceive the meanings of 'religion' and 'politics' in ways that were similar to Locke's. It also led him to found the modern state of Pennsylvania, which of course has its own constitutional history.[14] Like Locke,[15] Penn built the religion–politics dichotomy around ideas of inner and outer, soul and body, spirit and matter. In his *A Brief Account of the Rise and Progress of the People called Quakers* (1694), the series of inward–outward oppositions is expressed like this:

INNER Conversion, Regeneration and Holiness	OUTWARD Schemes of doctrines, verbal creeds, new forms of Worship (p. 61)
The Substantial, the Necessary, the profitable part of the Soul	Religion the Superfluous, Ceremonialls, Formal Part (p. 61)
The Will of God's Spirit	studied Matter (p. 60)
Inward and experimental knowledge of God	lifeless possessions (p. 61)
Experiment	theory and speculation (p. 63)
Knowledge of the heart/the inward state	Own imaginings, glosses and commentaries on scripture (p. 63)
Extraordinary understanding in divine things/the Light of Christ within	Vanity of this World (pp. 63, 65)

In *The Great Question to be Considered by the King ...* (1680), one can derive the following oppositions, which match those above:

Religion	Civil society
Inwardness	Outwardness
Other-worldly salvation	This worldly governance
The private, individual soul, conscience	The public realm of law and magistrates

These rhetorical oppositions are prescriptive rather than descriptive; they seek to persuade; they are forging the ideas, constructing them, inaugurating a discourse on the inner and the outer that still captivates us today. In short, the invention of religions and politics is part of the same ideological transformation that invented the private inner self of modernity. The "outwardness" of the world, however, seems to have three different meanings. First, it refers to outward actions as against inner intentions, the performance of ritual practices, the reciting of creeds, the formality of etiquette and attachment to things that are mere objects and have no inner life. The clear implication is that the inner things of the soul are closer to God and therefore more real and more authentic. This is a moral as well as an ontological distinction, in that it implies that the outer actions

and possessions are relatively valueless. It is derived from the Protestant theological critique of Catholic and other forms of superstition, and a relative sundering of God and the world.

Secondly, there is the objectification of the world of solid matter, which he refers to here as "studied matter", which may reflect an awareness of the development of science and the scientific conception of the empirical observation of the material universe being developed by Galileo, Bacon, Descartes, Newton, Locke and many others. The world has been turned into an object, or a system of material processes, laid out in container time and space (see Al Azm 1972; Burtt 1932; Fitzgerald 1983: 121–42).Thirdly there is the outer world in the sense of the public realm of civil government as opposed to the privacy of inner knowledge of spirit. To what extent Penn was aware of these distinctions as he was writing is debatable.

One might say that these ideas were circulating and various individuals gave them various formulations.[16] What they all involved in one way or another was a profound reconfiguration of the dominant worldview of what I call *encompassing religion*. The idea of privatized religion(s) could be seen as implicated in the origins of the modern metaphysical mind–body duality. It gradually took the place of the Aristotelian metaphysics lying behind the view of religion as an all-encompassing truth, in which each created kind or species participates by degree in the totality. We can see the radical nature of this change clearly in the way American state constitutions were formulated in the later eighteenth century. In eighteenth-century American constitutions, religion, as I show later, appears as one contentious item within a complex constitutional statement of the values, principles and procedures of the non-religious political process that they represent and specify. Written constitutions of this kind fundamentally define modern politics as the public world of natural rationality, and religion appears as a problematic item that has been quarantined from the state through various measures, in particular tolerance, freedom of conscience or opinions, freedom of worship and freedom of religion. Arguably American constitutionalism in the eighteenth century was the arena in which the modern domain of politics as public shared reality was most powerfully defined and institutionalized.[17]

That Locke had a vast indirect influence few would deny, although Penn was influential too, and anyway there were several generations responsible for embedding these ideas in wide public discourses, especially in the American colonies and their debates about the meaning of liberty and the definition of political authority. However, one can at least say that, given that a whole system of new ideas about space, time and causality were forming, partly in the colonial context of maps, compasses, exploration, the rationalization and globalization of trade and the development of nationalistic consciousness, Locke's articulation of those ideas was especially clear and representative. Given those reasons, he needed to discredit and destroy an entirely different discourse on religion, one that had been dominant in one form or another for centuries, and that for many of *his* contemporaries would have been as self-evidently true as the discourse on the separation of religion and politics seems to *our* contemporaries.

ENCOMPASSING RELIGION

The more general *encompassing* discourse against which individuals such as Locke and Penn were arguing was that religion means Christian Truth, that Christian Truth is all-encompassing and universal, and that nothing exists or could exist (in the proper sense of the word 'exists') outside religion. Religion was not an object covered by a clause in a constitution but encompassing Truth, and what we today have separated out as 'religion', 'politics' and 'economics' were embedded in different configurations within the totality.

Locke set out to destroy the validity of this. In one place Locke exemplified this totalizing ideological perspective with the Biblical description of ancient Israel:

> the Commonwealth of the *Jews* ... was an absolute Theocracy; nor was there, or could there be, any difference between that Commonwealth and the Church. The Laws established there concerning the Worship of One Invisible Deity, were the Civil Laws of that People, and a part of their Political Government; in which God himself was the Legislator. (1689: 52)

But Locke denied that this view of the matter is Christian, since the gospels brought in a new dispensation: "But there is absolutely no such thing, under the Gospel, as a Christian Commonwealth. He prescribed unto his Followers no new and peculiar form of Government; nor put he the sword into any Magistrate's Hand, with the Commission to make use of it in forcing men to forsake their former Religion, and receive his" (*ibid.*: 52). It is clear that Locke is attacking the dominant ethos of the hierarchical commonwealth encompassed by religion. More specifically, Locke's *First Treatise on Government* targeted Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha*, probably published in 1680, whose principles denied the possibility of the separation of religion and politics that Locke wished to achieve. Filmer, who supported the divine right of kings, argued that civil power is from God, "by the divine law" (1991: 5–6). For Filmer, God, the Father of all, ordained a patriarchy in the family, and this is essentially the same as patriarchy in the state. "It follows that civil power not only in general is by divine institution, but even the assignment of it to the eldest parent" (*ibid.*: 7) and, he continues, "To confirm this natural right of regal power, we find it in the Decalogue that the law which enjoins obedience to kings is delivered in the terms 'honour thy father' [Exodus, xx, 12] as if all power were originally in the father" (*ibid.*: 11). Filmer holds that the natural duties of a father over one family are identical in kind to those of a king over the whole commonwealth (*ibid.*: 12).

God, the Father of Humankind, gave Adam lordship not only over Eve but over the whole world. Adam's family was the first commonwealth, and he had absolute power and authority over his family. This patriarchal power was divided by Noah after the Flood between his three sons. After the "confusion of Babel" the regal power descending from Adam was further dispersed throughout the world. All true Kingship is legitimized by this descent (*ibid.*: 10). Even after the true natural father or his line disappear, the right of the father descends to the title of prince or king.

In Filmer's theory, the idea deriving from theorists such as Bellarmine and Suarez of civil authority being based in the free consent of an original contract was denied by reference to Biblical authority. The Bible was generally the final authority for people who we today might call political theorists, even though Aristotle was also an important source. Filmer's arguments arose in the specific context of Charles I's claim to a divine right of kings. However, in order to appreciate the revolutionary nature of the challenge from writers such as Locke and Penn, we need to be able to see Filmer as one specific representative of a general view of the whole social order as rooted in, and encompassed by, the scheme of Christian revelation, and a divinely instituted patriarchy.

'THE RELIGIOUS' AND 'THE SECULAR'

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and right up into modernity, the most common use of the term 'the religious' has been to refer to a special class of virtuosi within the Catholic Church – the monks, friars and nuns – as distinct from the *secular clergy*; it referred to a specialized branch of Christendom, *a status* (Cross 1958: 1364–5; Bossy 1985: 170). One also finds references to the religious houses, meaning abbeys, monasteries and convents: the houses of 'the religious'. The bishops, in their obsequious letter to Henry VIII as part of their Preface to *The Institution of a Christian Man*, make reference to "the clergy of this your most noble realm, as well religious as other" (Lloyd 1825: 26). Here 'religious' refers to the monks, friars and nuns, the religious clergy, also called the Regulars. The "other" here refers in contrast to the *secular* priests. To be a secular in medieval England was not equivalent to the modern idea of the secular as non-religious. To be a devoted Christian, to be baptised and confirmed, to practice self-mortification and to serve the church would in today's language be called religious, but in the late sixteenth century these characteristics were in principle and by definition shared equally by all Christians, regardless of whether or not they were of a religious or secular status.

It could be argued that the religious were so-called because in principle their full-time withdrawal from the world exemplified service to God, and in that sense offered the most radical vision of the sacredness of service to God available. These renouncers most effectively symbolized the reality of the redemptive soteriology of the cross. The orders of Benedictines, Dominicans, Franciscans and others were, in a sense, 'other worldly' in distinction from 'this world'. Yet they were also an integral part of the universal church, and the church bridged the other-worldly–this-worldly distinction. It was, after all, the duty of all Christians to symbolically carry their cross, so in one sense the religious were not doing something qualitatively different from those 'seculars' such as Thomas More who wore a hair shirt and whipped himself in his study. A better way of expressing this might be to say that the whole doctrine of the church was based ultimately on a redemptive other-worldly soteriology, while simultaneously ordaining a ritual order in this world,

along with the sacralization of power hierarchies. Within this overall world order 'the religious' had a specific status and function.

The older sense of the religious and the secular as two branches of the clergy is still current usage in referring to the Catholic orders, and perhaps within some sections of the Anglican Church too.

CANON LAW AND SECULAR LAW

For many centuries in English, and deriving from Latin, there was a distinction between canon or church law and secular or common law. Again, this is not the same as the modern distinction between religion and the secular. The modern distinction is based on an *opposition* between the religious and the non-religious. As I argued earlier, politics in the modern state is supposed to be non-religious, and religion is supposed to be non-political. Whatever positive definitional attributes some people might wish to give to 'religion' or 'politics' in their generic modern forms, at base they define each other by what the other is not. In contrast, the medieval ecclesiastical and secular authorities were both *encompassed* by Christendom and Mother Church. It would have been meaningless to medieval and early modern Christian subjects to have been told that the secular is non-religious. After all, in general in modern usage one could not say that the secular priesthood were not 'religious', although one could have said that they were not 'the religious'. If the pope was a prince, was he religious or secular? If the king was addressed as 'sacred monarch' and as God's vicar on earth, as he or she regularly was in England, did this make the king a religious or secular figure? (One might ask the same question about property, the legislative assembly, and rights as they are represented in modern constitutions.)

The medieval encompassment of all institutions under the wing of the Holy Church, or at the cosmological level under the all-encompassing glory of God, can be understood when we turn to Cross's entry on "Toleration" in the *Dictionary of the Christian Church*:

> Christianity, which claims to be the only true religion, has always been dogmatically intolerant. Dissent ('heresy') within its own ranks, has been anathematized time and again in the history of the Church. St. Augustine went so far as to demand corporal punishment for heretics and schismatics; and this became the normal procedure in the Middle Ages when, owing to the intimate connection between Church and state, Catholic and citizen were virtually synonymous terms, and the heretic was thus considered a revolutionary endangering the foundations of society. The regular penalty in the Middle Ages was death.　　　　　　　　　　　(Cross 1958: 1364–5)

The historian R. W. Southern, like many others, has made the same point (Southern 1970: 16–17). The medieval distinction between church and state can be usefully approached from the angle of the exercise of authority. In particular, Logan (1968) strengthens the

view that I am arguing for here that the distinction is only intelligible as a division of functions within an ideological totality. He shows that the degree of cooperation between the two authorities reveals how they both shared the same ends:

> The exclusion of a person from normal society constituted in medieval Europe a penalty inflicted by both secular and ecclesiastical authorities ... ex-communication severed a person from the Christian community; it removed him from the communion of the faithful. In a unitary Christian society this amounted, at least in theory, to nearly complete ostracism ... Amidst the dashing of candles and the tolling of bells he was cursed and cut off from the church's body ... henceforth to be treated as a pagan.   (Logan 1968: 13)

While we can accept that ecclesiastical and civil courts were clearly distinguished as organizations, it also seems clear that they acted in concert towards a transcendental goal of unity, and that the unity was both spiritual and temporal, for the conservation of the temporal order was a sacred duty (*ibid.*: 15).

Logan's study goes up to the 1530s, yet this procedure "continued in use in to the next century and forms part of the ecclesiastical and legal history of those years. The reforming legislation forbade appeals to Rome, it is true, but the legislation had little effect on the internal machinery of the ecclesiastical courts. They continued to function by pre-Reformation procedure" (*ibid.*: 17).[18] We can see then that the secular was either a status of churchmen (the secular priests) or a power invested in institutions and officeholders that was subordinated to, and encompassed by, religion. The secular was not non-religious in the modern sense at all. It was all about religion, because religion meant Christian Truth. Tawney, among others, noted that, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, this medieval synthesis was still dominant (1926: 19–22 and *passim*). O'Gorman (1997: 163ff.) has weighed up the extent to which what he calls the confessional state continued to dominate England in the eighteenth century (see below). When we use the term 'secular' today, as in 'secularism' and 'secularization', we are talking about an entirely different cosmology, ideology and set of dominant values.

RELIGION: THE COMMONWEAL

The idea of the commonweal as the "politic body" was also not equivalent to 'the secular' in today's usage and meaning. The commonweal or commonwealth is perhaps best understood as religion seen under the view of the organization of society and human relations in this world. The commonweal was God's hierarchy on earth, and ordered relations between rulers and subjects, seniors and juniors, men and women, adults and children, and all others. As already pointed out, the English word 'religion' in the sixteenth century and for long afterwards had a meaning virtually identical with Christian Truth revealed in

the Bible. In their address to the King in the publication of *The Institution of a Christian Man*, the bishops refer to "the right institution and education of your people in the knowledge of Christ's true religion" (Lloyd 1825: 23).

Religion was not in *opposition* to the secular, and it would be equally wrong to think of the idea of the commonweal in the sixteenth and much of the seventeenth centuries in England as 'the secular' in today's meaning of 'non-religious'. The commonweal was conceived as based on a hierarchy of sacred duties determined by degree and rank. Sir Walter Raleigh had put it in this way:

> that infinite wisdom of God, which hath distinguished his angels by degrees, which hath given greater and less light and beauty to heavenly bodies, which hath made differences between beasts and birds, created the eagle and the fly, the cedar and the shrub, and among stones given the fairest tincture to the ruby and the quickest light to the diamond, hath also ordained kings, dukes or leaders of the people, magistrates, judges, and other degrees of men.   (Quoted in Tillyard [1943] 1998: 19)

The idea that the commonweal was the equivalent of modern secular politics, standing in opposition to and separate from religion, would be entirely misleading. The commonweal and all 'politic' order and governance, were encompassed by religion. The *commonweal* was the form in human relations that religion (Christian Truth) took. It was based on a detailed analogy with the human body, with individual rank being represented by parts of the body, identified by their nature, qualities and functions (see e.g. Williams 1967: pt II).

That there was no separation between 'religion' and 'society' can be seen immediately in the first sentence from Tyndale's treatise on vocation: "As pertaining to good works, understand that all works are good which are done within the law of God, in faith and with thanksgiving to God" (Williams 1967: 292). Tyndale's understanding of good works in effect conserves the status quo, "degree high or low". He goes on to say that the apostle, the shoemaker and the kitchen page all submit themselves to Christ when they submit to their master (*ibid.*: 292–3).

Tyndale, like many other of his contemporaries, used the analogy of the body to talk about the order of the commonweal or 'politic body', where sin and the breaking of laws are hardly distinguishable (*ibid.*: 293). As one would expect of hierarchy, based on deference and senior–junior relations rather than 'social stratification' or 'class' in the nineteenth-century sense,[19] masters have duties to their servants too (*ibid.*: 294). The same analogy of fathers to sons is advocated for landlords and tenants. And this analogy also relates us all to Christ as sons to father. By the use of such analogical relationships the commonweal and all its degrees is bound up with God, who is the highest degree, the father of all. It indicates where Filmer's *Patriarcha* derived from.

 One of the ways the distinction between the spiritual and the temporal was conceived in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was in the distinction within parliament, and therefore government, between Lords Spiritual (bishops) and Lords Temporal. However,

in the understanding of the time both the spiritual and the temporal as categories of people were subsumed in the higher unity of God and his redemptive purposes, and in the higher unity of the commonweal. Thus they were all members of parliament, they were all members of the church, bishops helped formulate state policy, church ministers read state edicts in the form of sermons in their churches, and the king was God's anointed ruler on earth.

'Religion' and the 'Commonweal' are two different ways of talking about the same thing, which is the divine order of the world. Some readers will think this naive, and will assume that hegemonic ideas held by an elite are not descriptions of the way people generally did think, but rhetorical attempts to persuade the lower classes to accept and internalize their submission. And it is true that the dominance of a discourse does not mean that there were no alternative ways of thinking available. Yet I quoted Baylor (1991) earlier as evidence that even the radicals of the German Reformation did not separate religion from politics. It seems that this top-down concept of obedience to one's station is at least recognized if not loved as rhetorical necessity by the lower orders, and seems to have been internalized by those poor petitioners who submitted "A Supplication of the Poore Commons" (1546) to their "most dear lord" King Henry: "they say your highness's laws are God's laws, and that we are as much bound to observe them as the Law of God given by Moses. Truth it is, most dear lord, that we are bound by the commandment of God to obey your highness and all your laws set forth by your High Court of Parliament" (Williams 1967: 287).

The nature of church, kingship and the state render the modern English-language discourse of 'religion and politics' uncharacteristic until the eighteenth century, although the distinction itself was broached by the English sectarian radicals, clearly articulated by the late seventeenth century, and from an early date written into some American state charters and constitutions. For the king, referred to by such epithets as "our most dread sovereign Lord", "the king's royal majesty", and in other places quite frequently "our most sacred king" was in 1534 both the head of state and also the head of the Church of England.[20] We can arrive at a sense of awe at the exercise of this divinely blessed kingly power when we consider the statement put out by the cowed Abbot and monks of Peterborough Monastery soon before the dissolution in 1534, which legitimized the king as God's representative on earth (*ibid*.: 777–8).[21]

The relation between the authority of the Catholic Church and the subordinate authority of the state (the church-state) was reformulated by Henry VIII into an identification of "the Christian religion and duty" with the power of the national state embodied in the king (the state-church). It was to the King's "laws and decrees" that the subjects made absolute submission, not to the Bishop of Rome. Kinney comments that "obedience is always a holy act" (Kinney 1975: 47). Obedience of a servant to a master, of a wife to a husband, of a pupil to a teacher, of a subject to a prince, of lower degree to higher degree, was analogous to the obedience of a Christian to God. The whole deferential social order was wrapped in divinity and teleologically determined by God's scheme of redemption.

Kinney writes that in such different kinds of writing as Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, or "a sermon transforming Essex's uprising into a morality play of good and evil", or *A*

Philosophical Discourse Entitled the Anatomie of Mind by Thomas Rogers (1576), there are common themes that envisage creation as "a single fabric, woven with purpose and beauty by a single artist", in which order on earth is analogous with order in heaven, in a world in which everything and every person has its rightful place. "For Elizabethans, man's security and contentment rested in his wholehearted acceptance of due order and degree" (Kinney 1975: 46). Obedience, as the willing submission of the individual to the order of the whole, is fundamental. The homilies preach against the individual prioritization of self-interest, and insist on the acceptance of God's order. The subordination of the interests of the individual to those of the state-church had to be turned upside down by Locke and other powerful rhetoricians in order to arrive at the modern liberal dominance of rational self-interest and the rights of individuals. Rebellion had almost cosmic significance (*ibid*.: 44).

POLITIC NOT POLITICS

The commonweal was frequently referred to as 'the politic body' and, like other uses of 'politic' as an adjective this implies fitting, well-ordered and God-given, although it can also have more negative connotations, in the sense of crafty or cunning.[22] Divine purpose was realized through submission to one's status and duties in the creation of a harmonious whole. This was a politic state of affairs. Worship could be politic too. King Henry's Preface to *The Articles about Religion* (1536) and *The Institution of a Christian Man* (1537) (both republished in Lloyd 1825: xv–xxxii) concerns salvation and the order of the polity. Henry mentions several times the question of salvation and also "the honest ceremonies and good and politic orders" and the need for "unity and concord" (*ibid*.: xvi.) Henry says that he and his bishops have divided the Articles into two; those that are directly necessary to our salvation, and those less important practices "as have been of a long continuance for a decent order and honest policy, prudently instituted" (*ibid*.: xvi).

The words 'politic' and 'policy' here are a long way from contemporary usages such as 'politics' and indicate not a domain but an attribute. For 'politics' as a contemporary noun implies a secular, in the sense of non-religious, domain separated off from another domain named 'religion'. The prolonged attempts by various intellectuals to imagine religion and politics as separate required that both politics and religion should have different natures or essences, made highly explicit as I showed not only by Penn (1680) and Locke (1689) but also by the Anglican Divine William Warburton ([1748] 1766). By being essentially separated, they can then be thought of as having problematic interrelations. But this modern usage cannot make much sense when referring to an idea of a totality of human relations made by and for God, in which the king is head of the church, and the bishops (Lords Spiritual) are in the parliament with the rest of the nobility (Lords Temporal), and play a leading role in government; and the ministers read state-authorized homilies in the form of sermons on civil obedience.

A *politic* action is one that is suitable and appropriate to the circumstances, and thus as relevant to those actions that we might today judge to be 'religious' as to those we might judge to be 'political'. This does not mean that the word 'politician' and the expression 'political power' were not occasionally evident. For example, Filmer himself uses these terms in his discussion of, and disagreement with, the Jesuit Suarez's claim that "Adam had only economical power, but not political" ([1680] 1991: 16). This "economical power" is used by Suarez in the standard way of the time to refer to the domestic situation, the power of a father over his household, and distinguished from "political power", which Suarez defines as power over a community of families. These early examples of the political and economical are different from modern usage because for both of these theorists politics and economics are not separated out as distinct and autonomous non-religious domains, but as gradations of power within the encompassing legitimization of God and the Bible. Filmer also refers to "the politicians and civil lawyers", and despite Filmer's holistic intentions it is tempting to see these as early modern beginnings of significantly shifting usage. This would mean a shift in the direction that Locke and others were trying to make explicit.

One difference with later theorists is that the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writers were talking from the inside out, that is to say, they were talking from within a worldview that they took to be the way things are, the order of things, the Truth. They had not yet turned it into a *comparative sociological theory*. However, in *The Dialogue between Pole and Lupsett* (1539?) attributed to Thomas Starkey (Williams 1967: 295–302; Mayer 1989), there patently is a theory of the commonweal. Starkey is certainly advocating a conservative vision of the commonweal, but he has a more abstract theoretical style. Starkey was an Anglican priest who advised Henry VIII and his Chancellor Thomas Cromwell (Mayer 1989: viii; Zeeveld 1948: 111–27).

Pole, one of the conversants who speaks most in defence of the commonweal, develops the body analogy very explicitly; he refers to "the true commonweal" as "the politic body", as civil order, as politic law, the politic state, commonalty (Williams 1967: 296–302). The analogy with the body anchors the "politic state" in the "order of nature" (*ibid.*: 297).

As the head of state is the "heart", so the head and the eyes and ears are "the under officers by princes appointed" whose responsibility is to the "weal" or well-being of the body. Craftsmen and warriors are the hands, ploughmen and tillers the feet (*ibid.*: 297). Like Tyndale, Pole draws an analogy with disease "when the parts of the body agree not together: the head agreeth not to the feet, nor feet to the hands: no one part agreeth to the other: the temporalty grudgeth against the spiritualty, the commons against the nobles, and subjects against their rulers" (*ibid.*: 299).

RELIGION AND POLITICS IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY NORTH AMERICA

Penn went to America to found Pennsylvania with a King's Charter in 1682. He promised the subjects their full civil and religious liberties. Nearly a hundred years later, in 1774–75,

after considerable parliamentary interference in the government of the colony, deputies appointed by the General Assembly took their grievances against the king-in-parliament to the Continental Congress. There followed various stages of constitutional development, and in September 1776 a specially convened convention adopted a state constitution (Hough 1872: 217). This was criticized by some republicans within the Pennsylvania opposition for lacking "the legitimate checks and balances necessary for a stable equilibrium of political power" (*ibid.*: 218). Eventually, a new constitution was agreed in 1790. The Bill of Rights section:

> re-enacted the old colonial provision copied into the first Constitution, respecting freedom of worship, rights of conscience, and exemptions from compulsory contributions for the support of any ministry. The recognition of a God and of a future state of rewards and punishments were still demanded of all holding office, but a belief in the divine inspiration of the Old and New Testaments was not included.
>
> (*Ibid.*: 220)

A desire for this degree of toleration was not unanimous in the late-eighteenth-century colonies. There were those like John Swanwick, himself a Philadelphia man, who in his open letter *An Act for the Establishment of Religious Freedom* (Swanwick 1786) politely expressed alarm at the degree of toleration being granted in Virginia. Swanwick did not deny some degree of separation of church and state, but his objections to it are fundamentally that it is too extreme in its liberality, one might say too loose in its definition of 'religion', and that it ought to make more provision for protecting and promoting the Christian faith:

> By this act ... a door is opened wide for the introduction of any tenets in religion, however degrading to Christianity, or how tending to its destruction; that all countenance or support of government to it is withdrawn, and ... the legislature of Virginia may be held and administered by men professedly atheists, Mahometans, or of any other creed, however unfriendly to liberty or the morals of a free society.　　(*Ibid.*: iii)

Swanwick seems like an Enlightenment man, and his view of Christianity is of a gentle rational kind that guarantees civil liberties. There is a degree of ambiguity in his argument, for he also seems to be arguing for the establishment of a state religion on the grounds that without it the civil society can have no principles of cohesion and will fall into anarchy. His language throughout implies the separation of religion from politics, and yet at the same time the Christian (Protestant) religion is essential for holding political society together.

Swanwick reprints the Virginia Act in his open letter. The Act begins with an appeal to freedom of thought as a natural right, and insists that nobody can be forced to pay taxes to subsidize a particular form of religion, since everyone should be free to give "his contributions to the particular pastor whose morals he would make his pattern". Both

civil and ecclesiastical rulers have tyrannically imposed and set up "their own opinions and modes of thinking" on people (*ibid.*: v). This state of affairs is unacceptable; our civil rights have no dependence on our religious opinions, and to stop someone holding office on that basis is an infringement of his "natural right". The civil magistrate should not be obliged "to intrude his powers into the field of opinion" since this "destroys all religious liberty" and would tend to result in the imposition on others of the civil magistrate's private opinions. The civil governor has no authority in the matter of religious opinions, a domain where his opinion is his own private one. This constitutional argument concerning the lack of qualifications of the civil magistrate to legislate on religious matters was made by Locke and Penn in the late seventeenth century.

Swanwick does not wish to return to the pre-enlightened times and he seems to accept the conceptual distinction between civil government and religion. He refers instead to "the mild spirit of an enlightened Christianity becoming more and more diffused" (*ibid.*: 7) and to the Christian revelation as "the purest and most luminous of all that have been given to men", a form of words that again suggests the possibility of other, non-Christian claims to revelation. He contrasts "true religion" to enthusiasm (*ibid.*: 8), to the "debasing system of materialism" (*ibid.*), and also to the "despotic rage" typical of "Mahometan princes" (*ibid.*: 14), to "the continual massacres of Greek and Roman kings and chiefs" and infidels such as Genghis Khan, and to Catholic superstition (*ibid.*: 17). In contrast, Christianity, by which he means mild rational Christianity, that is to say, liberal Protestant Christianity, has given us "certain civil or political rights" (*ibid.*: 14). In countries where the Christian revelation is unknown, "there are no comparable civil blessings": "Despotic governments have generally taken the firmest root among nations that were blinded by mahometan or pagan darkness, where the throne of violence has been supported by ignorance and false religion" (*ibid.*: 18).[23]

The habit of interchanging 'religions' with 'superstitions' is evident here in Swanwick's writing at the high point of the American Enlightenment. A good example of this can be found in the fascinating writings of Samuel Purchas about a century and a half earlier ([1613] 1626). One point of transition from religion as Christian Truth to generic religions came from the multiplication of 'religions' reported and described by travellers and voyagers in their letters and journals. Purchas, who had admired the collections of travel writings collected and translated by Richard Hakluyt ([1599] 1809), retold many of these stories in his own words plus others that he himself collected and translated in *Purchas his Pilgrim Or Relations of the World and the Religions Observed in all Ages and places Discovered, from the Creation unto this Present. Contayning a Theologicall and Geographicall Historie of Asia, Africa, and America, with the Ilands adjacent. Declaring the ancient Religions before the Flood, the Heathenish, Jewish, and Saracenicall in all Ages Since, in those parts professed, with their severall opinions, Idols, Oracles, Temples, Priests, Fasts, Feasts, Sacrifices, and Rites Religious: Their beginnings, Proceedings, Alterations, Sects, Orders and Successions. With brief Descriptions of the Countries, Nations, States, Discoueries; Private and Publicke Customes, and the most remarkable Rarities of Nature, or Humane industrie, in the same.* The title is a good summary of the contents and notable for its reference to the religions of the world "observed in all Ages and

places". That Purchas can suggest that there is more than one religion suggests a stage in the process of the transformation towards a modern usage. The fourth edition of 1626 has a dedicatory epistle to Charles I, in which Purchas points out that the first edition of 1613 had been dedicated to Charles's father James I. Purchas recounts that King James had told him (Purchas) that he had read his book seven times and kept a copy on his bedside table. If this was true, then it brings home vividly the importance to the English and their rulers of the growth of foreign trade and commerce generally, and knowledge of other peoples in the world.[24]

The contents of the book indicate a well developed vocabulary of religion and religions, for example: "Asia: The First Booke. Of the first beginnings of the World and Religion: and of the Regions and Religions of Babylonia, Assyria, Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestina". Chapter IIII (Purchas [1613] 1626: 17) is explicitly a "History of Religions".

We seem to have here a modern discourse on world religions as early as 1613. However, it is clear that the idea of religion is thoroughly Christian and monotheistic, and only applied to the superstitions of the pagans by analogy, rather in the modern style of 'pseudo-religions' or 'quasi-religions' (see Smith 1994 and the discussion in Fitzgerald 2000: 98ff.). False religions, or superstitions, are those barbaric or pagan practices, and accounts of the meaning of life and death and right and wrong, that are *fallen* versions of true religion. The whole structure of the book is based on the Christian Bible, and the assumption of an overriding and encompassing Fall and Redemption narrative. The whole of history is encompassed by this divine narrative. The first five or six chapters might be called the theory and method section, and they make it clear that Biblical Christianity frames the whole collection of narratives. The point is that the 'religions' in the plural are 'superstitions', and the two words oscillate throughout the text as alternatives. There is only one true religion, and this religion can explain, on the basis of the Bible, how these fallen versions of religion can be found in so many different forms all over the world. The religions of the world are represented as mistakes, misunderstandings and superstitions, resulting from lack of contact and a falling away from the true sources of revelation. The existence of these religion-like superstitions must be explained according to the revelation of true religion. This is a pilgrimage, and Purchas refers to himself as a pilgrim, reading thousands of journals and travel narratives, travelling around the world in his imagination, collecting and translating and reproducing a vast range of data about the cultures, customs and beliefs of the different regions of the world. It is virtually an attempt to theorize a history of the world on the basis of ethnography interpreted through deduction from Biblical narrative.[25] It provides us with a prime and early example of the combination of confessional and secular writing. The confessional aspects still largely encompass the secular, but point towards modern travel writing and anthropology.[26]

Returning to the late eighteenth century, Swanwick therefore represents a position between, on the one hand, the pre-Enlightenment commonweal in which the civil society is encompassed by, and embedded in, religion; and the full constitutional construction of secular political civil society in which 'religion' is one item of natural rights, alongside all the others.[27] It is a matter of degree. For Swanwick a minimal reference to Christian

themes such as Christ, salvation and a future life of rewards and punishments should be required for officeholders for the cohesiveness of the civil society. Yet four years later in his own Pennsylvania, much of the Christian nuance was undermined by excluding from that 1790 Constitution the necessity of belief in the divine inspiration of the Bible, which further severed the increasingly abstract concept of religion and religions from its semantic moorings in encompassing Christian Truth, and gave it a universal, ahistorical appearance useful for colonial classification purposes.

The 1838 Pennsylvania Constitution was a ratification of the 1790 Constitution with amendments. When one looks at the index and summary of the Articles, bearing in mind the structural similarity of one Constitution with another, one can see clearly how much the modern domain of politics has been constructed through constitutionalism. American constitutionalism should perhaps be considered the arena where the modern conception of the political, non-religious state, the secular location of rational humanity, was formed in its earliest and most explicit manifestations. The Constitution itself is a sacred document. 'Religion' is put in a special place as though to quarantine it. It is reduced to Sections 3 and 4 of Article IX in the Declaration of Rights:

> 3. That all men have a natural and indefeasible right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences; that no man can of right be compelled to attend, erect, or support any place of worship, or to maintain any ministry against his consent; that no human authority can, in any case whatever, control or interfere with the rights of conscience; and that no preference shall ever be given, by law, to any religious establishments or modes of worship.
> 4. That no person, who acknowledges the being of God and a future state of rewards and punishments shall, on account of his religious sentiments, be disqualified to hold any office or place of trust or profit under this Commonwealth.
>
> (Hough 1972: II, 236–7)

"The commonwealth" has been turned upside down, and it is now the equivalent of the 'civil governor' or the political society, as Locke and Penn had both argued it should be. Religion does not encompass the order of hierarchy, but has become a privatized essence freely available to any individual (even though all language is about men [and savages] and not about women). Toleration means separation of church and state, the privatization of religion, and the investment of sacrality in rights. Religion is not the sacred; *the right to practice a religion freely* is sacred. The Constitution lays out the basis of the political society and its sacred principles and its "inherent and indefeasible rights": "all men are born equally free and independent"; "all power is inherent in the people"; "inviolate rights" such as life, liberty, property, reputation, free and equal elections, trial by jury, freedom of the press, of thought, of expression, due course of law, freedom from unreasonable interference by the state, the right to sue the commonwealth (unthinkable under the older meaning), and others. This is the construction, the articulation, of the modern world; but its contrived and invented aspects are disguised by the concept of natural reason.

In his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, published in London in 1787, Thomas Jefferson, who referred to "the sacred fire of freedom and self-government" (Bailyn 2002: 25) gives a history of the colony since the first attempt of Sir Walter Raleigh to found a colony in Virginia under Queen Elizabeth (*ibid.*: 180ff.). The first settlers were "of the English church". They possessed the powers of making, administering and executing the laws. They were intolerant of all other sects and churches, and Quakers were banned outright. Baptism according to Anglican rites was compulsory. The Anglicans were in complete control for about a century. However, "Other opinions began then to creep in, and the great care of the government to support their own church, having begotten an equal degree of indolency in its clergy, two thirds of the people had become dissenters at the commencement of the present revolution" (*ibid.*: 262). Jefferson defends the present constitution, based on enlightened principles of natural reason and rights. He refers to the previous Anglican "religious slavery" (*ibid.*: 264) and compares it to the present establishment of civil freedom. Many of the arguments he makes are strikingly similar to those of Locke and Penn a hundred years earlier. The "rights of conscience" are not answerable to the civil authorities, but only to God: "The legitimate powers of government extend to such acts only as are injurious to others. But it does me no injury for my neighbour to say there are twenty gods or no god. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg" (*ibid.*: 265).

Elsewhere his language sounds Lockean too (*ibid.*: 141). This fundamental distinction between civil government and religion, which Locke, Penn and others had argued, are clearly established in the thinking of Jefferson. Simultaneously, he imagines many religions in the world; there are "probably a thousand different systems of religion" of which "ours is but one of that thousand" (*ibid.*: 267). The only way that anyone can decide which is the true religion is through reason and free enquiry (*ibid.*). Only one of these can be right, but deciding which one is not in the competence of the civil administrator, but must be left to the free rational intelligence of the individual to decide through open and free debate. Choosing one's religion can only be a matter of personal choice, and cannot be forced.

Jefferson, like Locke and Penn one hundred years earlier, is attacking the idea that any one form of Christianity or any religion at all can determine the nature of the civil government. We can see a clearly privatized concept of religion, its truth assessed according to rational principles, separated from the civil government whose job is to maintain social order. It has nothing to do with religion. Jefferson also has a concept of religions that are multiple, an idea that derives from the multiplicity of different Christian churches and sects, but extending the association of 'religion' to belief in gods and the superstitions of Catholics and other peoples.

On the other hand, the indigenous Americans, Jefferson's own colonial others, who are referred to as "Indians", "Aborigines" and "Savages", do not have either civil government or religion (*ibid.*: 150). They have "never submitted themselves to any laws, any coercive power, any shadow of government". Yet they avoid anarchy because "Their only controls are their manners" (*ibid.*), and also that innate sense of right and wrong that "in every man makes a part of his nature" (*ibid.*: 151).

THE ESSENTIALIZATION OF 'RELIGION' AND 'POLITICS'
AS A COLONIAL PIZZA EFFECT?

The concept of private religion as essentially distinct from public politics may have origi-nated in seventeenth-century England, at least in so far as it is represented in the English language,[28] but, given that dissent from the dominance of the established church was one of the prime motives for the establishment of colonies, then such a separation was simultaneously in the minds of many settlers. In England, the increasing demand for the separation of church and state was not the ideology of a new class in the Marxist sense, since 'the middling orders' who supported many of the non-conformist churches were not themselves conscious of being a class and, as O'Gorman points out, English society was still dominated by the idea of degree and the value of deference, represented by "minor variations of speech, dress, and manners which are often too subtle and too varied to be conveyed in documentary evidence" (1997: 115). Nevertheless, dissenters such as the Quakers were explicitly in favour of egalitarianism in dress and manners, objected to hat etiquette and honorific language, and seem typical of the relationship between the religion of the heart, severe criticism of ritualism and hierarchy, trade, a more democratic concept of private property and an emerging colonial world order.

However, the development of this kind of thinking in England could be exaggerated, and there is good reason to believe that it was the American dissenters who first most effectively institutionalized this idea of modern politics as non-religious, by making it central to their constitutions. For England during the century of Enlightenment was still to a large extent a "confessional state", and the extent to which it had become a politi-cal state in the modern sense of 'non-religious' or separated from religion is arguable. O'Gorman weighs up both sides of the equation. On the one hand it could be said that "England in the early eighteenth century was a confessional state, a state in which one official confession of faith, Anglicanism, was established by statute and enforced through the law – a faith, moreover, in theory accepted and practiced by the vast majority of the population" (1997: 163).

The Test and Corporation Acts and the Licensing Act had maintained the church's dominance and established status. O'Gorman says that, for J. C. D. Clark, who takes a strongly revisionist stand, "the structural foundations of eighteenth century society were the monarchy and the aristocracy as well as the Church". The period was one of hierarchy, patriarchalism and faith, rather than liberalism, individualism and secular-ism. It should be thought of more as an age of monarchy and aristocracy, rather than of reform, protest and modernization (*ibid.*: 171). This "revisionist" picture of eight-eenth-century England suggests that "the church was the dominant social force in the eighteenth century ... Anglicanism was much more than a 'political theology'; it was a pervasive social cement binding all orders of society" (*ibid.*: 165). O'Gorman, quoting J. C. D. Clark with reservations, writes: "The ideology of the confessional state thus legitimised social hierarchy, underpinned social relationships and inculcated humility, submission and obedience" (*ibid.*).

On the other hand, however, the church may have appeared stronger than it really was. Various bits of legislation such as the Toleration Act, and the repeal by the Whigs of the Occasional Conformity Act of and the Schism Act had undermined the church's all-embracing position and introduced an element of voluntarism, religious pluralism, and apathy (*ibid.*: 169). Commercial values had widely penetrated British society by the middle of the eighteenth century, intersecting with values from other sources, such as law and politics. A corporate theology of a graded hierarchy in which duties are assigned by birth gave way for many people to individual conscience and personal responsibility. (*ibid.*: 170). And though parliament was still dominated by the figure of the king, the two-party system of Whigs and Tories, combined with state finance and the increase in trade and commerce, would surely have corresponded better to the separation and privatization of religion than to the continued dominance of the state-church (*ibid.*: 172–3).

This ambiguous picture points to a slower rate of transition compared with the American states. It suggests that the encompassing religion was still a kind of reality, but that the separation of religion and politics was an idea that had not achieved hegemony but was common currency. The position of William Warburton, an Anglican bishop who was in favour of the monopoly of the church, gives us some insight into this halfway house. In his work *The Alliance between Church and State* ([1748] 1766), we find the idea of their separation but interdependence implied by the title. It is interesting to find the expression "modern Politics" on the first page. The expression "their politic alliance", the older adjectival usage, can be found in the preface dedicated to Warburton's patron, the Earl of Chesterfield. But here "modern politics" sounds like the reified domain of contemporary rhetoric. Furthermore, Warburton distinguishes between the essence of church and state in modified Lockean terms. "The only subjects worth a wise Man's serious notice, are RELIGION and GOVERNMENT" (*ibid.*: iii), he tells Chesterfield, and goes on to distinguish them: "the object of Religion being Truth ... requires Liberty; and the object of Government, Peace ... demands submission ...".

However, Warburton argues that this separation requires an alliance between the two spheres such that the Church of England and the nation state are essentially distinct yet complementary, and provide a combination necessary for stability: "they seem naturally formed to counteract one another's operations" (*ibid.*: iv). Their "Natures" (*ibid.*: iv) and their "Agency" are different, but "there seems to be no more reason against their POLITIC ALLIANCE than we see there was against the *physical union* of the Soul and the Body" (*ibid.*: iv).

Here Warburton makes two pieces of metaphysical speculation mutually supportive by drawing an analogy between them, as has been noted in the cases of both Locke and Penn. He not only convinces us that religion and government (or church and state) are things that have essentially different yet complementary natures, but he also virtually takes for granted the by now well-established discourse on the existence of two other essentially different but complementary things, the soul and the body. Church and state are distinct but complementary in a way analogous to soul and body. There is a whole library of rhetorical contestation here, for how can a non-material entity such as the soul have a

physical relationship? This was a great problem for Locke, Descartes, Spinoza and Kant, and also to the Scottish common sense philosophers such as Thomas Reid, who were concerned about philosophical issues such as theory of perception and theory of knowledge. One only has to think of the different ways these supposed entities – a soulless body and a bodiless soul, brought into mutual relations in order to provide the other with what it lacks – have already been debated by Warburton's time by philosophers and theologians, and this library of contestation has been compressed into an assumption and slipped neatly into his own text as an encapsulated strategy to support another essentialization of imaginary entities: religion and government or politics. He is therefore embedding his argument about church and state within a further dualism that could not have existed in the same senses in the late medieval period, except in the minds of some very rare individuals, but not at the 'official' level of a bishop of a national religion.

The idea of secular (in the sense of non-religious) scientific knowledge of a material world that is objective and external to the observer presupposes some idea of the observing subject who can stand back from the world and make factually true propositions about it. This idea of the possibility of objectivity has been fundamental for Enlightenment concepts of the natural and social sciences. Not only does it turn the world into an object, or a system of objects, and us into master observers, it turns all other peoples and their visions of reality into objects subordinated to our master gaze and method.

Arguably as already suggested it was the North American colonies that brought these ideas about the essential difference between religion and politics into realization first and most emphatically, and that they were re-exported from North America not only to other colonial societies but also back to England. And we have the evidence of the chapters in this book that the separation of religion and politics has been exported from Western colonial powers such as Britain and America to different parts of the world as part of the logic of colonial control and global capitalism, as well as Enlightenment mastery.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have argued that in contemporary rhetoric on religion there are two general conceptions of religion that are in conflict. They both derive from Christianity, and project an internal ideological hostility between a holistic concept of Christendom, which I have called encompassing religion, and a privatized Protestant inward piety or faith that makes possible the idea of a secular (in the sense of non-religious) world. These opposed ideologies still oscillate in contemporary discourses.

One is of encompassing religion, where nothing properly exists outside religion since it represents Truth, which is all-embracing. In this model, 'politics' and 'economics' are embedded, and all 'facts' are subordinated to Christian redemptive values that give them meaning. This model of religion is hierarchical, and all things that exist have their proper

place and function within the teleological whole. Individual persons exist in so far as they find their proper subordinate place in this context of hierarchical relationships. That which opposes it is pagan superstition and belongs in Hell.

This idea of religion became, in colonial-era travel writing of the early kind represented by Samuel Purchas (that is to say, early seventeenth century), multiple (religions) and interchangeable with superstitions (superstitions are fallen religions). Other peoples or 'nations' came to be identified as having 'religions' rather by analogy to the way that the English nation had Christian Truth, a Protestant yet still hierarchical conception articulated by the idea of the commonweal. This idea of national religions is reflected in the way that twentieth-century structural–functional anthropologists have claimed that small-scale societies in Asia and Africa have holistic cultures. In Purchas, nations and religions are also close to what today we might call ethnic identities. I suggest, although cannot substantiate this here, that these ideas developed powerfully in the era of European empires, notably the British and French, with their contradictory ideologies of imperial hierarchy, cultural essentialism and commercial and religious individualism. This latter aspect of individualism feeds into the second main idea of religion, which emerges out of the former. Although still clearly operational, these discourses are under dissolution in a world increasingly dominated by American neo-colonialism and consumer capitalism.

The second concept of religion, which I would argue is hegemonic today, cuts across the first, or stands it on its head. The idea of religion as a private soteriological belief essentially separated from politics, or the idea of religious societies having essentially different purposes and characteristics from political societies, has become institutionalized in Western liberal democracies and exported through the processes of colonization to many societies where no such distinction was conceivable in the local language. This idea of religion was powerfully articulated, (in the English language at least) in the seventeenth century, and was developed and transformed into a conception of secular, rational, political 'man', especially through the American constitutional process, which produced the most powerful charter for representing this political essence. At the same time, and as an integral part of this discourse, a notion of the secular as the non-religious, the natural, the rational, was generated as the superior ground from which to observe and order the world. This idea of religions as privatized personal choices first made the idea of markets as aspects of nature possible, and then the religions became commodities themselves.

Through the processes of colonialism and world domination these parochial European representations have assumed the appearance of universals, different representations dominant at different periods of the imperial and colonial eras. Yet they are contradictory and can generate a whole range of ideological representations in different contexts, depending on the needs of the moment and who is deploying them. Today these English language discourses on religion are present, usually unanalysed, in the media and in public debates about nationalism, ethnic identity, minority culture and the relation between democracy and non-Western forms of world construction. My hypothesis is that the term 'religion' is sliding constantly between these different and even contradictory notions in

the contemporary rhetoric of academics, politicians, community leaders, corporate bosses and the media. To the extent that the English-language discourses have been appropriated into the rhetorics of other non-European languages, any number of further variations may have been generated. This instability explains why discourses that represent 'religion' and 'politics' as natural aspects of all human societies, are not only analytically dubious, but ideologically volatile.

NOTES

1. This chapter is based on English-language texts, mainly English and North American. The story needs to be told from the point of view of other languages and cultures. I believe that the importance of Scotland in this story about the separation of religion and politics and of church and state may be great, as indicated for example by the story of Jenny Geddes (Lothian 1995; thanks also to information received from sculptor Professor Merilyn Smith), but I have not had the space required to follow this up. I am grateful to colleagues for reading and commenting on earlier drafts of this chapter: John Drakakis, Steven Ingle, Neil Keeble, Jairo Lugo, Brian Murdoch and Colin Nicolson. It has been impossible for me to acknowledge all the invaluable comments I have received, but to the extent that I have been able to incorporate them into an already long chapter it has been improved considerably. I have also benefited from comments from participants in various seminar and lecture forums that are too numerous to list.

2. It seems significant that William Purchas ([1613] 1626) in his retelling of the proto-ethnography on indigenous Americans deriving from travel journals and other sources, could find their practices worthy of being called 'religion', although with the nuance of fallen religion or superstition, whereas one hundred and fifty years later Thomas Jefferson (1787) could find no sign of either religion or civil society among them.

3. See Fitzgerald (2007) for a discussion of the ubiquitous confusion between the religion–secular and sacred–profane dichotomies, and the need for their analytical separation.

4. Another example of this problem can be found in R. W. Swanson's *Church and Society in Medieval England* (1989). In the preface Swanson makes a point of apologizing for what he calls the anachronism of his title, pointing out that "the church was society" (*ibid.*: ix). Yet he has a whole chapter on "The Church and the Political Order" that subverts this point and creates methodological confusion (*ibid.*: ch. 3).

5. Both John Drakakis and Neil Keeble have pointed out (pers. comm.) that in Italian in the writing of Machievelli a distinction is already mooted, and this is reflected in late-sixteenth-century English drama, for example Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*, where the challenge of 'politics' and 'politicians' to 'religion' is represented.

6. As I go on to explain, the term 'secular' to indicate a materialist, atheistic, non-religious rationality was not generally used in this way until after 1850; in the late-seventeenth-century writings of Locke the non-religious magistracy conforms to natural reason, as does the non-political religion. This Enlightenment rendering of natural reason is only dependent on God, if at all, in the remotest deistic sense, and for many eighteenth-century thinkers is simply 'in the nature of things'. Religion has become imagined as 'belief' understood as propositional, but the belief is about the supernatural as distinct from the natural, which is the domain of scientific knowledge.

7. I have been greatly helped in my understanding, as far as it goes, of late medieval and early modern Europe by John Bossy (1982, 1985) and his critical approach to language and its historiographical context. However, Bossy does not in these works show much interest in the colonial context.

8. Although Chillingworth (1638) reveals how English Catholics saw it. For them, Christian Truth was mediated by the Catholic Church, and Protestants are heretics.

9. I have already mentioned the influence of Machiavelli and early signs of a distinction in late-

sixteenth-century English drama with the characterization of the scheming 'politician' who uses 'religion' cynically for 'political' ends. The Protestant trend towards intense inwardness, combined with the execution of Charles I (Charles VI of Scotland), the era of republicanism, and the failure of godly rule all contributed to its articulation. Neil Keeble points out (pers. comm.) that Milton's *Paradise Lost* contributed to this trend to separate the inner kingdom from the outer fallen world.

10. I am aware that the claim by a historian such as Louis Hartz (1955) that Locke provided the basis of American revolutionary thought has been challenged by such writers as Bernard Bailyn (1967), John Dunn (1969) and J. G. A. Pocock (1975), all of whom argue for a greater influence from the Machiavelli–Harringtonian tradition of republicanism. Also, Garry Wills (1979) has argued for the importance of the Scottish Enlightenment thinkers. On the other hand, Dworetz (1990) has argued strongly for Locke's primary influence. My focus must be limited to the separation of religion and politics and the corresponding construction of an essentially non-religious domain of politics as central to the definition of human rationality; and an essentialized and privatized domain of 'religion' licensed by the state.

11. It is true that one can find various references to "becoming religious", to "religious fraternity" and to "religious duties" in John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* ([1678, 1684] 1984: 60; 84/5), usages that are not referring to monastic orders, suggesting that the modern usage was earlier and more prolific among radical Protestant Christians than among the members of the elite Anglican hierarchy. This was in the context of a world represented as a pilgrimage, in which a major trope is the distinction between true inner religion as personal faith and outer show of apparent religion, the following of mere "ordinances". However, while the world is represented in Bunyan as profane in the sense of fallen there is little sense of the modern idea of a neutral system of matter with no moral implications. And there is no usage in *The Pilgrim's Progress* of such words as 'civil' or 'political', the kinds of words that Locke was using at around the same time or soon after to refer to a non-religious state or politics. See Fitzgerald (2007) on the confusion between the 'secular' and the 'profane', and the 'sacred' and the 'religious'.

12. It seems important to note that 'religion' and 'the sacred' are not coterminous in this discourse.

13. Neil Keeble has pointed out to me (pers. comm.) that the idea of toleration first appears in early-seventeenth-century radicals and sectaries such as Barrowists, Brownists and Baptists.

14. "One of the leading ideas of William Penn in his colonizing work was toleration, and the record of Pennsylvania in this was better than that of any other American colony" (Clarke 1955: 344).

15. And later Warburton; see the discussion below. The modern dichotomy between the self and the external world, between observer and observed, is surely in the process of emergence.

16. Burtt (1932) directly connects Newton and his concept of an external, material world made of indivisible particles contained in infinite time and space with Cartesian dualism. Al Azm (1972) argues that the theses in Kant's antinomies in the *Critique of Pure Reason* substantively represent the Newtonian view of a material reality 'external' to a knowing subject, particularly as expounded by the Newtonian Clarke in his correspondence with Leibniz. The antitheses significantly correspond with Leibniz's critique of the Newtonian view. I have argued that the Cartesian dualism inherited by Newton and embedded in much modern thought (despite the implications of quantum mechanics and relativity theory) became internalized in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Enlightenment as natural rationality and common sense (see Fitzgerald 1983: 121–42).

17. In his important book *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson has argued that the origins of nationalism was in the New World (1991: xiii). There seem to be many significant parallels between the invention of 'nations' and the invention of 'religions', including the colonial context, but I do not have the space to pursue this here.

18. See Penn (1680: 4) and Cross (1958: 1365).

19. O'Gorman emphatically (and I would think rightly) denies the existence of modern class consciousness in eighteenth-century England, and instead asserts an "integrated set of hierarchies, ascending and descending in minute gradations" (1997: 115). This is one of the reasons why in my view we have to look to the dissenting, more egalitarian American colonies for the earliest and most unambiguous institutionalization and constitutionalization of the separation of religion and politics.

20. This language was used to address the Stuarts, William and Mary, and the Hanovers through the eighteenth century. The contemporary monarch Queen Elizabeth II is still head of state and head of

the church.

21. See also, for example, Thomas Cromwell's *First Injunctions* of 1536 (Williams 1967: 805–8) and McCoy (2002).

22. The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives prudent, judicious, expedient, shrewd, skilfully contrived, cunning and scheming.

23. One can perhaps see here the transition from the older opposition between religion (Christian Truth) and superstition (the fallen religion of 'the other') to the more modern dichotomy between European/Western rationality and the irrational native of the colonies. The irony is that it is a colonial native (although a white one) who is thinking in this way. It exemplifies the obvious point that white Americans were not colonized at all in the same sense in which indigenous Americans were colonized.

24. Purchas's book is very much about maps, compasses, designs of ships, speeds and lengths of voyages and geography, as well as what we now tend to call 'cultures'. The transition in concepts of space and time is shown in his placing of the Garden of Eden within a Mercator Map of the region we call the Middle East. Benedict Anderson's discussion of 'The Map' (1991: 170ff.) is germane, as is much of his argument, for example "Apprehensions of Time" (*ibid.*: 22ff.). The imagining of 'religions' and 'nation states' overlaps.

25. Stack has indicated a source of secular writing within the church's need to take a superior stance in the objectifying need to describe and classify indigenous American practices. It may be also that travel writing in the colonial context had a similar effect, producing a descriptive prose style that offered a higher place from which to describe and classify the customs of the natives. There is not enough space to do justice to Purchas's interesting book, which is a rich source of early ethnography.

26. The reports in Purchas of the indigenous people of America are to be found in *The Eighth Booke: Of New France, Virginia, Florida, New Spaine, with other Regions of America Mexicana; and of their Religions.* He records that there is one Virginian called "Tomocomo" who is now in London (Purchas [1613] 1626: 843). Purchas claims that "no people have there been found so savage which have not their Priests, Gods and Religion" (*ibid.*: 840). In contrast, in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787: 150), Thomas Jefferson seems not to be able to find either religion or politics among the indigenous people

27. The centrality of politics as the explicit arena of action and reality, in contrast to the quarantining of religion, is indicated by George Washington's words when he was submitting the draft Constitution: "the Constitution...is the result of a spirit of amity, and of that mutual deference and concession which the peculiarity of our political situation rendered indispensable" (Hough 1872: 22). The Constitution only mentions 'religion' in Article I of the Amendments, where it merely says that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or the press; or the right of the people to peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances" (*ibid.*: 38). The historian Bailyn gives an idea of the way that 'politics' has been essentialized and prioritized when he says that, for John Adams, the "defence of bicameralism" was the central issue, and "involved nothing less than the nature of political man" (2002: 13).

28. The importance of Scotland in this process deserves more knowledge and attention than I have been able to give it here. The role of the Stuart kings, as kings both of Scotland and England, and the attempts of James VI in the early seventeenth century to impose on the Scottish Presbyterian church the episcopacy of England, may have raised the issue of church and state relations in a different but significant context that I cannot explore here.

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