



EDITED BY

PETER B.
CLARKE

≡ The Oxford Handbook of
**THE SOCIOLOGY
OF RELIGION**

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Works like this take a considerable length of time to create, and family and friends, however uninterested they may be in the subject, tend to become sounding boards. In this case this happened to the extent that they began to ask not, 'How are you?', but 'How's the Handbook going?' That gives some idea of how much they were obliged to share in its creation, and I thank them all for their forbearance, kindness, and support.

There are fifty-six contributions to this Handbook and every single contributor co-operated in a friendly and helpful way, and I sincerely wish to extend my thanks to each and every one of them, and from all of them I learnt much.

The Handbook is not free of errors, but what mistakes there are, are my responsibility and mine alone.

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INTRODUCTION

TOWARDS A MORE ORGANIC UNDERSTANDING OF RELIGION WITHIN A GLOBAL FRAMEWORK

PETER B. CLARKE

IN the present age, engaging effectively in identifying, articulating, and elucidating the dynamics of religion involves the development of a less institutional and more organic concept of religion, and the use of a more global framework. This is the main challenge for contemporary sociology of religion, the effect of which will be to transform the approach to the study of religion from a discipline largely informed by Western notions of religion derived from the study of Christianity, and Western interests, into one driven by a more rounded cross-culturally relevant understanding of the phenomenon.

It is of pressing concern that the sociology of religion embraces a wider range of issues, including cognitive science's understanding of religious development, the changing character of secularization, the emergence of new forms of religious transmission and of religious pluralism and diversity and their impact on social harmony—not necessarily by any means a zero-sum situation—and on the formulation and public expression of truth claims. Increasingly relevant to an understanding of the dynamics of religion in society is research on the contest between governments and radicals to control religion, and the strategies put in place by the

former to ensure that disaffected second and later generations of immigrants do not succumb to what are described as the extreme ideas and philosophies of the latter. Such political management and shaping of religion rely heavily on various 'voluntary' initiatives and programmes for the purpose of constructing particular forms of moderate religion whose potential can then be harnessed to generate social capital and undermine the control of religion by militant extremism.

Relatively recently, sociology of religion has turned its attention, with considerable benefit to the subdiscipline, to new areas of research, to which an organic understanding of religion is best suited, such as the phenomenon of unchurched spirituality, and to the new religious vitality which is widespread and which would appear to owe much of its strength to both local and global trends, including economic migration and the revolution in communications evidenced in the explosion in the use of cyberspace, an innovation that has contributed as much as any other technological innovation to the democratization and the de-objectification of religious knowledge and its transmission.

Among research topics equally relevant and important to a sociology of religion for this generation, but which have on the whole been neglected, are those of religion and ecology, religion and science, and the subject of irreligion. The last mentioned if taken country by country may appear highly marginal, but when looked at globally is in fact a substantial topic. In the case of all of these, as well as others mentioned above, the use of a global perspective and framework of analysis will serve research best, although the social roots or causes will never be exclusively global.

Many of these issues are addressed with expertise in the Handbook. So here I will confine myself to a few observations on some of the questions raised for the sociology of religion by such developments as the rise of the new religious vitality evident in contemporary society, the new forms of religious pluralism and diversity, and the political management of religion, and will end this section of the Introduction with a brief definition of what is meant here by the concept of organic religion. I suggest that this concept be used to overcome some of the serious limitations of the institutionalized understanding of religion and in particular its tendency to create an impression of religion as fixed and static, doctrinally focused, and of processes such as syncretism as aberrations. I also suggest that taking a more organic view of religion has implications for methodology in the sociology of religion, necessitating, as I believe it does, a greater use of ethnography and qualitative methods generally.

THE NEW RELIGIOUS VITALITY

A generation ago, mainstream sociology of religion concerned itself almost exclusively with Western society, leaving the rest of the world to anthropology, and

within that framework with Christianity. The dominant paradigm of the sociology of religion was religion's loss of significance at the institutional level and at the level of consciousness. The discourse in broad terms centred on the historical and sociological processes of differentiation whereby religion, once the dominant and overarching societal institution, was decoupled from other spheres of public life. A collective amnesia regarding religious history, beliefs, and practices followed. Now would seem to be the moment to refocus and place the emphasis on religious vitality and processes of 're-coupling', 'de-differentiation' and 'de-secularization'.

This change in focus should not, however, mean an end to research and debate on such standard topics as secularization and sectarianism, for these have by no means been exhausted. As Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* (2007) shows, new dimensions of secularization remain to be explored, and we have hardly begun to understand sectarianism outside the Christian context. Studies of this kind of well-established topics will doubtless breathe new life into the debate on these and other standard questions, as a number of the contributions to this Handbook show, including those that discuss issues such as the relationships between religion and evolutionary biology, religion and cognitive science, religious diversity, religious pluralism, the orientation of religions toward the world with special reference to modernization and the environment, religion and culture, religion and delinquency, and irreligion, among others.

It is not the point, therefore, of this Introduction to suggest that the past of sociology of religion has no future and that it be abandoned in favour of a totally new agenda; nor does it seek to discourage the further study of the classical sociological literature on religion. The subdiscipline can only benefit from this being better known and more widely read.

While sociological interest in the issue of religious vitality began some time ago (see Stark and Bainbridge 1985; Martin 1990; Berger *et al.* 1999), it has increased markedly since 9/11, when religion in its extreme forms came to be seen as a major social problem and in its 'moderate' forms as particularly useful for generating social capital, promoting pro-social behaviour, and protecting the most materially and socially vulnerable against crime.

The renewed religious vitality that we are at present witnessing is a worldwide phenomenon, the reasons for which vary from place to place, as do the forms it takes. In Western Europe it is sometimes misleadingly seen as resulting from the arrival of unprecedented numbers of believing and practising economic migrants from Asia, Africa, and parts of Eastern Europe such as Poland and Lithuania. It cannot, however, be attributed solely to these developments, any more than the growth and dynamism of new forms of evangelical Protestantism in Latin America, the resurgence of Islam across the Middle East and South and Southeast Asia, and the rise in China, Japan, and elsewhere in Asia of countless New Religious Movements (NRMs), some of them with millions of followers (Clarke 2006), can be attributed solely and directly to the forces of modernization and Westernization. In every

incidence of religious vitality, both local and global social, economic, religious, and political forces are at work. The migration westwards of Muslims or Hindus or Buddhists from the Middle East and Asia has undoubtedly contributed to the vitality of religion in Western Europe, and in some cases has acted as a catalyst in this regard, giving rise to a Christianity that is more self-aware and self-assertive. But it has also to be kept in mind that there has been much lapsing and/or backsliding among immigrants, including among Muslim youth, and this has had repercussions on *daw'a*, or mission, and on the quality of education provided by the madrasahs (Muslim schools), which in many parts of the world have become stricter about such matters as the effective teaching of Islamic knowledge. Backsliding is usually attributed to Western influence, and it has become the first priority of large, well-organized Islamic missionary movements such as Tablighi Jama'at to reconvert those who lapse.

The religious dynamism and vitality and the ever increasing interest in spirituality, wherever they are found, need to be observed from within an internal-external, or a local and a global, framework. The expansion of Evangelical Christianity in Latin America, as Martin (1990) points out, can be best understood if seen from this perspective. It makes little sense to attribute it to CIA sponsorship of North American evangelists whom it is paying to brainwash the peoples of Latin America by spreading pacific forms of pro-American propaganda. The popular association of Catholicism with many of the political and economic ills of the continent has been crucial to the success of Evangelicalism. Likewise in the Muslim world, the Ikhwan or Muslim Brothers movement founded in 1929 by Hassan al Banna (1906–48)—perhaps the most influential of all the Islamist movements of modern times—cannot be fully understood, as Gibb (1978) and Mitchell (1969) point out, if seen purely as a response to Western influence in the Muslim world. The Brotherhood was concerned as much as anything else with rescuing Islam from local forms of corruption. The renewed religious vitality, then, whether we are discussing two of its main centres, Latin America and the Muslim world, clearly has its origins in both local and global conditions.

At this juncture I would like to describe briefly what is meant here by religious vitality. I want to stress that it is not to be understood primarily in terms of numerical growth, but concerns rather the dynamism, or 'force', and the 'scope' of religion in the contemporary world.

RELIGIOUS VITALITY UNPACKED

Although he saw them as related, as they clearly are, the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1968: 111–12) made a useful distinction between the 'force' and the

‘scope’ of religion. His idea of force was not unlike Durkheim’s (1915: 209) and referred to the degree of determination with which believers hold and are held by their faith. By scope he meant the range of social contexts within which religious views are considered as being either more or less relevant. Both of these aspects of religion have become more pronounced in recent times—as, it is worth noting, political ideologies have come to differ more in form than in substance. It could be said that religions too, at the lay level and the level of practice, are becoming increasingly like each other, and hence the concern of official religion to define more clearly the boundaries.

The increases in force and scope of religious belief have aroused considerable concern among humanists and even among devout and practising politicians, some of them Muslim, others Christian, and others Hindu. Among the Christian politicians who have expressed concern in this regard is the former United States President Jimmy Carter, who is persuaded that religion is striving to acquire too great an influence over the public realm, to the disadvantage of both the public and the religious spheres. By contrast, some secularization theorists continue to be persuaded that religion’s influence over the public sphere has decreased, is decreasing, and will continue to decrease, for they argue that an ever more diverse and pluralist world that increasingly relativizes religious truth claims makes it virtually impossible for religion to regain a firm hold over the public arena. The present growth in individual religiosity and spirituality, it is claimed, affords proof of this.

It might be argued that secularization theory, on account of its institutional focus and its static concept of the phenomenon, has lost sight of religion’s organic qualities, its potential dynamism, its capacity to reinvent itself and to combine with many other forms of life while retaining its own distinctiveness and conserving its own identity. Perhaps it has also underestimated religion’s intellectual role, considering it to have been replaced by scientific explanation. However, for so many in the West as elsewhere, religious explanations of such persistent and intractable problems as the problem of evil and suffering remain as attractive as other, secular kinds of explanation. Moreover, religion’s capacity to engender hope that the world can be transformed through such messianic beliefs as belief in the Second Advent of Jesus or in the case of Muslims in the coming of the Mahdi (God-guided one) who will, it is thought, ensure the triumph of Islam and restore equality and justice to the earth, or in the appearance every 100 years of the *mujaddid* or renewer, whose role is similar to that of the Mahdi, would appear to be undiminished. Beliefs of this kind continue to be strongly held almost everywhere in the modern world, even in places where one would least expect to find them, including in the world of Japanese Buddhism, particularly in its more recent expressions such as Soka Gakkai, in neo-Hindu movements such as the Brahma Kumaris (daughters of Brahma) movement, in the Korean Won Buddhist movement, and in such Chinese movements as Falun Gong (Chang 2004) and the Chinese Christian-derived Eastern Lightning and/or Church of Almighty God.

There is hardly a single example of religious innovation in the contemporary world in which these beliefs have not figured prominently. Yet only very few sociological treatises have examined their potential to generate powerful religious commitment and ideological fervour. Until recently, it was common for sociologists of religion to view all such religious enthusiasm, commitment, and fervour as features of traditional societies as Weber defined them. And even where religion fails to explain, and faith tends to waver, many adopt Pascal's position that it would be wiser to act as if God does exist rather than if she or he doesn't.

The social impact of the new religious vitality takes many forms. In modern, late modern, and/or postmodern society, it gives rise to the previously mentioned contest over public space in which religions are now engaged with secular society. The contest is highlighted by the modes of social insertion that certain religions tend to adopt as they become established in new territories. Today most religion is global, and the ending of religious regionalism has come rapidly. When I began researching Islam in Western Europe in the early 1970s, that religion was no more than an exotic appendage to the rest of Western European religious culture, whereas now it makes sociological sense to speak of European Islam as it does of European and, in the United States, American Buddhism (Queen 2000; Cadge 2005). These new religious formations give rise to new forms of what was referred to above as social insertion as they begin to challenge publicly mainstream society's arrangements in relation to religion and society, religion and law, health, education, politics, employment legislation, and worship.

In contemporary Western society and in predominantly Muslim countries such as Turkey, the contest over public space between the secular and the religious, rather than being resolved, is intensifying and engages both those who regard religion as a private matter and those who are so gripped by their religious beliefs—not necessarily in an intellectual sense—that they refuse to accept limitations on their application, cases in point being certain forms of Islamism that pursue the establishment of an Islamic state which, they argue, is a Muslim imperative. The obligation to establish an Islamic state is not only not accepted by all Islamists, but is one that, it has been argued by specialists in both Islamic and Western jurisprudence, is incompatible not only with democracy but also with theocracy (El Fadl 2004).

That religion has come to be seen once again as an influential force in contemporary society presents it with opportunities to engage more actively in the debate in the public domain on issues of education, delinquency, ethics and morality, politics, the environment, race, immigration, and health. This is a noticeable change, in that until relatively recently the voice of religion, while it was on occasion listened to with respect, is now considered to be a necessary element in the decision-making process. In this sense there is already under way an informal process of desecularization in which the relationship between the sacred and the secular is undergoing realignment and can no longer be described as one of separation. Recent discussions in France over the status of degrees offered by

Catholic universities and other tertiary-level religious institutions is but one example of this realignment.

A sociology of religion agenda for the present generation might usefully be constructed around the issues touched on above within the framework of a discourse on religious vitality worldwide, a vitality whose force and scope in many parts of the world is on a scale equal to that of any religious revival in history. Moreover, where the degree and extent of religious innovation are concerned, the present age might well be described as an axial age. There can be little doubt that Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, and Christianity, to name but these four religions, have undergone in the past fifty to a hundred years or so changes as profound as any in their previous history, and are continuing to experience change on an unprecedented scale. Even the misleadingly labelled Traditional religions such as those of Africa, Oceania, the Americas, and Asia are radically changing, some of them changing even their very character and orientation as ethnically based, non-proselytizing religions, to universal religions with a salvific mission.

While the force and scope of religion have increased, as we have seen, no one religious orientation predominates with the exception of a few parts of the world; nor does religion or any one religion communicate an uncontested ideological message. For example, in North America and in the West generally, while there has been an explosive rise over the past fifty years of theologically, morally, and socially conservative religion, liberal religion has also been on the increase, as has involvement in unchurched spirituality (Stark *et al.* 2005; Heelas and Woodhead 2005). The new kind of religious pluralism everywhere in evidence has contributed to this diversity of religious opinion, particularly in the West. At the same time it has introduced new styles of being religious and new ways of believing and belonging, and has also enlarged and diversified the 'spiritual marketplace' (Roof 1993), raising for further discussion important questions that preoccupied classical sociology, including the question of the relationship between religion and social cohesion.

It could of course be argued that the religious vitality and spirituality driving the process of desecularization are transient phenomena, their transience resulting in large measure from their lack of adequate institutional structures. While further comments will be made on this issue below, this seems an appropriate place to make the point that solid structures can create as many dilemmas for the survival of religion as can their absence. This was seen in the decline of Anglicanism and the rise of Methodism in eighteenth-century England, when the Anglican Church's structures wedged it firmly in the rural areas, while Methodism's lack of structure gave it the flexibility necessary to evangelize the emerging industrial towns.

Religion, then, does not survive only when it is institutionalized. Although they have become highly complex structures of a kind, there is no church of Buddhism, or of Hinduism or Islam. Furthermore, given the profound transformation in communications now under way, it might well prove to be the case once again that solid structures impede growth, while movements with fragile structures that

are easily dismantled and that depend on networking may be better prepared to reorganize and meet new demands as types and styles of religion and spirituality change, for, as studies of New Religious Movements (NRMs) have shown, they do tend to change almost every decade, if not more often.

THE NEW RELIGIOUS PLURALISM AND SOCIAL HARMONY

The new types of religious pluralism and diversity which have emerged during the past fifty years have never before been encountered in the West or anywhere else in the form and on the scale which they have now assumed. While previously it was mostly branches of the same religion that provided pluralism and diversity, now it is different religions each of which contains within itself a variety of expressions. This is the new feature of religious pluralism and diversity that needs addressing in relation to social harmony and integration.

Religious diversity is not new to sociological enquiry. It was an important part of the original agenda of sociology, which sought to understand the challenges to social cohesion posed by differences, cultural and religious. Sociologists from the outset asked fundamental questions of a hermeneutical kind regarding the meaning of different ways of life and how these impacted on society. One weakness of the classical sociological approach to interpreting the meaning of different ways of life, including different ways of being religious, was its tendency to think of societies as singular entities or integrated units and its apparent blindness to the many different worlds that members of these societies might be inhabiting simultaneously.

Thus, while it must continue to meet the challenge of interpreting religious difference, contemporary sociology of religion must also consider, whatever the unit of analysis, integration as an empirical variable. Outside and within religions, beliefs, moral and theological, are contested, and boundaries porous, providing fertile soil for the revitalization of religion. As indicated previously, such pluralism and diversity fed mainly by economic migration do not and need not create a zero-sum situation where social harmony and integration are jeopardized, but may well prove to be a strength in this respect. What is further of great interest about this topic is how religious pluralism and diversity are handled in public places such as school and college assemblies, how the approach and understanding of those who teach religion in these and similar institutions, and of those who interpret and execute the law have been affected, and the contribution all this might make to social cohesion and the related sphere of human rights.

THE POLITICAL MANAGEMENT OF RELIGION

The question of the political management of religion touched upon above takes different forms depending on constitutional arrangements, the ideology of the governments in question, the nature of the legitimacy, if any, that governments enjoy, and the kind of political control they seek or have a mandate to exercise. These factors in turn determine governments' attitudes toward, and the measures they are prepared to adopt to uphold, order and stability.

As previously noted, in Europe governments are engaged more or less directly, depending on the context, in creating 'moderate' religion and in particular 'moderate' Islam, a highly controversial term. In China the search goes on for a neo-Confucianism that will assist in dealing with the moral and social issues raised by rapid economic expansion; in Thailand Buddhism continues to be used to 'civilize' the so-called Hill Tribe peoples such as the Akha; and in Japan scholars and government are assessing the contribution that the teaching of religion in schools might make to lowering suicide rates among the young and tackling behavioural problems such as bullying.

Virtually everywhere, governments are engaged in the management and even the production of religion and spirituality through education and other means, and in certain contexts one of the indirect and mostly unintended consequences of this has been to allow greater space to religion in the public sphere. However, government initiatives to construct moderate and socially purposeful religion do not always have the desired effect, and can contribute to the spread among opponents of the existing political regime of what is presented as 'authentic' politically uncontaminated religion. Both of these situations give strength to the idea of religion as an ideology, a perception that religious leaders are at pains to discount.

CONCLUSIONS

One of the main intellectual implications of what has been said about contemporary forms of religious vitality is that thinking about religion in the same way and with the same habits of mind as in the past is no longer sustainable. Using, as has been suggested above, a global framework and a more organic model of religion would allow the sociology of religion to develop a more refined and sophisticated understanding and approach to religion in the contemporary world, where the de-objectification of religious knowledge and the teaching and practice of spirituality through the media and cyberspace have reached an advanced stage, and where tool kits for constructing both religions and spiritualities are readily available and in

plentiful supply. An organic understanding of religion would transfer the emphasis from belief and institutions to religion as life, to the implications of what is lived out as religion, often in a personal sense, to an idea of religion as open to change and as having the power to change society. Indeed, it remains for millions the only instrument available with this power and their only language of political discourse. For this reason it is in certain political contexts tightly controlled.

While research on vertical, institutional forms and standard types of religion remains an important ingredient of the agenda of the sociology of religion—for, as was previously mentioned with reference to secularization, these issues have not been exhausted, nor could they ever be—at the same time it would seem to make sense to place greater emphasis on research into the more creative and horizontal forms of religion and spirituality. Researching this kind of religion, which receives much of its stimulus from the new kinds of pluralism and diversity that are taking shape across the world, necessitates the use of mixed methods and, in particular, a greater reliance on qualitative and ethnographic methods. Moreover, its success will depend on the development of both a more organic understanding of religion and a new perspective, a global perspective, both of which should enable research to appreciate more fully the complexities of the somewhat baffling contemporary phenomenon of the revival of religion, the explosion of religious vitality, and the future of the religious past, in modernizing, modern, and postmodern or late modern contexts.

THE HANDBOOK

The remit of this volume has been to provide scholars with the opportunity to reflect critically on issues long discussed by sociology of religion, to introduce others long relevant but little researched, and to consider the implications for the subdiscipline of the sociology of religion of others that have begun to emerge only relatively recently. It has also been kept in mind that the so-called established or standard issues that have preoccupied sociologists of religion have undergone change and are no longer precisely the same kinds of issues as they were when first discussed, as the chapters on secularization and related topics clearly indicate (see among other contributions the chapters by Dobbelaere and Turner).

The structure of the Handbook is somewhat arbitrary. In a number of instances chapters placed in one part could well fit in another, an example being Paden's (see Part I) creative and thought-provoking reappraisal of Durkheim in the light of research in evolutionary biology on *Homo sapiens*. This counters the tendency to take a static view of the classics of the sociology of religion such as Durkheim's *Elementary Forms* (1915) and Weber's *Protestant Ethic* thesis (1965), and often to

rule out any possibility of reconciling their theories on religious belief and practice with more modern and postmodern scientific world views.

While even an uncommonly lengthy volume such as this could not hope to address all of the issues with which sociologists of religion might wish to engage, it is worth mentioning that some topics apparently missing appear in a hidden, implicit form, and some that are treated directly are also taken up in contribution after contribution. The all too brief summary that follows of the content of the chapters cannot hope to do justice to their quality.

PART I: THEORY: CLASSICAL, MODERN, AND POSTMODERN

As the above discussion of the importance of an organic understanding and a global framework for the sociology of religion for the present age makes clear, classical theory remains a core element of the subdiscipline. The contributions to Part I offer critical reflection on several aspects of classical sociological theory, including its capacity to meet the needs of contemporary sociology of religion, on how the classical sources have been interpreted, and on the uses to which they have been put (see chapters by Gellner, Kippenberg, Turner, and Paden).

This critical revisiting of classical sociology suggests—and this point is strongly made by Kippenberg and Paden in particular—that, if understood as intended, it remains a useful hermeneutical resource. As Kippenberg, for example, points out, Weber's sociology of religion has been mostly read as a theory of secularization, when what Weber assumed was a different relationship between religion and modernization than this reading suggests. A strong emphasis in Weber, Kippenberg argues, was on how the process of disenchantment when establishing secular orders as autonomous spheres becomes a catalyst for new types of religiosity rather than the decline of religion. The themes of secularization/disenchantment and enchantment emerge again in Turner's chapter on Weber's sociology of comparative religion and his Kantian notion of secularization. In this chapter Turner argues that whatever the tradition—Christian, Islamic, or Confucian—the life and authority of the educated and elite carriers of religion are undergoing a serious challenge from the popular 'spiritual supermarkets' (see Roof 1999 and Chapter 34 below). This form of re-enchantment of the world, Turner suggests, would appear to contradict Weber's general secularization thesis.

Gellner's presentation also focuses on Weber, and mainly on the selective and variable use and/or lack of use of Max Weber in anthropological discourse on Buddhism and Hinduism. Gellner also draws some insightful parallels between

classical and contemporary social-scientific discourse and in particular between the ideas of Weber and those of Foucault.

Furseth suggests that Foucault's and Bourdieu's ideas are important to the study of religion, particularly for the insights they provide into the links between religion and power, a theme taken up by ter Borg, who develops a model of religious power based on the human need for ontological security. Furseth further suggests that there is much theoretical potential in Habermas's ideas on religion in the public sphere and on the rights of religious minorities, a topic of increasing relevance.

Hamilton's chapter critiques one of the most widely discussed and controversial of modern sociological theories of religion, rational choice theory (RCT), a theory also discussed by Hefner among others. Following Spickard (1998), Hamilton suggests that RCT is best seen not as a theory that explains individual actions and choices, but as a heuristic device for understanding religious provision and consumption.

That globalization makes it impossible for the sociology of religion to continue in the same vein as in the past is one of the main emphases of Hefner's wide-ranging contribution on religion and modernity worldwide. This chapter also contains a critique of rational choice theory, classical thinking on secularization, and key postmodern concepts concerning religion. Regardless of the answer to the thorny question of whether objectively there is a postmodern culture and philosophy, Wenzel's approach is to insist that subjectively such a phenomenon exists, and that its consequences for standard or traditional church-based religion entail further secularization (see also Dobbelaere's chapter), the emergence of new styles of expressive, personal styles of religion (see the contributions by Bailey, Hamberg, Heelas, and Granholm), and the growth of fundamentalism as a backlash (see Shupe's chapter).

The location of religion in modern and postmodern society is also a theme in Waggoner's wide-ranging chapter which examines the thinking of Durkheim, Marx, Foucault, and Derrida on culture and religion. This chapter also provides a historical and sociological critique of the notion of religion as a state of affairs, rather than a state of mind, a debate which in the social sciences goes back to Durkheim and Marx.

The study of religion in general, and not just the sociology of religion, often tends to be slower than other branches of the social sciences and humanities to take up and test new sociological thinking and theory, and this slowness is evident, Hawthorne points out, in relation to feminist and gender theory, which had already become a meta-critical tool in the social sciences and humanities before the study of religion sought to engage with it. As to the future, Hawthorne suggests a move away from universalist pretensions of the study of religion and a greater readiness on the part of gender-critical approaches to the study of religion to engage in more constructive dialogue with post-colonialist theory.

PART II: METHOD

Debate over sociological method (see Riis's chapter) has been one of a number of constant themes in sociology of religion, as has debate over the use of the term religion itself and its definition (see Droogers's chapter) and the related questions of the boundaries between religion and other areas of life—for example, morality (see Reeder's chapter), art (see Wuthnow's chapter), and science (see Bainbridge's chapter on science and religion). This debate has more recently been extended to cover the subject of the role of cognition in relation to the origins and development of religion (see Reich's chapter). These issues have been made ever more complex by the all-pervasive pluralist and global character of contemporary society and by the profound transformations already referred to, which religions are presently undergoing. Finding adequate methods for the sociological study of religion in this context is a difficult challenge, but one nevertheless taken up by Riis, who discusses the relative value of quantitative and qualitative approaches and offers compelling reasons for a methodological combination which makes use of both. This does not, however, mean closure where the debate on method is concerned, for as Riis warns, his proposal brings with it its own difficulties.

Jensen's chapter on the nature and role of conceptual models—which also involves an analysis of the nature and role of ideal types—makes a bold attempt in the direction of further refinement of methods widely used in the sociology of religion, while Droogers tackles the vexed question of defining religion by looking at a map of the landscape through which definers travel. He highlights the merits of a social-constructionist approach to the issue, maintaining that definitions cannot be isolated from the position of the definer in global society, or from the religion and science and the secularization debates (see Bainbridge's chapters and Dobbelaere's chapter).

Unlike anthropology of religion, sociology of religion has paid little attention to date to the contribution that cognitive science might make to our understanding of the origins and development of religion. Reich looks at the concept of religion as used in cognitive science, by which he means evolutionary neurobiological cognitive science, over against psychological studies of cognition and its ontogenic development. He critiques the work of Boyer (2001) among others in this area, whose idea of religion, he suggests, is too narrow. In its place Reich offers a model which he believes serves to describe the dynamics of religious and spiritual development, which, he maintains, can be triggered by events either outside or inside the multiple self. Reich divides this multiple self into a central, striving, social, and religious self, a concept and definition of self that will be of interest to scholars in the fields of contemporary spirituality (see the chapters by Hamberg and Heelas), Oriental religions and certain of the so-called Traditional religions.

PART III: RELIGION AND BOUNDARIES: MORALITY, SCIENCE, IRRELIGION, ART, AND EMBODIMENT (TRANCE)

As several of the contributors to Parts I and II make clear, there is no fixed, ongoing relationship between religion and other spheres of thinking and behaviour. This notwithstanding, religion and other spheres can become differentiated, and Reeder examines in this section of the Handbook the processes whereby morality has been decoupled from religion, not only in the world of academia but throughout society. In doing so he questions the hermeneutic value of the cosmicization thesis as applied to morality, principally because it obscures the attempt to relate norms and values to the perceived environment. The sense in which these two systems of ideas and behaviour can be understood as distinctive relates, he suggests, to their focus, morality being concerned primarily with interhuman issues, in contrast with religion, which fixes its attention on the fundamental causes of well-being and suffering.

The relationship between religion and science was a prominent theme in the formative period of sociology as a discipline, and Bainbridge examines recent attempts by scientists and religious scholars to delineate the potential for a relationship between the two in the vastly different context of modern society, and what kind of relationship might be a fitting one. While maintaining that there are strong grounds for thinking that the relationship will inevitably be hostile—regardless of whether the type of religion in question is fundamentalist or conservative or liberal—Bainbridge notes that recent research has identified a tendency among the young to believe that an accommodation between the two is a possibility.

The question of the relationship between religion and science emerges again in Bainbridge's contribution on the relationship between religion and irreligion and/or atheism, a much neglected theme, as was previously noted, in the sociology of religion. In this second contribution he argues that the study of atheism, although a minority viewpoint, is indispensable to the study of religion in that, among other things, it poses several complex and difficult questions for all theories of religion. Interestingly, Bainbridge suggests that the future of this minority position often considered unworthy of serious attention by scholars and dismissed as merely froth on the beer—the beer being belief in God—might lie in developments of cognitive science (see Reich's contribution).

As Wuthnow's presentation shows, perhaps surprisingly for many, religion and art, while they overlap at certain points, do not easily accommodate each other. The relationship spans a continuum, the oppositional end of which would include Islam, which prohibits all forms of representational art; types of Buddhism, including such modern movements as Korean Won Buddhism and the Thai Santi Asoke movement, both of which oppose the use of images of the Buddha; forms of Christian asceticism,

including elements of the Western monastic tradition and Puritanism; and at the more accommodating end one could place types of Hinduism such as devotional Hinduism, Shinto, and many African and African-derived religions such as Umbanda and Candomble. Wuthnow's main focus is the United States, where he sees overlap in several domains, including dance and rock music in the liturgy. However, he is also aware that this relationship is a much neglected theme in the sociology of religion, where there is little or no research available on what further bridging between the two spheres might be possible.

Sociology of religion has made little effort to understand the sociological dimensions of ecstatic forms of religion, including trance and/or possession, forms which are central to the religion and spirituality of peoples worldwide. Lewis, a social anthropologist, has long been concerned with the question of the social roots and meaning of trance and possession (see his book *Ecstatic Religion*, 1971), and in his contribution to this Handbook he explores, through an examination of altered states of consciousness most frequently externalized in behaviour through trance, the correspondence between religious and sexual experience which is as yet little studied.

PART IV: RELIGION AND THE STATE, THE NATION, THE LAW

Until recently it was widely taken for granted in the Western world that clearly defined boundaries existed between church and state. But, as we saw in the first part of this Introduction, such thinking has begun to be challenged as world views increasingly compete with each other and with humanist and secular philosophies in the same public arena and demand greater space and a voice on all matters of life, from health to education, to politics, economics, law, and religion. This is not an exclusively Western issue, but has also flared up in recent times in Indonesia, India, and Nigeria. In Nigeria the demand for a federal Shari'a court during the debate on the constitution for the Second Republic in the late 1970s almost tore the nation apart.

The relationship between religion and the state has never been easy or harmonious for long. Moreover, it has taken a variety of forms, as Hammond and Machacek show in their historical overview of the variable relations that have existed between religions and the state with reference to several countries, including China, Brazil, and Poland. These two contributors to the Handbook also note the difference often overlooked between the relationship of politics and religion and that of religion and the state. While there is increasing focus on the relations between religion and the state, few topics can be as relevant today as the ever tighter link between religion and nationalism. This is not so surprising in many parts of the world where the only effective language of political

discourse, as was previously mentioned, is religious language. Jaffrelot highlights the ambiguous nature of the relationship between religion and nationalism, illustrating his argument with reference primarily to India, but also examining other cases.

Although present in the classical sociological writings of Durkheim and Weber, the relationship between law and religion has largely been ignored in the sociology of religion. This topic is central to Richardson's contribution, which focuses on the impact that religion has had on legal systems, and how religious groups, especially dominant ones, can make use of such systems and even contribute to the process of their construction. He also considers how law and legal systems can be used to exert control over religions and religious practitioners, especially over minority faiths, an issue that scholars of New Religious Movements (NRMs) have frequently addressed (Richardson 2004).

It is sometimes assumed that once enshrined in a Constitution or Bill of Rights or United Nations Declaration, human rights will be protected. Pace, in a contribution that ranges widely across different religious traditions and branches within those traditions—Hindu, Islamic, and Christian—focuses in particular on the lack of fit that can exist between state law that guarantees human rights and religious law or custom, examples being freedom of belief and worship and the right to choose one's partner. The importance of this field of research increases with the emergence on the back of globalization of ever more religiously diverse societies and new forms of religious pluralism.

PART V: GLOBALIZATION, FUNDAMENTALISM, MIGRATION, AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

Every entry in this Handbook treats to a greater or lesser extent the question of the impact of globalization and its effects on contemporary and historic forms of religion and spirituality. There can be little doubt about the considerable impact that Oriental religions have had in recent times on Western forms of religion and spirituality and of that exercised by Western Christianity over a longer period on Oriental religions.

As Robertson's chapter points out, there has been a reaction from humanists among others to global developments in religion. Robertson argues that one of the core features of the contemporary global situation as it impacts on religion is the rapidly developing tension between the widespread and disputed quest for explicitly formulated national identities, on the one hand, and the problematic increase in the intra-societal valorization of religious faiths, on the other. The reasons for this

include the aggressive promotion of ostensibly atheistic and secularistic ideas by prominent intellectuals in the UK and the USA, and he cites as examples Dawkins 2006 and Hitchens 2007. This and related tensions have their roots, Robertson maintains, in global connectivity and increasing global awareness. Drawing on Durkheim's notion of society and religion as inextricably bound together, Robertson sees emerging in the United States a politicized civil religion with a strong theocratic flavour, a strange paradox given the post 9/11 war on Islamist extremists whose goal is the creation of an Islamic state.

Shupe's chapter relates extremist forms of religious orientation directly to globalization; indeed, Shupe sees it as the other side of the same coin. By contrast, Plüss's account of migration and the globalization of religion speaks of the multi-polar processes of belief and practice that result as migrants of the same religious tradition, on finding themselves in different contexts, use their beliefs to address important existential questions that arise from their new experiences. Religion, however, does not always act as a social glue binding migrants together. The extent of the religious involvement of immigrants should not be exaggerated, for there are those among them, in some cases a sizeable minority, who use their new status to 'liberate' themselves from religion, or at least the religion of their birth and upbringing. As was already noted, it is this turning away, viewed by religious authorities as lapsing or in Islamic terms as backsliding, that provides the catalyst for the growth and expansion worldwide of missionary movements such as Tablighi Jama'at. First-generation immigrants tend to live in quarantine in relation to the host society, and this stage is followed by a process of mixing, in which there tends to be a decline in religious practice, and following on this stage reform, a stage which is a marked feature of Muslim communities in the Western world.

In their chapter on religious diversity Bouma and Ling question the utility of the nation-state as a primary focus of analysis of contemporary forms of this phenomenon, which is mostly global. Notwithstanding its increasingly complex nature, Bouma and Ling maintain that religious diversity offers the researcher a useful conceptual tool for examining how changes in religion impact on social life, and the converse.

PART VI: RELIGIOUS COLLECTIVITIES AND THE STATUS AND ROLE OF THE RELIGIOUS PROFESSIONALS (THE CLERGY)

Dawson in his chapter attempts to refine the classification of religious collectivities into churches, denominations, sects, and cults; while convinced that it remains a

useful typology, he recognizes that its ethnocentric character largely limits its use to the Western context. However, rather than abandoning the ideas of Weber and Troeltsch on which this typology is based, Dawson suggests that researchers revisit their writings to gain a better-informed understanding of their ideas, which will, he believes, provide them with a universally applicable way of categorizing religious organizations, based essentially on the variable of mode of membership.

Zubaida examines the divide between the Sunni or mainstream Islam and the Shi'i branches of Islam. There are many types of Shi'ism, the largest being the Imami or Twelver Branch of Shi'ism, which is the religion of the majority of Muslims in Iran, southern Iraq, Azerbaijan, and Lebanon. Zubaida provides a historical overview of the divide between Sunnis and Shi'ites before raising the question of the renewed political thrust of the once politically quiescent Shi'ism in modern times, beginning with its construction as a radical ideology in Iran in 1979. Zubaida's view is that the Sunni-Shi'ite divide is effectively more a political and sociological category than a theological one, as it becomes significant only at times of political and social upheaval.

Ammerman looks at what, from the perspective of the sociology of religion although not historically, is a relatively new kind of religious collectivity, the congregation. This form of religious association consists of a locally situated, multi-generational, voluntary group of people who see themselves as distinct and engage jointly in religious activities. While closely associated with contemporary religious practice in the United States, where there are well over 3,000 such congregations, 80 per cent of which are Protestant in persuasion, this form of gathering may have had its origins among the Jews in exile in Babylon in 586 BCE and would appear to be a particularly appropriate forum for worship among religious communities in diaspora whose culture goes unsupported by the wider society. Ammerman sees the congregation becoming ever more important as a point of communal identification as global migration increases in scale (see Plüss's chapter).

The clergy have come under more scrutiny in recent times than perhaps any other profession, and the social and religious issues that have given rise to such intense scrutiny—paedophilia, the ordination of women, and homosexuality, among others—are addressed by Hoge, who also writes of the declining authority and status of this profession. Among the more important reasons for this decline, he suggests, are increasing differentiation and greater egalitarianism in the relationships between clergy and laity. Hoge is persuaded that there is a need for more relevant and appropriate training for the clergy if they are to perform an effective role in a world that is turning ever more religiously diverse, and suggests that new research be started in a number of areas with which scholars are familiar but about which little of substance is known, including those of women clergy, homosexual clergy, and clergy outside any denomination.

PART VII: SECULARIZATION AND THE REPRODUCTION AND TRANSMISSION OF RELIGION

It is worth repeating here the point made above, that standard religion is experiencing change and challenges on an unprecedented scale, both from without and within. Addressing mainly the situation in the West, and more specifically the European Union, Dobbelaere argues that there are clear indications that what he refers to as ‘manifest secularization’ or ‘laicization’ as it is known in France will increase in the years to come. He is at the same time careful to point out that this process, since it is ‘man-made’, is not irreversible. Dobbelaere also takes up the question of the continuing sensitivity to religion displayed by individuals under the label of ‘individual secularization’, which he sees as the loss of control by religious authorities over the form and content of what people believe and how they practise. Defined thus, Dobbelaere contends that the continuation of religious belief and practice at the individual level confirms rather than refutes the theory of secularization. Among the most complex and serious challenges confronting standard and other forms of religion such as Pentecostalist and Evangelical forms of religion in Korea and New Religious Movements (NRMs) (see Bromley’s chapter) is the challenge of intergenerational transmission. Roof’s presentation stresses the importance of the nexus between generations and religion, and calls for more research on every aspect of the intergenerational question and in particular on ‘second-generation’ immigrants across countries, about whom very little is known.

Edgell, who has carried out extensive and in-depth research on religion and the family, concentrates in her contribution to this Handbook on such questions as the ways in which religion shapes family life and how families sustain—and change—religious institutions, which she describes as social locations for the production and transmission of religious familism or ideology about what constitutes a family and what a good family should be like. Edgell also asks a set of pertinent questions that seek to understand the fit—or lack of fit—between religion and the family today. This already complex topic is made ever more complex by the increasingly diverse and pluralistic character of modern society.

Guest critiques theories of transmission and reproduction of religion from Comte through Marx and Durkheim to contemporary sociologists of religion, including Berger, engaging as he does so with positivist and sociology of knowledge approaches to the question, among others. He also deals with the issues of transmission and reproduction in the context of secularization theory in its various guises and against the background of the McDonaldisation of religion, one form of which, Guest maintains, is the Alpha Course. Guest further considers Hervieu-Léger’s (2000 [1993]) views on the phenomenon of ‘cultural amnesia’, the effects of which gravely

undermine the passing on of religious beliefs and values. Transmission and reproduction, as Guest points out, do not necessarily depend on the mainstream churches, which are increasingly less effective in this regard. The emergence of small-scale, alternative community structures (see Ammerman's contribution) could possibly, he suggests, perform the role of sustaining and passing on core values. Building on the thinking of Bourdieu, Guest offers the suggestion that a fruitful approach to understanding future processes of transmission and reproduction might come through adopting 'a resource mobilization perspective' which would focus on those resources associated with religion and pay less attention to factors such as institutions.

Ritual, with its expressive, performative, symbolic, and rational dimensions, has always been assumed to be a key element in the dynamic of transmission and reproduction of religion, and in his chapter on this topic Collins illustrates how it builds and consolidates Quaker community.

The mediation of religion in both the global and the local context is, as Hoover's presentation on the media points out, one of a number of emerging new research areas in media studies. Scholars are examining the representation of religions in various contexts, including the Internet and the Web, and how such mediation of religion might contribute to religious ferment. However, Hoover is keen to stress the serious shortcomings of a purely instrumentalist understanding of the relationship between the media and religion. Bunt's discussion of the Internet and religion emphasizes the capacity of the former to transform religion in the areas of representation and adherent networking as a proselytizing tool. This is happening to such an extent that some belief systems and practices may already be dependent on search engine ratings and placement 'to acquire and maintain an impact or profile'. For this reason and others—motivations can vary—religious organizations are increasingly becoming keen media and service providers.

Fieldwork on religion in cyberspace poses its own particular difficulties, the most important of which are highlighted in Bunt's presentation which, like Hoover's, not only makes an important contribution to the debate on the transmission and reproduction of religion, but also complements Riis's and Jensen's chapters on method.

PART VIII: RELIGIOUS CHANGE: NEW RELIGIONS AND NEW SPIRITUALITIES, ESOTERICISM AND IMPLICIT RELIGION

One's sense of the level of impact made by New Religious Movements (NRMs) and New Spirituality Movements (NSMs) on contemporary thinking about and practice of religion and spirituality will differ depending on the angle from which one views

them. Seen from the perspective of South Asia and parts of East Asia, it is clear that so called neo-Hindu movements and lay Buddhist movements have greatly influenced these regions (Clarke 2006).

NRMs and NSMs have also impacted on the study and teaching of Religion (Bromley 2007), and these are some of the issues addressed by Bromley in his contribution to the Handbook. Limiting himself to the West, Bromley traces the development of the emerging specialization of New Religious Studies (NRS), which offers a multi-disciplinary approach to the phenomenon of New Religion and Spirituality. One of the scholarly merits of this discipline, he maintains, is that it provides space in research and teaching for topics which have hitherto been marginalized, the focus having been on the more dominant forms of religion and spirituality.

The important question of the interaction between dominant forms of religion and spirituality and less dominant forms is one of the subjects addressed by Heelas and Woodhead (2005). And it is considered again by both Hamberg and Heelas in this Handbook. Hamberg questions the assumption that the present decline in church-based religion in Europe is part of a long-term process of decline. She also raises the question for further research of the extent to which the decline in standard religion has contributed to the growth of spirituality outside the churches, and the apparently problematic relationship of that spirituality to science. Overall, Hamberg is cautious in her conclusions regarding the relationship of church-based religion and spirituality, as well as on the question of the origins and strength of the social and cultural forces driving the phenomenon of unchurched spirituality. She also expresses methodological concerns relating to definition (see Droogers's chapter). These are but some of the issues to which research, Hamberg believes, needs to turn its attention in a more systematic and sustained manner.

Setting aside the discussion of the possibility of a causal relationship of whatever kind between secularization and the rise of unchurched spirituality, the contemporary interest and involvement in spiritualities of all kinds is indisputable and on such a scale as to prompt Heelas in his contribution to this Handbook to suggest that the Sociology of Religion be renamed the Sociology of Religion and Spirituality. This idea could find favour with, among others, Roof (1998), who points out that one of the weaknesses of the sociology of religion is that it suffers from an overly rationalized, narrowly defined, institutionalized conception of the religious. One might also add a criticism of sociology of religion's geographical narrowness whereby with some notable exceptions, including Hefner (1999) and Martin (1999), it has confined its focus to the West and then largely to one or two forms of Christianity in the West, while aiming to construct a set of general principles of religious behaviour.

Heelas in his discussion of 'Spiritualities of Life' is anxious, among other things, to counter the argument that present-day spirituality is simply a tool of consumer capitalism, pointing out that it is often bound up 'with humanistic and expressivistic values' such as equality and authenticity. Regarding the persistence of the Spiritualities of Life, Heelas, in contrast to Bruce (2002), is persuaded that the

evidence of their continuing growth and their capacity to handle the dilemmas of contemporary life should assure Spiritualities of Life a 'rosy future'. In relation to the type of analysis of the secularization process and its fundamental elements which Bruce's position seems to represent, it can be said that it hides a Weberian positivistic understanding of the relationship between religion and modernization and implies that what is said to be happening and/or to have happened in the West by way of the decline of religious influence over society and individual consciousness will almost inevitably be the case elsewhere. The contemporary global situation is, however, a much different environment in relation to the communication and transmission of religious ideas and practices, among others, than that of the modern world in which Weber attempted to assess the future of religion.

Among spiritual developments that overlap with Spiritualities of Life and are of growing interest is that of esotericism. Granholm's chapter on this topic is not limited to a discussion of its core elements, but also examines the changing relationship between esotericism and Christianity from the nineteenth century. Under the impact of secularization, this relationship changed from one in which esotericists identified themselves as Christians and made use of Christian symbolism and terminology to one in which many esotericists influenced by secular modes of thinking and eventually free to express themselves as they saw fit sought to expound their philosophy and beliefs in 'scientific' language, thus bringing to an end the idea of esotericism as 'deviant' knowledge.

The significance of implicit religion is another example of a topic that, while on the agenda since the late 1960s, has not so far been treated with any great seriousness by the sociology of religion. Yet, as Bailey contends in his contribution to this Handbook, without an understanding of the role of implicit religion, it is impossible to understand people's secular lives. In his historical overview of the development of the concept and its meaning, he also indicates how implicit religion overlaps with and differs from spirituality. In addition, Bailey points to its relevance to questions concerning group solidarities, organizational institutions, and ritual behaviour, among others.

PART IX: RELIGION AND ECOLOGY, HEALTH, SOCIAL ISSUES, AND VIOLENCE

The environmental crisis, perhaps more than any other concern of contemporary society, is turning attention to religion not primarily as a means of salvation in a transcendental, other-worldly sphere, but increasingly, as Tucker points out in her chapter, as the provider of 'a broad road to the cosmos and human roles in it'.

The role of religion in relation to the environmental crisis remains highly controversial, several religions endorsing an exclusively anthropocentric view of moral rights and obligations, while others uphold beliefs which are seen as undermining attempts to control the world's population, whose present rate of increase is believed to be detrimental to the survival of the planet. Aware of these difficulties, Tucker in her contribution in part circumvents them by considering religions in broader terms than the institutional and denominational forms they take. They are for her purposes world views which, despite the problems associated with some of their teachings on such matters as domination of nature by humans and certain kinds of birth control, can help to construct a much needed global ethical perspective in relation to environmental issues and help inculcate qualities such as truth telling, trust, and visioning that are indispensable to ecological sustainability.

The relationship between religion, spirituality, and health is addressed by Cadge in her presentation from an institutional perspective. She adopts this standpoint principally for the reason that, as she points out, most research on this relationship ignores the institutional aspects of health provision and care. From a sociological perspective this is self-defeating, Cadge argues, for if research agendas included institutional dimensions, they could greatly enhance our knowledge of the specific relationship in itself and at the same time provide an appropriate contextual frame for discussing and debating a host of other issues relating religion, spirituality, and health, such as health-care workers' religious and moral obligations, spiritually oriented alternative medical approaches, and spiritual and medical intervention at the end of life.

Johnson's presentation focuses on the relationship between religion and delinquency and finds that religious commitment helps protect youth, whatever their socio-economic conditions, from delinquent behaviour and deviant activities, including the use of illegal drugs. There is also a more constructive side to the relationship between religion and behaviour, in the sense that religious belief and practice not only protect against delinquent behaviour but, according to Johnson's findings, also foster positive and/or normative behaviour.

Inaba and Loewenthal explore the relationship between religion and altruism, a research concern identified and pursued by classical sociologists including Max Weber, and one of interest and concern today, especially in societies where the building of social capital encounters serious obstacles. Inaba and Loewenthal point out that while early research was rather muddled about the correlation between religion and altruism, research since the 1980s is less ambiguous in suggesting that religion is likely to play a causal role in promoting altruism.

More time has been spent on discussing the correlation between religion and violence than on any other aspect of religion since 9/11. This was doubtless a defining moment in modern thinking about religion. Prior to 9/11, many were reluctant to believe that there were any close links between religion and violence (see Bruce 1986 on the conflict in Northern Ireland). The violence of 9/11 challenged that certainty. And while politicians and religious leaders are inclined to

emphasize that good religion is moderate and peaceful, some researchers think differently. While Juergensmeyer is anxious to stress that religions are not only about violence, he nonetheless in his discussion of the concept of cosmic war argues that religion is driven by a fundamental impulse in the form of a quest for order, and from this starting point it introduces the concept and reality of violence as the pathway to harmony and peace.

Kirwan frames his analysis of religion and violence with special reference to modern martyrdom in terms of a critique of Girard's theory of religion and violence which speaks of the annulment of the violent sacred. Kirwan sees this account which is robustly Christian as being highly problematic for many in a religiously pluralistic society. However, it is Kirwan's view that, if understood correctly, the Girardian idea of religion and the annulment of violence need not offend non-Christians. From this starting point he introduces an interesting discussion of ways in which militant *jihad* and *shahid* or Islamic martyrdom may possibly be interpreted in a way similar to the Girardian interpretation that speaks of the 'abrogation' of the false and violent sacred. This is not simply wishful thinking, for Islam is not as bereft of hermeneutical tools as is widely thought.

While the relationship between religion and social issues has begun to attract a good deal of interest from researchers in recent years, it is without much theoretical guidance in the way of social problem theory. This is a gap that Hjelm's contribution attempts to fill. His presentation focuses the following issues: on social problems as a claims-making activity, on how religions construct solutions to social problems, on how religion itself is constructed as a social problem, and on how this impacts on the way religion is perceived.

While Pessi's contribution covers some of the same ground as Hjelm's, it is essentially an empirically based discussion of the topic of religion and social issues. She offers several interesting critiques of empirical research on this relationship between religion and social problems in Europe and in particular in Finland. Like Hjelm, she poses a number of important questions for religions, including that of how they may come over time to be perceived as social welfare institutions rather than bearers of a transcendental message. Pessi argues that religions that seek to resolve social problems come to be perceived as providing 'institutions of authenticity' in the sense of providing those meaningful horizons that individual choice always requires.

PART X: TEACHING THE SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION

Increasing religious pluralism clearly impacts directly on the teaching of the sociology of religion, and with this in mind Nesbitt looks at the contexts in

which religion is taught, including Sunday school, state school, university, and so on—each one making its own demands and raising its own questions. She also identifies the variety of types of teacher of religion—for example, the insider and the outsider to the faith community in question, the salaried school teacher, and the volunteer Sunday school teacher. In Nesbitt's view one of the more important demands that modern, ethnically diverse, religiously pluralistic society makes of teachers is that they acquire ethnographic skills. If they fail to do so, she argues, they will not adequately recognize and appreciate diversity, and as a result will be unable to engage in citizenship education, which is integral to the role of the teacher of religion, at least in the United Kingdom. To be ethnographically aware is to make explicit to oneself what one's view of religion is, and this will involve as a consequence, Nesbitt contends, challenging the taken-for-granted equation of religion with belief and practice. The teacher of religion's task extends not only to acquiring ethnographic skills for the better performance of their own role but also training students in ethnography, seeing in them potential co-ethnographers.

Spickard takes up the topic of teacher- or student-centred teaching in the context of American tertiary education. He begins with an account of the sea-change in ethnography during the past thirty years which began by questioning the quality and value of teacher-directed education and went on to suggest that a student-centred approach to learning was the more effective in training people to reflect, analyse, and internalize knowledge. It was also seen as a more effective means of transmitting knowledge. Not all institutions of higher education favour this kind of equality approach in teaching and research, and the result is a bimodal system of learning. The situation in the churches regarding the transmission of religious faith and practice, as Spickard points out, is also bimodal, some institutions favouring a top-down clergy-directed approach, while others are disposed to follow the participant-centred approach which makes a fit with the voluntarism which now characterizes the approach of increasing numbers of believers to religious beliefs and practice.

The Handbook, then, has been about creating new insights and breaking boundaries in the sociology of religion. Its intention has also been to encourage further debate about the methods, theoretical orientations, teaching, and objectives of the discipline of the sociology of religion. In looking forward, the past has not been neglected. Moreover, some of the major issues which it has addressed historically, including the new forms that some of these issues, such as secularization, religious pluralism, social integration and harmony, and religious violence, have been revisited, with creativity and insight.

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P A R T I

THEORY:
CLASSICAL,
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CHAPTER 1

REAPPRAISING DURKHEIM FOR THE STUDY AND TEACHING OF RELIGION

WILLIAM E. PADEN

INTEREST in Durkheim has undergone something of a revival through the publications of the British Centre for Durkheimian Studies in Oxford (Pickering 2001), and, following Pickering's comprehensive work *Durkheim's Sociology of Religion* (1984), the study of Durkheim's views on religion in particular has proceeded apace (Allen, Pickering, and Watts Miller 1998; Idinopulos and Wilson 2002; Godlove 2005; Strenski 2006).

Yet a previous generation of religion scholars had faulted Durkheim's reductionism, just as anthropologists had challenged his ethnographic categories. Joachim Wach's classic, titled *Sociology of Religion*, mentioned Durkheim but twice time in passing—only to issue a warning against the positivism of confusing religious and social values (Wach 1949: 5, 95). Even a later textbook on the history of comparative religion republished in 1986 concluded its telling portrayal of Durkheim with these words:

Although widely read, Durkheim was so dominated by the desire to explain away the phenomenon of religion that his theories about the origins of religion are of little

consequence. His failure to accept mankind's belief in the actual existence of an unseen supernatural order—a failure in which he was to have many followers—led him into serious errors of interpretation. . . . The student of comparative religion will, perhaps, read him less in order to acquire a knowledge of either the nature of religion or the thorny problem of the origins of religion, than to learn something of the standing of these theories in turn-of-the-century France. (Sharpe 1986: 86)

At the same time, social theory was starting to take hold. In the late 1960s came the influence of the neo-Durkheimians Mary Douglas, Victor Turner, Peter Berger, Louis Dumont, Clifford Geertz, Robert Bellah, and Claude Lévi-Strauss, all of whom contributed theoretical and interpretive frames that religion scholars found academically legitimizing—and perhaps, as a benefit, religiously unthreatening. Through and after the 1980s, the “History of Religions” field—usually the methodological flagship of religious studies—was becoming “socialized” and anthropologized. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* was transitioning in classrooms from being an instance of dated nineteenth-century-style speculation to being recognized as something of a gold mine of theoretic capital, and found its secure place on the reading lists of courses on theory and method. Historian of religion Jonathan Z. Smith was continuing the Durkheimian trajectory in fresh, critical directions (1978; 1987; 2005), and could write that while one may not accept “the answers Durkheim set forth to the questions he posed”, nevertheless his questions and sociological vision continue to “establish our agenda” (1987: 36).

The acceptability of the neo-Durkheimians was not only because they provided theory where theory had been lacking in religious studies, but because on the whole their conceptualizations were not dismissively anti-religious or offensively reductive. Thus, from the point of view of the academic study of religion, the question of the ultimate referential reality of religion could conveniently be deferred or bracketed, and the social construction of phenomenological reality could be adopted as a working matrix. Durkheim could therefore be read with a new slant: had he not stressed the enduring, effective nature of religious forces, albeit socially originated, over against rationalist views that dismissed them as mere illusions? This motif even became a major theme in the lengthy introduction of Karen Fields to her new translation of *Elementary Forms* (Fields 1995). Durkheim's thesis, moreover, could be construed not as a reduction of religion to society, in the commonsense meaning of “society”, but rather as a special enlargement of the notion of society that focused on its intrinsically religious nature, including the irreducible, *sui generis* structuring and functioning of “the sacred”. Concurrent with the appropriation of sociological frames in religious studies was general acceptance of the methodological point that all thought and interpretation, religious or scientific, is necessarily reductive, selecting some features of the world for purposes of baseline analysis, while ignoring others.

This chapter focuses primarily on ways in which some of Durkheim's ideas on religion have been, and can be, appropriated and developed, particularly his central

category of sacrality—which is more heterogeneous than most observers take it to be, and a subject benefiting from differentiation, modification, and aspectual analysis. Not just a nineteenth-century or primitive archaism, the factor of the “sacred” continues to be observable wherever group identities are challenged and put at stake, as in conflicts over ethnic and national autonomy, in loyalty to tribes and sects, in human-rights issues, and in domestic wars over such things as the inviolability of human embryos, marriage, and traditional gendered classifications. While post-structuralist thought has tried to replace ideal types and the language of universal patterns by turning attention to micro-social behaviors of strategizing “habits”, the role of cross-cultural modeling does not cease to lose its value, particularly as studies of religion explore connections with the human sciences. Whereas Durkheim thought that his elementary forms encompassed the whole of religion, today one is more methodologically circumspect and one is more likely to take structural types as addressing “aspects” of a phenomenon and not whole or total entities. The essay concludes with a discussion of the relevance of the sciences of evolutionary sociality for reappraising Durkheimian ideas of the social formations of religious behavior.

DIFFERENTIATING THE CATEGORY OF THE SACRED

A key criticism of the phenomenology of religion tradition was that its grounding concept, “the sacred”, or “the holy”, was explicitly or implicitly theological and metaphysical, and thus completely inappropriate as an academic category. Here religious phenomena were often presented as “manifestations” of that transcendent power—a power that resembled divinity. The sacred, as a term, was essentialized and reified as an a priori religious reality—a reality experienced in countless ways and cultural forms. In sharp contrast, Durkheim’s *le sacré* was a social representation, rather than a superhuman presence, and thus functioned in an altogether different, unidealized theoretical universe. The sacred in this frame is a value placed *on* objects, rather than a power that shines through them because of their extraordinary qualities. Much of the analytic potential of Durkheim’s theory of religion is linked to the applicability of the bedrock idea of the social generation of “sacred things”.

Yet in Durkheim’s work this key concept seemed to vary in context and contain a variety of conceptual influences and levels. Thus, sacredness for Durkheim had one clear ritual prototype in the anthropological notion of taboo, following J. G. Frazer and W. Robertson Smith; yet this needed to be wedded to the discourse of the sociological binary of collective and individual realms of life—and, in turn, that

representational level had to be connected with the origin of the sacred in the emotional experience of effervescent group gatherings. As well, all of this, in Durkheim's mind, was linked with his sociological version of a neo-Kantian idea of obligatory, categorical morality. It follows that this repertoire of aspects of sacrality contains a range of possibilities. Is "the sacred" a prohibited object, not to be violated by any contact, or is it—as we learn halfway through *Elementary Forms*—discovered in a state of emotional, communal ecstasy, if not pandemonium? Is it a cult of imperative morality and sacrifice inspired by the constraints of social authority, or is it a totemically "signed", semiotic emblem representing differential identities among groups? Is it a realm of ideals, or is it a status to be achieved through a deliberate process of self-transformation? Is it the prestige attributed to any object at any point in culture, or is it a zone of culture always and everywhere found to be marked off from ordinary life? Is it a "force", a kind of mana, that conveys itself by contagious association, or is it an embodiment of a social norm? To make it even more complex, Durkheim accepted W. Robertson Smith's idea that the sacred contains its own binary of pure–impure (1995: 412–17). In *Elementary Forms* the sacred is all these things, according to sequence or context. To be sure, while identifying each aspect separately, one must grant their interdependence on a circle of relationships—for example, the sacred is a mark of group experience and identity, and thus acquires prestige, which means in turn that it contains a certain experienced force, which is a force that must in turn be managed through proper ritual protocols. The following sections sort out and discuss some of the key features of this process.

The Sacred/Profane Binary as Principle of Religious Conduct

Durkheim's vocabulary about the "sacred and profane" as exclusive realms that repel and contradict each other has been thoroughly criticized, and for many became grounds for rejecting the category of the sacred entirely. It is natural to address this issue first. Criticisms of the binary have been reviewed in detail by Pickering (1984: 115–49). The main charge is that so many cultures and religions do not keep these worlds separate, as Durkheim's theory seems to require. Clearly Durkheim's language about all religion forming a "bipartite" universe of sacred and profane (1995: 38) led to this problem, and seems to be indefensible if by "profane" is meant an actual realm of life different from the sacred realm. But it can be shown that Durkheim's binary refers to ritual relationships that regulate incompatible states, not static areas on the map of the world. That the sacred/profane is a class not of things, but of relationships *to* things, is a distinction that Durkheim should have made clearer (Lukes 1972: 27).

The sacred/profane binary can be understood as a cultic distinction referring to protocols of ritualized negotiation between two kinds of status. Notably,

Durkheim's prototypes of the binary refer to rites of passage where there is a costly process of transitioning from one state to another: initiation rites, the requirements for entering monastic life, the practices of ascetics in achieving sanctity, and even the phenomenon of religious suicide (1995: 37). There are two actions going on here: (1) keeping a boundary between things with more powerful status and things with less status, and (2) engaging in processes by which the latter can gain access to the former—as in the ordeals of initiation, in taking off one's shoes before entering a shrine, or in having to bow before a king. This is a social, not a metaphysical, duality.

Durkheim's use of the sacred/profane binary—the sacred thing “is, par excellence, that which the profane must not and cannot touch with impunity” (1995: 38)—was profoundly shaped by the notion of taboo, a category that Robertson Smith and Frazer were linking with the term “sacred”, taking the latter to mean forbidden or restricted from common use (much as with the Latin *sacer*, forbidden). From this came the idea of the ambiguity of the sacred object as having a positive or a negative force. But Durkheim's theory of religion progressed well beyond the idea of the prohibitions of primitive thought, showing how separation could be conceived as “abstention”, and how abstentions could be shown to be the gate of access to achieving sanctity through such things as costly renunciations of the world of attachments. That “man cannot approach his god intimately while still bearing the marks of his profane life” (1995: 312) takes the idea of interdiction far beyond the notion of primitive taboo. Robertson Smith, too, had shown that the conception of holiness evolved from primitive connotations of danger to notions of purity of life (W.R. Smith 1956: 140–1).

The Sacred versus “the Divine” as General Organizing Category for Studying Religion

It is possible simply to take the notion of sacredness in a less dynamic sense and refer to a class of objects that have been made sacred. Pickering thus argues (1984: 149–62) that Durkheim's basic concept of the sacred is useful beyond its encasement in the dichotomous and controversially phrased sacred/profane binary stated early on in *Elementary Forms*. For Durkheim religion is a vast set of “sacred things”, the content of which is infinitely varied over time. One has to be careful here about just slipping into an equation of the sacred and the religious, where the former simply connotes some transcendental dimension of life that all religions have in common. Still, assuming that “sacred” here means objects constructed by social prestige rather than being just a placeholder term for “the nonempirical”, this would indeed be an alternative way of reading the history of religion—alternative, in the case of religious studies, to seeing history as just a succession of varying beliefs or ideas about the nature of divinity or reality. The compelling nature of

those objects, which may or may not include gods, is a reflection of their status within a system; protectedness and inviolability are concomitants. Such an anthropologized history, among other things, would include attention to the emergence of certain secular values, understood as sacred, including the history of the sacralization of the idea of a human “person”, or other notions of a secular sacrality (Carrithers, Collins, and Lukes 1985; Watts Miller 2002).

A methodological assumption in this sociological model is that the “objective” world is what it is through collective representations, rather than construed as an *a priori*, existing reality which all religions and cultures aspire to describe with their symbols. As will be addressed below, such an approach would also converge ultimately with studies of the evolution of human sociality.

The Sacred as a Marker of Shared Identity

Sacredness is not just an attribute of objects as such, but has a semiotic nature signaling the shared identity capital of a particular group. Thus, “things are classified as sacred and profane by reference to the totem. It is the very archetype of sacred things” (Durkheim 1995: 118). Whatever its original ethnographic viability, Durkheim’s model was that a “clan” is a group that has a unity based on its members sharing the same “name”, the same emblems of identity, and the same ritual relations with the same sacred objects—but it is not necessarily consanguineous or territorially based. The members then share the same “essence” by way of participating in what the totemic emblem represents—that is, their “kind”. The emblems are ways in which a group becomes conscious of itself and “perpetuates” that consciousness (1995: 233). As soon as one clan or group is differentiated from another, elements of this totemic identity come into play. Group-specific histories and rites follow suit. In Mary Douglas’s phrase, “the sacred for Durkheim and Mauss was nothing more mysterious or occult than shared classifications, deeply cherished and violently defended” (1987: 97).

This concept has not lost its value, and continues to describe the signature formations of new and traditional groups—where “group” here does not mean social environments in general, but rather the self-representations of specifically differentiated collective units or subunits. A group is a kind of linguistic construct that functions as an essentialized representation of aggregates of individuals, and thus comes to have the effect of a “thing” or an objectivity. Benedict Anderson’s (1991) popular term, “imagined communities”, though referring to modern ethnic and anti-colonial national movements, would just as well describe any group; indeed, it is Durkheim’s term, too: “the clan was possible only on condition of being imaginable”; “take away the name and the symbol that gives it tangible form, and the clan can no longer even be imagined” (1995: 235). J. Z. Smith’s work connected to Durkheim through this linguistic, classificatory feature of sacrality

(2005: 102–8; 1987), a feature implicit in the notion of the totemic emblem—where the abstract “mark” on the *churinga* was the one factor that gave it its sacred character.

Markers, or stereotypic signatures, of group definition come in many forms. One might think of the role of patron saints like the Mexican Virgin of Guadalupe in constructing a national identity; the role of female circumcision as a strategic community membership sign in African communities; allusions to “remember Kosovo” for Serbian nationalists or to the iconic Western Wall for Jews; the identifying sign of headscarves for Muslim women or the differences between the way in which Sunnis and Shi’ites hold their arms in performing daily prayers. The notion of “axiomatic” community markers has been productively applied to the discursive formulations of evangelical groups that base themselves on biblical authority (Malley 2004). Durkheim’s clan “signs” can be endlessly ramified in the communicative displays of any historical social formations.

Sacred Order and its Violation

With sign differentiation come boundaries and defending boundaries from violation. Sacredness can then refer not just to an object, but to the whole order or system on which the object depends and to which it refers. Here sacrality is what keeps a world of representations in place—the representations of the group being at the same time the representations of its world. Social classifications and their ideological representations become a kind of property, and maintaining such territory against violation or compromise draws upon the deepest instincts for self-preservation or survival.

The “profane”, here, if one is to employ the term at all, is what violates or offends the system; it is not simply the mundane or what is outside the system. It is oppositional. The sacred is not set apart because dangerous (*sacer*), but, as the Latin term *sanctus* conveyed, because ordained or secured as inviolable. Emic terms pointing to this aspect of the sacred order include Hindu *dharma*, Islamic *sharia*, and Confucian notions of *Li* (propriety), *T’ien* (order of heaven), and *Hsiao* (filial piety). In biblical tradition, “covenants” with God determine the order of the moral universe.

The binary of order and its violation was developed in several ways. For example, Mary Douglas’s (2002) model of cognitive boundaries dropped the distinction of primitive and modern systems of order, showing how any group will have its own versions of pollution, danger, or anomaly. In her terms, where there is an order of things, there will be the prospect of impurity—famously, “where there is dirt there is system” (2002: 36). Order generates boundaries between and within groups, and the boundaries will be consequential according to whether groups are “strong” or “weak” relative to the outside world, and according to whether the internal

classifications (“grids”) of those groups emphasize strict internal role gradations or not. Strong groups, for example, will have the most highly defined purity rules for maintaining membership.

Other neo-Durkheimian models have added to the theme. Louis Dumont’s *Homo Hierarchicus* (1980) joined notions of purity with social hierarchy. J. Z. Smith built a typology distinguishing “locative”, bounded religious systems—where sacral-ity is a function of things being in their proper place—and those which are “utopic”, non-worldly and a-spatial (1978: 129–71). Others have pointed to additional facets of symbolic order, such as *nomos* (Berger 1967), the sacralization of identity (Mol 1975; Rappaport 1999), hierarchy (Isambert 1982), systemic order (Paden 1996), and symbolic classification related to space (Anttonen 2000; J. Z. Smith 1987). The relation of sacred order to the notion of honor should be a productive research area.

Effervescence, Regeneration, Anti-Structure

Yet another salient dimension of the Durkheimian “sacred” is the effervescence of group gatherings, in contrast with routine life. Durkheim tried to include this in his sacred/profane binary (the individual gives up his ordinary feelings and identity to participate in the group festivity), but its duality goes in another direction from those described above. It plays on the contrast of collective high arousal and ordinary habit. The sacred is generated through the feelings activated in ecstatic collective events. Others have shown that the festival moment contains the seeds of anti-structure behaviors that could potentially subvert the otherwise regulated, boundaried structure of the sacred. Breaking taboos, rather than keeping them, then becomes the gate of access to the sacred.

The anti-structural but life-renewing aspect of the sacred was elaborated by Roger Caillois (1913–78) and Georges Bataille (1897–1962), representatives of the so-called left-wing Durkheimian school and its Collège de Sociologie. This work extended the notion of the unrestrained “festival” or “expenditure” mode of the sacred, and has had a revival of influence (Richman 2002; Taussig 1998). In Caillois’s synthesis, *Man and the Sacred* (1959; first pub. 1939), the sacred is ambivalent in the sense of being both a constraining, containing, inhibiting force of order *and* a creative, transgressive, liberating, sacrificial force which breaks through old forms and rigidities. It is both the “tabooed” and that which destroys the congealed conformities of law and normativity—both what is to be protected and what violates protected order when the latter wears out or becomes resistant. In Caillois’s view, war has taken over the function of festival paroxysm in modern society—“a total phenomenon that exalts and transforms modern society in its entirety, cutting with terrible contrast into the calm routine of peacetime” (1959: 165). “The festival”, he proposes, “is in the same relationship to the time of labor, as

war is to peace. They are both phases of movement and excess, as against the phases of stability and moderation" (1959: 166). Bataille expanded upon the paroxysmal, even violent, nature of the sacred, as well as its relation to erotic effusion and ecstatic mysticism, festival reversals, the emptying of order, wealth-destroying potlatch, and "expenditure" (*dépense*) generally (Bataille 1985). For Bataille, the "right hand" of social conservation thus contrasts with the "left hand" of social expenditure.

Michèle Richman's major work (2002) on the concept of effervescence in theories of social dynamics explores the theoretical issues in the notion of regenerative upheavals and explosive contestations, events that contrast with the socialization of maintaining status quo civility and thus static notions of structure. Durkheimians argue that this "socio-logic of effervescence" can be distinguished from psychological notions of crowd psychology in its simply irrational, regressive aspects. Victor Turner's (1969) concept of unstructured *communitas* had previously addressed aspects of this concept. Not just archaic and exotic, these regenerative moments become a permanent feature of social history. Thus Karen Fields notes "the tumultuous arrival in 1979 of Ruhollah Khomeini at Tehran airport", and the "birth of a nation" in 1989 when Lithuanians returned the bones of St Casimir to the People's House of Culture, then reconsecrated as the cathedral of Vilnius—or even Nazi and Ku Klux Klan rallies, "with individuals led to impute to themselves shared inborn essences and fabulous collective identities" (1995: pp. xlv–xlv, xlii). One could also point to stadium-filled gatherings of sports fans or evangelicals, a million-man march on Washington, the national rites of mourning following the events of September 11, 2001, rave culture (St John 2003), and even the shared emotion, community, and "sociomental bonds" between those who have never met face to face but who experience common events through common media events (Chakyo 2002). Michel Maffesoli (1996) has examined the notion of "postmodern tribes", temporary social identifications and identities—distinct from institutional structures—which, despite their impermanence, still have a collective feeling or enthusiasm, a certain sympathy and power, an "immanent" transcendence.

Yet the same "regeneration" prototype indeed raises questions about how group violence, or social pathologies—lynch mobs, ethnic cleansing campaigns—fit the template. The anthropologist Stanley Tambiah therefore asks of the Durkheimian model "how in the context of ethnic riots, participants accede to the call of violating and victimizing the enemy as a moral imperative, socially induced and legitimated" (1997: 303).

It remains the fact that periodic festivals, ceremonies, or collective observances also have a conserving, integrative, mnemonic function and as such comprise an infrastructure of most religious systems. One can find the effervescence factor either in connection with high-stimulus sensory pageantry, recurrently choreographed, or in anti-formal groups that generate emotional ecstasy in

formats expressing more personal involvement, or in marked periods, such as Ramadan, where strong social displays of non-ordinary observances intensify motivation and collective commitment. In each of these the totemic sacred is being kept “alive” and in memory, over against the forces of its diminution and neglect. Studies of the dynamics and cognitive bases of memory and emotion in relation to ritual frequency and sensory stimulus add new interest and complexity to this theme (Whitehouse 2004; Connerton 1989; Hervieu-Léger 2000).

AFTER DURKHEIM: SOME TRAJECTORIES

Durkheim and Religious Studies

The eclectic work of Mircea Eliade (1907–86)—the major, classical figure in comparative religion who extended the range and modalities of data concerning the sacred as none other had—straddled the phenomenological and neo-Durkheimian worlds. Eliade explicitly recognized the influence of Caillois, and in widely read works such as *The Sacred and the Profane* (1959) kept the language of the heterogeneity of sacred/profane realms while at the same describing the ways in which religious cultures reunite them in time, space, myth, and ritual. As well, he developed Durkheimian notions of festivals as “openings” onto an eternal, “Great Time”.

For Eliade, the sacred and the profane represent a simpler duality than Durkheim’s: they are respectively the cosmological realm of myth and the ordinary life world. Otherwise put, these are the realms of supernatural archetypes and of nature. Whereas Durkheim was focusing on the exclusivity of two realms that required ritual transformation, Eliade elaborated more on the connectivity and integration of dualities—that is, the various ways in which the mythic realm gave value to aspects of the human world. “Some of the highest religious experiences”, he wrote, “identify the sacred with the whole universe. To many a mystic the integrated quality of the cosmos is itself a hierophany” (1963: 459). While Eliade objected to sociological reductions, preferring to reconstruct the patterned “worlds” of religious insiders more at the level of existential phenomenology, both men imagined religion as plural systems of mythically and ritually constructed worlds—worlds understood not as objectivities but as symbolic schemas with a life of their own. Both believed that the study of religious worlds was relevant for contemporary people in the search for moral and spiritual values. A Durkheimian reading of Eliade, and vice versa, would be mutually illuminating and a helpful way of re-understanding the French connection in religious studies—a connection that has been implicit rather than overt in Eliade’s work (Paden 1994; 2002).

At the same time, a post-Eliadean generation of religion scholars connects with Durkheim more in terms of the way in which collective classifications contain and authorize socio-political agendas and practices. "In keeping with the Durkheimian tradition of sociological studies on religion and myth", writes Russell McCutcheon, "we could say that a social formation is the activity of experimenting with, authorizing or combating, and reconstituting widely circulated ideal types, idealizations or, better put, mythifications that function to control the means of and sites where social significance is selected, symbolized and communicated" (2000: 203). The Durkheimian/Maussian notion of mythology as containing classifications and hierarchies, and thus ideology in narrative form, is central to the work of scholars, like Chicago historian of religion Bruce Lincoln, who take Durkheim as basic, but add the critical, political edges of cultural theorists "from Antonio Gramsci to Roland Barthes and Pierre Bourdieu" (1999: 147).

Evolutionary Sociality: A New Linkage with Durkheimian Ideas?

Recent developments have raised the prospect of narrowing the traditional gulf between Durkheimian sociology of religion and evolutionary biology (Dunbar, Knight, and Power 1999; D. S. Wilson 2002). Insofar as Durkheim postulates universal social forms, and insofar as evolutionary thought has now provided extensive research on the evolution of human sociality and social cognition, it is an area worth investigating (Schmaus 2004).

Of course Durkheim's task, in context, was to propose and defend the autonomy and irreducibility of a sociological level of facts. Here the distinctiveness of humans, in contrast to nonhuman species, was their social life and representations; it would be a "vain quest", Durkheim thought, to infer human sociality from animal life (1995: 62). Yet he also admits that a theory of religion must rest on the sciences, including "the sciences of nature . . . since man and society are linked to the universe and can be abstracted from it only artificially" (1995: 432). Today the formerly hallowed dichotomy of culture and nature is much less clear, and the picture of hominid sociality evolving through life in small groups and forming group-related cognitive and behavioral adaptations has widely replaced Durkheim's late nineteenth-century world view. Thus, the intrinsic, inherited sociality of the human species includes dispositions for accepting group representations, biases for loyalty, coalition making, and conformity, capacities for reciprocity, cooperation, and altruism, and—relevant to the Durkheimian notion of collective or totemic representations—responsiveness to signals of kin associations.

All of this suggests new prospects for reading Durkheim. For example, in his ambitious work *Darwin's Cathedral* (2002), the biologist D. S. Wilson drew on

Durkheim to help explain how group selection might operate in some religious groups, particularly through the unifying power of moral commitment to sacred symbols.

Recall Durkheim's statement that "in all its aspects and at every moment of history, social life is only possible thanks to a vast symbolism". . . . This statement may be ninety years old and well worn in various branches of the social sciences, but it is brand new against the background of modern evolutionary theories of social behavior, including human social behavior. It often seems as if the integration of biology and the social sciences is a one-way street, more a conquest by biology than a fertile interchange. Here is a case where the influence needs to flow the other way. (2002: 226)

In Wilson's model, sacred symbols command respect and affect behavior, which is to say, phenotypic variation, which in turn can influence survival and reproduction.

Anthropologist Roy Rappaport (1999) gave a sustained account of the factor of sacrality in social evolution, focusing on the function of inviolability in ritual and language as an adaptive necessity by which groups preserve their identities while also responding to change. "Sacred postulates" and invariable rites are posited as beyond any falsifiability, giving a trans-empirical quality that attempts to guarantee constancy. Sacred language, for its part, is an antidote to the subversive plasticity of language. "Sanctity's role in human evolution", Rappaport writes, "has been profound" (1999: 416); it is "a functional replacement for genetic determination of patterns of behavior" (1999: 418).

Kinship behavior suggests another potential point of connection with Durkheim and evolutionary theory. For example, at the genetic level, "kin selection" and "inclusive fitness" theory means that individual animals—the first stage of research was on social insects—will be willing to sacrifice themselves for the greater good of their gene pool to the relative extent that their genes are the same as those in the group cohort. While human group affiliation is not limited to close biological families, any group can function as kin equivalent, and it is possible that the social dispositions evolved in small group living can also be triggered by the circumstances of *constructed* group identities. "Kin" here becomes a cultural formation, and this was Durkheim's point about clans. A disposition that evolved for in-group defense—whether of resources or reproductive line—or for favoring and trusting one's "kind", is then applied to "one's group", however defined: country, fraternity, club, clan, team, street gang, military unit, labor union, political party, school, family ancestry, ethnic tradition, or religion.

As well, the markers of totemic identity, within an evolutionary world view, might be understood as continuous with kin or in-group communication systems. In the natural world, animals sense affiliation by any number of pheromonal, visual, or behavioral "indicators"—and kin recognition cues, or phenotypic matching as a way of detecting relatedness, may be involved with the stereotypic identity signals and codes of human groups. The totemic principle and cult, with its

patron gods and progenitors, might then be thought to activate kin mechanisms—amounting, as some evolutionists have put it, to a “hypertrophied kin recognition process” (Kirkpatrick 2005: 248–51). Likewise, ritually enhanced or “exaggerated” displays will stimulate extra feelings of respect, just as certain animals will respond more fully to an exaggerated representation of a sexual object—for example, made of cardboard or a painting—than to the real thing (E. O. Wilson 1999: 252). Mythic histories, then, would be the enhanced lineages of one’s “kind”, understood in both a sociological and a biological sense, and ritual would be the “cult” of reproducing its signals. As well, some evolutionary theory has shown that behavioral signals that are demonstrably costly or hard to fake (self-sacrifice, strict moral observance), advertise an individual’s high commitment to the group, thus enhancing the commitment of others (Sosis and Alcorta 2003: 266–7).

Another area of possible mutual interest between evolutionists and Durkheimians is the notion of prestige goods as social capital. Durkheim’s sacred objects are made of the stuff of social prestige. But the “prestige” is also understood as an evolutionary social adaptation (Henrich and Gil-White 2001). Persons of rank and status, and objects that represent rank and status, will compel attention; individuals in an in-group will tend to acknowledge the values placed by superiors on prestige objects. Such objects are sources of salient social information. Evolutionists have also pointed out the transition from primate dominance complexes to the coming of “human symbolic prestige” (Barkow 1989: 6, 183), and with the emergence of human artifact cultures, the extension of prestige to objects (Dissanayake 1992; Mithen, 1999). An economy of prestige goods would allow tribal leaders to attract respect and gain hierarchical relations with competing groups. Religious systems would become the epitome of “symbolic culture” understood as an emergent evolutionary environment (Chase 1999: 42). Thus, the religious history of the species would emerge as a history of the attaching of prestige to various kinds of objects and institutions, ultimately producing the thousands of holy objects sitting side by side on the planet, each a priceless currency for its community, yet each irrelevant in other social landscapes. In large-scale groups, these “cult objects” (scriptures, hierarchies, sacred institutions and objects, gods) would become hypertrophied forms of prestige, taking on a life of their own—prestige generates prestige. The relationship to Durkheim’s views on the sacred as a construction of social prestige (1995: 209–11), and to his lectures on the sacred character of property and property rights (1958: 121–220), is there to develop. Likewise, Murray Milner Jr (1994) has given a sustained argument—though not in an evolutionary context—that brings status relationships and sacral relationships into a common, integrated, theoretical model.

At the same time, evolutionary psychologists often refer to Durkheim as an exemplar of a social-science model that ignores the inherited, adapted mechanisms of individual minds. This “Standard Social Science Model”, in their view, erroneously pictures the mind as a blank slate into which social norms are downloaded

and reproduced. Yet in Durkheim's case, at least, this is questionable (Schmaus 2004). Thus, in the *Elementary Forms* we read: "The whole social world seems populated with forces that in reality exist only in our minds" (p. 228); "ideas can only release emotive forces that are already within us" (p. 419); the totemic principle itself "exists only in our minds" (p. 349); "society can only exist in and by means of individual minds, it must enter into us and become organized within us" (p. 211); sacred/profane representations are not in nature, but are based on "psychic antagonism" (p. 321), or "psychic mechanisms" (p. 325). One could argue that the edifice of social symbolism, for Durkheim, is maintained by the strength of "countless individual representations" (p. 210).

Where evolutionary psychologists deny that culture and cultural world views are "things" that are just internalized in individuals, their point is important; yet a distinction should be made between amorphous culture in general and group-specific representations/identities in particular. While groups are indeed made up of individual, self-interested components, those individual components have dispositions to respond to representations of group identities and accept or trust group or "kin" ideas as objectivities (Plotkin 2003: 248–90). "Groups" may be continuously reconstructed "output fictions" of individual minds, and thus epiphenomena; but among those fictions are powerful ideologies that constrain behaviors and can have deadly motivation and causal force. In short, insofar as imagined communities, norms, totemic symbols, or essentialized identities are *believed in* by aggregates of individuals, the collective factor then comes back into play as a functioning social "ontology". The notion of the construction of a social "reality" that *functions* as an objectivity is therefore not conceptually at odds with the point that it is individual brains which "select" for it and make decisions about its input information.

The Durkheimian project of explaining the elementary forms of religious behavior as elementary forms of social behavior could therefore find a complementary project with evolutionary research on the social dispositions of *Homo sapiens*.

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SUGGESTED READING

The annual journal of the British Centre for Durkheimian Studies, *Durkheimian Studies*, is recommended; also Allen *et al.* (1998); Godlove (2005); Idinopulos and Wilson (2002); Pickering (1984 and 2001); and Strenski (2006).

CHAPTER 2

THE USES OF MAX WEBER

LEGITIMATION AND AMNESIA IN BUDDHOLOGY, SOUTH ASIAN HISTORY, AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL PRACTICE THEORY

DAVID N. GELLNER

In this essay I ask what we can learn by looking at the different ways in which Weber has been used or not used in the study of South Asian religion and in social anthropology more generally. There is an interesting contrast in the reception of Weber: what he wrote on Hinduism and Indian history has been largely ignored, whereas scholars of Buddhism have frequently drawn upon his writings on Buddhism for inspiration. The fact that Weber's influence is largely absent from works on

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Hinduism is paralleled by the way his name has dropped out of discussions of 'practice theory', at least in so far as its anthropological incarnations are concerned.

WEBER'S FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION

As is well known, Weber undertook his long study of the economic ethics of Hinduism and Buddhism as part of a global survey of world religions. Originally published in German in 1916–17 as 'The Economics of the World Religions: Hinduism and Buddhism' (Weber 1916–17), it came out in English in the USA in 1958 as *The Religion of India: The Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism* (henceforth *ROI*). As Kantowsky (1986: 214–16) has described, the translation is based on a draft that Don Martindale, then a graduate student, had done in order to practise his German. It is evident that Hans Gerth, the senior co-editor, did not, as he promised Martindale he would, check the translation. The text as published contains many infelicities and downright inaccuracies, not to mention the fact that no one checked the bibliography or the South Asian terms used, so that it is riddled with inappropriate—because Germanic or simply incorrect—transliterations of technical terms. Clearly, a re-translation, ideally by a South Asian specialist, would be highly desirable. None the less, enough of Weber's original survives in *ROI* for the sheer daring of Weber's synthesis of South Asian specialists' work, and the acuity of many of his sociological interpretations, to come through loud and clear.¹

It is often not appreciated, especially by regional specialists, that Weber had a very particular question in mind. In search of the answer, he devoted some evidently very intense periods of study to the best sources he could lay his hands on.² What he wanted to know was whether, at any point in their history, non-European civilizational traditions had within them the religious and cultural resources to give rise to a capitalist spirit, as had happened with forms of Protestantism in Europe and North America. His studies of China, South Asia, and the Islamic world were a counterpart to his famous Protestant ethic thesis in the European context. He thereby launched enormous numbers of research programmes, many of them, from the strictly Weberian viewpoint, misguided. For

¹ For assessments of Weber's work, see Gellner (1982; 1988), Kantowsky (1986), Schroeder (1992). For the 2001 revised version of Gellner (1982), I checked quoted passages against the original German and, where necessary, re-worked them.

² It is astonishing that at the very time when he was studying these sources on Hinduism and Buddhism so closely, he was also much taken up with following and attempting to influence the course of the First World War (Marianne Weber 1988: 552).

Weber was not seeking to establish whether particular religions were or were not suited to capitalistic activity, once the practices and benefits of capitalism were widespread and well known. Rather, he was interested only in the emergence of a capitalist spirit where the 'substance' of capitalism was lacking—where, in other words, the spirit operated as its own reward in a hostile and unfavourable environment. The practical and political problems of transferring the benefits of industrialization and modernization to the places which lacked them, once this new form of society was established 'on mechanical foundations', was not of Weber's time and was not one that he faced.

This has not prevented many authors from seeing Weber's studies as relevant to 'development' and 'modernization'. Hence there are studies that attempt to identify something about Hinduism as the key to India's backwardness, or Confucianism as the key to the success of Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan. (No doubt some are even now seeking the key to India's success in computer programming in some aspect of the 'Hindu spirit'.) Even the translators of Weber's work on Hinduism and Buddhism, Hans Gerth and Don Martindale, wrote in their prefatory note that 'the central concern of this and other of Weber's studies of countries we today describe as "developing" was with the obstacles to industrialization and modernization' (*ROI*, p. v).

This mistake is perhaps understandable—and must be understood—in the context of the simple-minded, evolutionist developmentalism of the immediate post-Second World War period and of the Cold War in the 1950s. North American sociologists sought an emblematic and foundational sociological thinker to oppose to Marx; they were also trying to theorize about development, and to explain why some countries developed faster than others. It was no doubt natural to press Weber into service on both counts. It was attractive, if simplistic, to be able to blame a lack of development on a single factor or 'cause', a mode of thinking that still flourishes in countries attempting to develop.

Such confusions about Weber have perhaps died away in the Western academy, but not because they are universally understood. Rather, Weber scholars, who nowadays have a much more nuanced understanding of their subject, have become denizens of a specialized subdiscipline. And the large themes that Weber tackled have become identified with other thinkers—Giddens, Foucault, Bourdieu, and others—whose influence means that most working sociologists and anthropologists do not go beyond their brief undergraduate acquaintance with the classics. Sociology has become a fragmented discipline, with one wing believing that only humanistic, non-cumulative subjects waste their time reading the classics, and the other wing, while still believing that the classics matter, tending to leave the interpretation of them to intellectual historians or other specialists.

WEBER'S ANSWER

So what was Weber arguing in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* and in his studies of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Judaism, and Islam?³ In the first place, as I have argued elsewhere (Gellner 1982), it is a great mistake to take Weber's argument to be that the Protestant ethic (infused by the Calvinist predestination doctrine) was 'the' cause of capitalism (as exemplified by Benjamin Franklin and his motto 'time is money'), in any strong sense of 'whenever A, then B'. However, there is another, much more sophisticated (yet paradoxically closer to everyday usage) sense in which the Protestant ethic *may* be said to be a cause of capitalism. This very specific sense of cause has been analysed by J. L. Mackie (1965), who argued that in much everyday reasoning what we mean by 'cause' is an INUS condition. An INUS condition is an insufficient but necessary part of a set of conditions which, taken together, are unnecessary but sufficient to produce the result.⁴

The way in which this applies to the first appearance of capitalism may be seen as follows. There was a set of conditions ($C_1, C_2, C_3, \dots C_n$) which, taken together, were sufficient to produce the first, unplanned appearance of capitalist, industrial society. C_1 may be taken to be a reliable banking system, C_2 double-entry book-keeping, C_3 a given level of technology, C_4 a balance of power (both within states and between neighbouring states) such that merchants could not easily be appropriated by sovereigns, and so on.⁵ The central point of Weber's theory was that the existence of these technical and economic conditions was not enough. China made many advances in banking and in science long before Europe. Marco Polo (assuming that he did in fact go there) was clear that in China he was visiting a much more advanced and impressive power than what he had left behind in Europe.

The key condition lacking in China, according to Weber, was the 'spiritual' factor, some equivalent of the Protestant ethic capable of inducing entrepreneurs to live austere, endlessly (and from one point of view irrationally) reinvesting their profits in further capitalistic activity, rather than turning themselves (or their progeny) into gentlemen. Weber's survey of world religions isolated four key aspects of Protestantism: it was *active, rational, this-worldly*, and *ascetic*.⁶ Protestantism thus

³ On these, and on more recent interpretations of Weber's entire oeuvre, see Turner (Ch. 4, this volume). Weber did not live to produce a book-length essay on Islam, but what it would have contained is discussed by Turner (1974). The literature on Weber is gigantic. For a recent, very short introduction to Weber, see Chalcraft (2006). For the debate over the Protestant ethic, see Marshall (1982) and Chalcraft and Harrison (2001).

⁴ More detail of this argument is given in the 2001 version of Gellner (1982). Mackie points out that in everyday life we name 'cause' that condition (of many) over which we have some control or are able to fix.

⁵ A good summary of these conditions is to be found in Collins (1986: 23–4, 28).

⁶ 'Rational' is here to be understood as systematic, relating all aspects of life to the given ethic and world view. See Brubaker (1984) for an excellent introduction to Weber on rationality. For a massive reconstruction of Weber's thought in terms of rationalization, see Schluchter (1989).

produced a very specific kind of personality—one driven to endless accumulation. In his examination of other religious systems, he was particularly interested to enquire what kinds of ‘self-making’ were encouraged or enabled for those who took their messages seriously.

Other religious currents often displayed several of these characteristics, but rarely all four. Confucianism, for example, was rational and this-worldly, but it was not ascetic; mercantile activity was tolerated, but the successful merchant would always want his son to become a scholar. Islam was active and this-worldly. But the influence of a warrior ethic prevented it from applying full rationality to its admittedly ascetic personal creed.

Buddhism was rational, but not very ascetic (it was specifically hostile to extreme asceticism); it did not encourage an active, this-worldly orientation on the part of its most dedicated followers. In traditional contexts its lay ethic was always inferior to the path of the monastic. Hinduism cannot be seen as a single religion, but in so far as it was ascetic, it was other-worldly. In Jainism, Weber found a major parallel to Protestantism. Despite the fact that, as in Buddhism, the hierarchical division between monastic and lay was fundamental to the organization of the religion, the laity were much more closely bound to monastic discipline than in Buddhism, so that the lay ethic was indeed active, rational, ascetic, and yet—by virtue of remaining in the world and often in commercial activities—this-worldly. Jains were, and often are, highly successful merchants. In this case, Weber’s explanation of the lack of appearance of capitalism in India shifted to the absence other conditions (C_1 , C_2 , etc.). In effect, his conclusion was that in pockets a capitalist spirit may have appeared, but that the overall extreme division of ethical, economic, and religious labour in South Asia militated against its being taken up or having an independent effect.

Weber’s fundamental point was that the appearance of a new form of society—industrial capitalism—was anything but inevitable. It was not the ‘natural’ outcome of processes inherent in pre-modern forms of society, but rather the surprising and unintended consequence of a combination of conditions, one of which was a peculiar and extreme form of ‘self-making’. Weber concludes *ROI* by reiterating that the ‘rationally formed missionary prophecy’—that is, the fully worked out and systematized versions of South Asian religions—had no consequences for the ‘ethic of everyday life’ of ordinary people:

The appearance of such [consequences] in the Occident, however—above all, in the Near East—with the extensive consequences borne with it, was conditioned by highly particular historical constellations without which, despite differences of natural conditions, development there could easily have taken the course typical of Asia, particularly of India. (*ROI*, 343)

As others have noted, Foucault’s interest in the ‘self-making’ project of Puritanism is but a reformulation of Weber’s fundamental question about the emergence of a new kind of person at that particular period in history.⁷

⁷ e.g. van Krieken (1990); Keyes (2002: 249–50).

WEBER ON HINDUISM AND INDIA

Specialists on South Asia are rarely motivated by a desire to answer such ambitiously large comparative questions about the origins of modernity. So it is perhaps not surprising that they do not engage with Weber's fundamental question. None the less, it is interesting that some find inspiration in aspects of his work, and others do not.

Few serious scholars of India or of Hinduism have concerned themselves with Weber's theories. Weber offered an overall picture of the development of Hinduism. He made many acute observations about the way in which Brahmans had transformed the bases of their religious pre-eminence over the centuries. He had a good understanding of the way in which Hinduism spreads into tribal areas and the role of Brahman priests in that process (*ROI*, 9–21, 43–4). He also grasped intuitively the fact that Islamic dominance removed the Kshatriyas as a counterbalance and enabled Brahman claims, till then often confined to the law books, to be enforced and put into practice (*ROI*, 125). He understood how priests were the bearers of Hinduism throughout South Asia (*ROI*, 153). All these are themes which have received attention in recent years, but this has not led to any noticeable revival of interest in Weber. Weber also had interesting insights into the ways in which Brahmanical teachings presupposed the individual (*ROI*, 169), a point which may anticipate the arguments of Louis Dumont.⁸ Dumont, however, did not care to acknowledge Weber as a major influence.

Symptomatic of studies of the history of India is the recent *magnum opus* by Sheldon Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men* (2006). This 684-page work takes in the whole sweep of South Asian history from the point of view of language use and the relation of language to power at different periods. It is highly sophisticated, both in its use of indigenous sources and in its handling of 'metropolitan' theory, thereby itself exemplifying the Sanskritic self-awareness, learning, and grasp of different idioms that is its own subject matter. Pollock's aim is ambitious: to understand the role of Sanskrit at different periods and to explain its relationship to power. The book offers a new periodization, or at least an entirely new way of thinking about the periodization of South Asian history. Furthermore, it is genuinely and skilfully comparative, invoking evidence from different periods of European history in comparison with South Asia. The richness of Pollock's documentation and the sheer number of diverse theoretical arguments being made may well limit the book's impact. Lesser mortals can only marvel at Pollock's skill in keeping so many balls in the air at the same time.

For present purposes the important point is that Pollock ignores Weber on South Asia and on South Asian religion completely. It seems to go without saying

⁸ For other ways in which Weber anticipated Dumont, see Gellner (1988: 86, 90).

(in a book where almost nothing goes without saying and every possible theoretical digression is pursued in a footnote somewhere) that nothing in *ROI* is worth discussing. On the other hand, Weber, the sociological theorist of the state, of ethnicity, and—above all—of legitimation, most certainly is worth engaging with. Pollock is particularly concerned to attack the—as he sees it—crass way in which historians have explained the proliferation of high Hindu cults and rituals sponsored by Hinduizing kings, whether in the subcontinent or in Southeast Asia (what Geertz called ‘the theatre state’), as driven by the need for legitimation. Weber is here rejected in the name of a relationship between culture and power that is neither functionalist nor yet Marxist—but what exactly it is, is hard to specify. Though Pollock rejects Weber’s stress on legitimation, at least on these questions of sociological theory Weber is taken sufficiently seriously to be considered worth arguing with.

THE INFLUENCE OF WEBER ON BUDDHIST STUDIES

While Max Weber’s observations about Hinduism have been largely neglected,⁹ what he wrote about Buddhism has often been an inspiration to later scholars.¹⁰ In so far as his writings on Buddhism have been used, it has rarely been in a context of his wider oeuvre.¹¹

The anthropology of Theravada Buddhism is rich in excellent, theoretically sophisticated studies. In the first place, there is the psychoanalytically inspired study of Burmese Buddhism by Spiro (1970); then there is the textually learned and Popperian historical study of Sri Lanka by Gombrich (1971), and the structuralist anthropological work on north-east Thailand of Tambiah (1970). Alongside these are many others, including the numerous early articles by Obeyesekere on Sri Lankan Buddhism, which in their search for meaning might indeed be characterized as Weberian; Obeyesekere had not yet gone in for the person-centred, psychoanalytic style of interpretive anthropology that was later to make him famous.

In different ways, all of these works might be said to have been influenced, broadly and generally, by Weber. It is Tambiah’s works that could be said to be fully Weberian in scope, expanding, as they do, from a single-village study to include the

⁹ At least in major reassessments of the field; but see the contributions to Schluchter (1984) and Kantowsky (1986).

¹⁰ This point has been made well by Keyes (2002: 246–7).

¹¹ For an assessment of Weber’s specific assertions about Buddhism in *ROI*, see Gellner (1988).

whole history of Buddhism ‘as a civilizational phenomenon’, the history of Thai kingship and the relation of the Buddhist monastic community to it, and the ways in which charisma was routinized by monks in the form of amulets and relics (Tambiah 1976; 1984).

It was Obeyesekere who first coined the term ‘Protestant Buddhism’ to refer to the kind of modernist, rationalizing, and political Buddhism propagated by the reformer Anagarika Dharmapala.¹² The term has been used in subsequent analyses by him and Gombrich (Gombrich and Obeyesekere 1988; Gombrich 1988) as well as by H. L. Seneviratne (1999). Although Seneviratne couches his argument as a criticism of Weber—for failing to see the modernizing and rationalizing potentials in Buddhism—this rather misses the point that Sri Lankan Protestant Buddhism arose only *after* influences from Christianity and Western anti-Christian trends like Theosophy. To count as a criticism of ‘the Weber thesis’, he would have to show that Theravada Buddhism—with its worship of relics, spiritual hierarchy, and scriptures preserved in a sacred language not available to the laity—had this potential before colonial influences.

As Keyes (2002: 246) points out, there are also many American students of Buddhism who absorbed a lively interest in Weber through their contact with Parsons’s Harvard school of sociology: Keyes himself (1978; 1983; 1993), Kirsch (1975), Spiro (1970), and Nash (1966). Coming from an interest in Weber first kindled by discussions with Steven Lukes and Mark Elvin, I myself attempted to apply Weberian framing ideas to a description of Mahayana Buddhism in Nepal (Gellner 1992; 2001a).

THE CASE OF THE MISSING THEORIST: WEBER, ORTNER, AND PRACTICE THEORY

I turn now to a different kind of influence, or lack of influence. Of course, Weber most certainly did influence Anthony Giddens and Pierre Bourdieu. But by the time they came to influence Sherry Ortner, one of the most widely read cultural anthropologists in North America, Weberian influence had, it would appear, been almost completely bleached out. Weber was identified with Geertz, and Geertz was seen to be the problem.

¹² The spread of this ‘Protestant Buddhism’ to Nepal is discussed in LeVine and Gellner (2005). Outside Sri Lanka, however, scholars have been reluctant to use the term ‘Protestant Buddhism’, preferring the more neutral ‘Buddhist modernism’.

Now Geertz was a more interesting thinker and anthropologist than many assume.¹³ His own anthropological work was by no means limited to the analysis of 'discourse', as his interpretive theory might imply (the *locus classicus* being his introduction to *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973)). But—and Geertz himself must perhaps take part of the blame for this, because he downplayed his earlier interests in development, politics, and so on—Geertz was identified, even by those such as Ortner who were taught by him, with a straightforward interpretivist position. And since Geertz himself invoked Weber to justify his position, it was assumed that Weber too was a Geertzian.

It is interesting to contrast Geertz with Louis Dumont in this regard. Geertz and Dumont appear as mirror images of each other, in so far as they are related to Weber. Geertz nails Weber's flag to his mast (Geertz 1973: 5)—but he is actually very much more Durkheimian than he would have admitted at that stage, particularly in the key role he gives to collective ritual in producing the 'uniquely realistic' 'moods and motivations' that characterize religious experience on his definition (1973: 90). Dumont, on the other hand, more or less erased Weber from his genealogy, but—given his interest in the rise of the West, the religious origins of individualism, and the India versus the West contrast that dominates his thinking—he is in fact deeply Weberian. Exaggerating only slightly for effect, it is possible to say that Geertz claimed to be Weberian, but was actually far more Durkheimian than he cared to admit (no doubt due to his education at Harvard with Talcott Parsons), whereas Dumont claimed to be a true descendant of the French school of Durkheim and Mauss (which indeed he was), but was just as much, and arguably even more so, a follower of Max Weber.

Ortner began her academic career with a Ph.D. at Chicago under Geertz. His influence was clear in her first monograph, *Sherpas through their Rituals* (1978, and still in print). It was published in a series called 'Cambridge Studies in Cultural Systems', of which Geertz was the general editor; few titles were published in the series, and it is now defunct. Ortner's book was a classic ethnographic study, in the sense that it provided a straightforward account of Sherpa life and Sherpa rituals. It was extremely well written and accessible. History was introduced only as part of the scene setting or in the notes. Ortner pointed out that Sherpa society was relatively open to immigrants, such that many Sherpas had relatives in other ethnic groups or castes; but the permeability or problematic nature of the category Sherpa was not a central part of the analysis. None the less, the book cannot be put into a straitjacket of stereotypical functionalist monograph. Unlike in Fürer-Haimendorf's book, *The Sherpas of Nepal* (1964), the stress was not on the cheerfulness and good spirits of the Sherpas. Instead, Ortner provided a very detailed and subtle ethnography and analysis of hospitality, which brought out its highly problematic, coercive underside. She drew attention to the parallels with worship of the gods, which also attempts to

¹³ A point made by both Ortner (1999a; 1999b: 138) and Keyes (2002: 242–3).

coerce them through offerings. In short, she focused on tensions within Sherpa society (including differences between 'big people' and 'little people') and on expelling evils, a major theme in Tibetan Buddhist ritual. The Sherpas are famous for their monastic exorcism ritual, Mani Rimdu, which has been much filmed and photographed. It is mentioned a few times in *Sherpas through their Rituals*. What is not discussed is the fact that, far from being a traditional part of 'ancient Sherpa custom', it was introduced from Tibet only in the first half of the twentieth century and was part of a conscious attempt on the part of the monks to 'clean up' Sherpa popular religion. This was a theme that Ortner was to turn to later. She did so as part of her discovery of 'practice theory', which formed part of a move away from a purely Geertzian theoretical stance.

Ortner's position is best approached through her well-known article 'Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties' (1984). She begins by identifying Weber with Geertz, as so many anthropologists do, and as Geertz encouraged them to do, as described above. Early on in the essay, she remarks that 'much of the later practice-centered work builds on a Geertzian (or Geertz-Weberian) base' (Ortner 1984: 130, 1994: 375). Now this essay was an attempt both to define a field and to push it in the direction she herself favoured; the history it offered was not dispassionate or objectivist, but, by her own admission, was a mythical charter.

What did it mean to be a 'practice theorist'? She allowed that the term 'practice' was extremely vague, so broad as to include anything human beings did. As with so many theories, it is best described in terms of what it was and is against, which was no doubt the point of constructing a historical dialectic from which it could emerge. It was, in the first place, against the pursuit of abstract social, historical, conceptual, or any other kind of structures divorced from the people who produce and reproduce them. In other words, there was an emphasis on *agency*—that is, the actor's point of view, and an attempt to capture what particular actors are striving to achieve. Second, it was against the notion that there is *the* Sherpa or Bongo-Bongo view of anything: rather, it insisted that all conceptual schemes are, if you like, ideologies: they are held more firmly by some people than by others, and serve some people's interests better than those of others. In other words, issues of *power* are an integral part of the analysis. We have seen that in her own ethnography this was already the case, though she had not explicitly theorized it in that way. Thirdly, there is *history*. Ortner's practice approach insists that the cultures studied not be seen as static or unchanging.

These concerns were meant to be illustrated and worked out in *High Religion: A Cultural and Political History of Sherpa Buddhism* (1989). While the theoretical aim of the book was to be an exemplar of 'practice theory', the main ethnographic problem was to explain the founding of celibate monasteries in the Sherpa area in the first half of the twentieth century. Sherpas are supposed to have migrated to the area just below (on the south side of) Mt Everest in what is now the state of Nepal around the end of the fifteenth century. For 400 years their priests were non-celibate, i.e. married lamas,

based in temples, attached to the Nyingmapa sect, and sometimes going for training in Tibet. Only in the twentieth century did Sherpas found celibate monasteries. Ortner begins by going back to the stories of temple foundings. She argues that underlying them is a *cultural schema*—a model, if you like—that is widely understood by Sherpas, and that presents a solution to the problems that they face. This schema has to do with the competition for prestige and position between rivals, often brothers, who do not inherit equally. Many Sherpa oral histories and stories relate events of opposition, both physical and ritual; the loser departs, and gains a powerful protector or patron; returns and defeats his opponent, wins over his followers, and founds a temple; the previous winner is now the loser, and has to cede the field.

Ortner attempts to show not only that the early temple foundings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries followed this schema, but that in the twentieth century the founders of the new celibate monasteries seem to have been following it too. The first two monasteries in Solu-Khumbu were founded by two rich brothers who were rival tax-collectors and headmen. Both, at different periods, had to depart and then returned. But why did they found celibate monasteries? This was a period of increasing centralization. The Sherpas were increasingly becoming incorporated within the state of Nepal. The Tibetan monks over the border who provided the spiritual leaders of the Sherpas were keen to expand their domain. The lay sponsors sought prestige. At the same time other Sherpas had increasing economic opportunities outside the Sherpa area, particularly in Darjeeling. Ortner claims that the small people who migrated to Darjeeling, earned money, and returned empowered to participate in monastery foundings could also be seen to be following the cultural schema in their relations with the big people, 'at least in a metaphoric sense' (1989: 167).

Sherry Ortner is, as she herself has described, engaged in the 'serious game' of convincing academic colleagues (1996: 217–18, 226–7); she is of course a highly skilful player, one of the best. In 'Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties' she recognizes, briefly, Weber's importance. Discussing the Marxist influence on 'the newer practice theory', she remarks:

Yet to speak of a Marxist influence in all of this is actually to obscure an important aspect of what is going on: an interpenetration, almost a merger, between Marxist and Weberian frameworks. In the sixties, the opposition between Marx and Weber, as 'materialist' and 'idealist', had been emphasized. The practice theorists, in contrast, draw on a set of writers who interpret the Marxist corpus in such a way as to render it quite compatible with Weber's views. As Weber put the actor at the centre of his model, so these writers emphasize issues of human praxis in Marx. As Weber subsumed the economic within the political, so these writers encompass economic exploitation within political domination. And as Weber was centrally concerned with ethos and consciousness, so these writers stress similar issues within Marx's work. Choosing Marx over Weber as one's theorist of reference is a tactical move of a certain sort. In reality, the theoretical framework involved [i.e. the 'new practice' position of which Ortner approves] is about equally indebted to both. (Ortner 1984: 147; 1994[1984]: 391)

Having said this, Ortner moves briskly on.¹⁴ One might remark that *not* making Weber one's theorist of reference 'is a tactical move of a certain sort' on her part: better, far, to cite Williams, Foucault, and Bourdieu. Dumont also was less than fulsome in his acknowledgement of Weber, though he did not write him out so completely. Now it would seem that what Ortner is thinking of here is still Geertz-Weber. This is despite the fact that two of the theorists she frequently cites, Giddens and Bourdieu, have a much deeper knowledge of Weber, both of them being well aware that the idealist Geertz-Weber is a wholly inadequate view of Weber's position; however, Ortner does not follow them in this. In fact, all the theoretical advances she claims for 'practice theory' are already there in Weber.

CONCLUSION

The probable reason why social and cultural anthropologists tend to ignore Weber is that he is too closely identified with sociology, and in particular with the complacent, developmentalist, worthy, but ultimately rather dull, sociology of Talcott Parsons. In so far as anthropologists ponder the inappropriateness of this view of Weber, they identify him with Geertzian interpretivism, which is now deemed out of date and inadequate. It is even possible to hold these two contradictory images of Weber—as Parsonian positivist and Geertzian interpretivist—simultaneously, primarily because anthropologists simply do not think about Weber very much.

Despite the fact that, from a purely intellectual point of view, Weber would serve anthropological purposes very well, there are too many sociologists engaged in the task of reclaiming Weber as an intellectual ancestor, of 'de-Parsonizing Weber'. Viewed in terms of ideological survival or product differentiation, Weber would be an unlikely choice for anthropologists. Allegiance to Weber would only muddy the boundary between social anthropology and sociology—a boundary fence that in most of the institutional contexts in which anthropologists find themselves, whether in Europe or in North America (South Asia is different), it would be most unwise for them to pull down, since sociologists are always far more numerous than anthropologists, and always have a more plausible claim on the public purse than anthropologists.

¹⁴ The only other reference to Weber of comparable length that I am aware of in Ortner's œuvre is in her essay 'Gender Hegemonies' (1996: 143–5), originally published in 1990. Here she begins from Weber's key analytical distinction between prestige and power, notes the relation to Dumont, and recognizes that Weber's typologies have to be seen as processual and dynamic, that it is necessary to return to the 'historical dynamism' of his argument, to avoid the theoretical impasses of the past.

In so far as anthropologists have come to Weberian themes, they have acquired them, unbeknown to themselves, from Foucault. Above all, Foucault's term 'governmentality', for governmental rationality, might have come straight out of Weber (as others have noted: Gordon 1987: 297). The connection between power and particular schemes (or discourses) of personal conduct, the origins of the particularly Western and modern 'techniques of the self', and the way in which the new Protestant view of the self emerges precisely at the time when a new form of statecraft is being evolved—these fundamental themes can be found in Weber before they were ever explored by Foucault.¹⁵ Bryan Turner points out that Weber's philosophy of history suffers from exactly the same weaknesses as Foucault's (Turner 1992: 129). This is in fact an indication of how much they share.¹⁶

A similar story of constructed and neglected intellectual antecedents could be told about the academic study of Buddhism and Hinduism, though it is less plausible to relate the difference to questions of disciplinary self-definition and survival. Whereas students of Buddhism have been happy to mine Weber for insights and inspiration, and some have also been happy to see him as a sophisticated forebear capable of bearing the weight of their theoretical ambitions, in the study of Hinduism and in the history of South Asia, Weber is ignored or dismissed. He is identified with outdated Orientalizing tendencies. The fact that with unrivalled scholarship and sophistication he addressed the same issues of power, culture, history, and agency that are being tackled by currently fashionable figures is forgotten.

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¹⁵ This connection has been brilliantly explored by Gorski in *The Disciplinary Revolution* (2001), an attempt—in his own words—'to combine Weber's sociology of religion with Foucault's theory of micropolitics' (2001: 28).

¹⁶ Turner (1992: 138) concludes: 'Neither Weber nor Foucault provided a phenomenology of the active body as an essential component of human knowledgeable agency.' Whether such a theory or phenomenology is indeed essential to an account of agency cannot be addressed here.

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SUGGESTED READING

The following are recommended: Gellner (2001a); Gorski (2001); Kantowsky (1986); Keyes (2002); Ortner (1984); and Weber (1958).

CHAPTER 3

MAX WEBER

RELIGION AND MODERNIZATION

HANS G. KIPPENBERG

MAX Weber, born in Erfurt (Germany) in 1864, enrolled in 1882 in Heidelberg in jurisprudence; in 1884 he carried on his study in Berlin, where he received a doctorate for a work on trading societies in Italian cities. In 1891 he did a post-doctoral essay on the importance of Roman agrarian history for government and private law. In 1893 Weber was appointed as professor of economics at Freiburg (Germany), and three years later he got a similar chair in Heidelberg, where he lived until 1918—since 1903 retired from his professorial duties for health reasons. In 1919 he accepted an appointment at the University of Munich, where he died in 1920.

CONDITIONS FOR THE RISE OF CAPITALISM

In 1891/2 Weber did an empirical survey of the situation of farm-workers on estates in East Prussia. In analyzing the data he recognized a dilemma of the noble owners: in becoming modern entrepreneurs producing for the market and hiring cheap Polish laborers, they undermine inadvertently the German presence in that region. But when

sticking to their traditional way of life, they are in danger of descending to the status of simple farmers (Weber 1892[1984]: 903). The dilemma, as Weber described it, bears witness to his keen interest in the condition and consequence of a change to a capitalist economy.

Weber did not see the emergence of a capitalist economy as self-evident, as he argued in a lecture on the “The Social Causes of the Decay of Ancient Civilization” in 1896. Most scholars ascribed the fall of Rome to catastrophic mass migrations; Weber, by contrast, saw it as an outcome of a gradual social change inside the Empire itself. Initially, ancient civic communities were based economically on slave labor. Because of their advantageous position on the coast, they engaged heavily in industry and trade. After the second century CE, because of the *Pax Romana*, when the supply of slaves dried up and the economic focus shifted inland, a self-sufficient estate economy gradually displaced the urban economy. When government officials and soldiers could no longer cover their needs through taxes, but had recourse to barter, little remained of the ancient capitalistic economy. The cities disintegrated into villages, the culture once again became rural. It was this reversal of development that allowed the dramatic devastation of the mass migrations.

It was Weber’s credo that it is the kind of social integration that determines the fate of capitalism. An intensely expanding political power, either in antiquity or in the modern age, seemed especially dangerous to him: “The bureaucratization of society will overcome capitalism in our society too, just as it did in Antiquity” (1909 [1976]: 277–8). This problem continued to bother Weber: “Faced with this superiority of the tendency of bureaucratization, how is it still possible to rescue some remnant of ‘individualist’ freedom of movement in any sense?”, he asked in 1917 (1914–18[1984]: 465).

RELIGIOUS ETHICS AND THE SPIRIT OF CAPITALISM

For a capitalist economy political conditions alone are not sufficient. What else had to be added is the subject of Weber’s famous essay, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904/5 [1930] and [2002]). Weber was not the first to notice a connection between Protestant regions and capitalism; but he was the first to attempt a serious explanation. Impending capitalism needed the support of an internal power, an ethos, because it first had to bring down a powerful opponent: *traditionalism*.

A person does not 'by nature' want to make more and more money, but simply to live—to live in the manner in which he is accustomed to live, and to earn as much as is necessary for this. Wherever capitalism has begun its work of increasing the 'productivity' of human labor by increasing its intensity, it has run up against the infinitely persistent resistance of this leitmotiv of pre-capitalist economic labor. (1904/5[2002]: 16)

This dogged resistance, which Weber almost ascribed to human nature, did not fade away by itself. It was broken by Puritanism, since it required from believers a methodical pattern of working and abstention from consumption. It was this manner of life that inadvertently pushed forward the development of capitalism. Weber's thesis elicited a heated debate. Though a couple of scholars were critical, in the end Weber was convinced that his argument about the Puritan origins of a methodical pattern of life conduct, fostering the development of Western capitalism, has withstood all objections (Weber 1910[1978]). Now he wanted "to correct the isolation of this study and to place it in relation to the whole of cultural development" (1904/5[1930]: 284). In her biography, Marianne Weber gives some valuable particulars about this shift in Weber's thought.

When around 1911 he resumed his studies on the sociology of religion, he was attracted to the Orient—to China, Japan, and India, then to Judaism and Islam. He now wanted to investigate the relationship of the five great world religions to economic ethics. His study was to come full circle with an analysis of early Christianity. And while in his first treatise on the spirit of capitalism Weber expressly set out to illuminate only one causal sequence, namely, the influence of religious elements of consciousness upon everyday economic life, he now undertook the larger task as well—namely, the investigation of the influence of the material, economic, and geographical conditions of the various spheres of culture with a view to their religious and ethical ideas. (Marianne Weber 1926 [1988]: 331)

The segment on "Religious Communities" in *Economy and Society* that was written 1913 but only published after his death in 1921/2 was an early outcome of this effort. Though Weber published his studies on *The Economic Ethic of the World Religions* separately, he did not see them as standing alone; he conceived of them, rather, as "preliminary studies and annotations to the *systematic* sociology of religions" (letter to the publisher Paul Siebeck, 22 June 1915). When the first of these studies appeared—*The Religion of China*—Weber pointed out that it was designed to be published at the same time as *Economy and Society* and "to interpret and complement the section on the sociology of religion (and, however, to be interpreted by it in many points)" (1915–20 [1989]: 236). Likewise, in 1919, when Weber reworked the text of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* for inclusion in his *Collected Papers on the Sociology of Religions*, he added that he hoped to treat ethnographic material, when systematically revising "the sociology of religion" (1904/5 [1930]: 30). Weber repeatedly emphasized the systematic nature of his sociology of religion. But how do we have to characterize it?

DISENCHANTMENT AS A PARTICULAR RELIGIOUS PATH TO MODERNITY

During his study of Confucianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Islam, and their relationship to economic ethics, Weber made an exciting discovery. It is recounted by Marianne Weber:

As soon as a man thinks ahead, he begins to feel that the structure of the world should be, or could become, a meaningfully ordered cosmos. He inquires about the relationship between good fortune and merit, seeks a justification for suffering, sin and death that satisfies his reason, and creates a 'theodicee'. In other words, religious feelings and experiences are treated intellectually, the process of *rationalization* dissolves the magical notions and increasingly 'disenchants' the world and renders it godless. Religion changes from magic to doctrine. And now, after the disintegration of the primitive image of the world, there appear two tendencies: a tendency towards the *rational* mastery of the world and one toward *mystical* experience. But not only the religions receive their stamp from the increasing development of thought; the process of rationalization moves on several tracks, and its autonomous development encompasses all creations of civilization—the economy, the state, law, science, and art. All forms of Western civilization in particular are decisively determined by a methodological *way of thinking* that was first developed by the Greeks, and this way of thinking was joined in the Age of Reformation by a methodological *conduct of life*. [. . .]. Weber regarded this recognition of the special character of [occidental] *rationalism* and the role it was given to play for Western culture as one of his most important discoveries. As a result, his original inquiry into the relationship between religion and economics expanded into an even more comprehensive inquiry into the *special nature of all of Western culture*. (Marianne Weber 1926[1988]: 333)

From this point onward, the process of "disenchantment" figured centrally in Weber's thinking about religion.

The notion "disenchantment" surfaced for the first time in 1913, in an essay in which Weber explained the fundamentals of his theory of action: "Some Categories of Interpretive Sociology". At the same time he worked on the section on "Religious Communities" and constructed it around this concept. Decisive passages effectively encapsulate Weber's view of its development. At the beginning of the process, according to Weber, "only the things or events that actually exist or take place played a role in life", though this situation changed early on with the rise of the magician: "Now certain experiences, of a different order in that they only signify something, also play a role. Thus magic is transformed from a direct manipulation of forces into a *symbolic activity*" (1978: 403). Regarding the outcome of the process, Weber concludes: "intellectualism suppresses belief in magic, the world's processes become disenchanted, lose their magical significance, and henceforth simply 'are' and 'happen' but no longer signify anything" (1978: 506). It was this development that, in Weber's view, divested the world of inherent meanings and ultimately transformed religion into a separate realm of its own.

For Weber the concept of disenchantment indicates the reciprocal relationship between religion and modernization. It is clearly distinct from the concept of secularization, which he also uses, but as a legal one. The concept of disenchantment does not indicate the rise of a godless world (as Marianne Weber seems to suggest), but the transformation of religion into a theoretical and practical sphere of its own, related to the unavoidable experience of a world devoid of meaning.

CONSTRUCTING RELIGIOUS HISTORY

Weber's thesis, that the rise of modern culture cannot be explained without taking into account religious history, was enabled by two new paradigms that had gained acceptance in religious studies since 1900. In Great Britain 'pre-animism' replaced the scheme of a continuous religious evolution, and in Germany a new type of historiography arose that focused on religious attitudes to the world. Both reconstructions of religious data were extremely helpful to Max Weber's attempt to conceive of modernization in terms of religious history, and the other way round.

It was a paper on "Pre-animistic Religion" (1900) by Robert Ranulph Marett (1866–1943) that established in a short time a powerful new paradigm in religious studies. According to Marett, an explanation of primitive religion as a belief in souls and as explaining unexpected natural processes, as E. B. Tylor had argued, was too intellectualistic. The origins of religion do not derive from an intellectual need for explanation, but from a primordial experience of uncertainty and dependence, an experience that persists in the modern world. Max Weber embraced Marett's approach as most other scholars of religions at that time did.

A second scholarly paradigm derived from German scholarship. German Orientalists were not tied to the politics of colonialism, as their British colleagues were, but engaged with religious meanings and their subjective appropriation. Their public forum became a series edited by Paul Hinneberg under the title *Die Kultur der Gegenwart* (*Contemporary Culture*). In 1906, two important volumes were issued, one on Oriental religions, another on Christianity as well as Israel and Judaism. Some of the most eminent scholars who contributed to these volumes also became authorities for Weber's *Religious Communities*: Julius Wellhausen on Israel and Judaism, Ignaz Goldziher on Islam, and Hermann Oldenberg on Hinduism and Buddhism.

These German Orientalists imagined religions as driving forces in establishing positive or negative attitudes toward the world. In his contribution Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918) presented a new account of the history of ancient Israel and Judaism. Critical analysis of the Bible had revealed that the fifth book of Moses,

Deuteronomy, was the book found in 621 BCE in the Temple in Jerusalem; this book required the worship of Yahweh exclusively in Jerusalem, and demanded the destruction of all other places of cultic worship outside Jerusalem. Before this time, biblical prophets like Amos had already proclaimed that these idolatrous practices were the reason for Yahweh's anger against Israel, and that pleasing Yahweh required loyalty and obedience to his commandments. Only when Judah was threatened with military defeat, however, was this message accepted by king and priests, since it offered an explanation for Israel's suffering. Henceforth, ethics defined the true Jew. But a new issue arose. Faithful believers obeyed God's laws yet still experienced suffering. This paradoxical situation stimulated the rise of a theodicy. This account of Wellhausen had an important bearing on Weber: ethics as means of salvation and the problem of theodicy are major concepts in his construction of the stages of disenchantment.

When Weber addressed Islamic history, he relied on Ignaz Goldziher (1850–1921). In his contribution to Hinneberg's series, Goldziher sketched a series of developments by means of similar concepts. Islam, when rising, was surrounded by Christian ideas of asceticism and world denial. Subsequently, however, these ideas were rejected, as Islam became a religion of war and conquest, aimed at ruling the world. But the one-sided emphasis on conquest provoked opposition from Sufis, who resisted a purely legal and political Islam and established world denial as a highly respected form of voluntary piety.

With regard to India, Weber relied on the researches of Hermann Oldenberg (1854–1920). According to Oldenberg, the gods in early India were simply personified powers of nature. This primordial view ceased, however, when the necessities of social life required gods who would protect law and morals. Moreover, these gods were approachable not only through sacrifice and prayer, but also through magic—a force that was expected to intervene directly in the course of events. From cosmological speculation about the efficacy of sacrifice and magic arose the notion of Brahman, understood as the unchanging essence of the universe, an essence that is also present in the individual (as Atman). Combined with the belief that the transmigration of the soul is dependent upon its karma, these notions formed the matrix on which Jainism and Buddhism emerged as religions of world denial.

The contributions to the manual of Paul Hinneberg reveal a particular point of view in reconstructing religious history. These Orientalists retrieved from their sources world views and ethics constitutive of human subjects and their practices. Similar considerations informed philosophers. Hermann Siebeck in a textbook divided historical religions into three categories: natural religions, which considered gods as saviors from external evil; morality religions, which viewed gods as guarantors of social norms and upheld a positive attitude toward the world; and salvation religions, which postulated a contradiction between the existence of God and the reality of evil in the world, and fostered an attitude of world denial (1893: 49). Siebeck's entire concept depended on an understanding of religious history terminating in "world denial".

RELIGIOUS GENEALOGIES OF MODERN INSTITUTIONS AND ATTITUDES

This approach proved particularly attractive to German scholars, who, for the most part, rejected the idea that history was governed by objective natural laws, and preferred to focus on its subjective, cultural dimension. From their point of view, not only capitalism, but other modern institutions and practices alike, required explanations based on actors and their beliefs. Accordingly, they incorporated religious history into their analyses of modernization, minimizing the impact of the Enlightenment.

There is no better opportunity to observe the relevance of this approach than to read the minutes of the first official meeting of German social scientists, which was held in Frankfurt in 1910 (Troeltsch 1911). At this event, Ernst Troeltsch argued that Christianity had generated three social forms: first, the church, an organization administering the means of salvation (for Troeltsch, the most powerful type); second, the voluntary sect, a community of truly committed believers; and third, mysticism, the embodiment of radical individualism. According to Troeltsch, this plurality of social forms was a consequence of the fact that the Christian “church”, confronted with the challenge of a life according to the realities of this world while upholding faith in the coming kingdom of God, had adopted Stoicism, distinguishing a perfect natural law embodied in man ruled by reason from a relative natural law requiring merely ethical control of emotions and passions. In contrast to the church, “sects” rejected the relative view of natural law and recognized nothing other than the severe ethical requirements of Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount. Finally, “mysticism” denied the inherent validity of the natural order on principle and relied on an interior divine light. By means of these distinctions, Troeltsch sought to make sense of the different practical attitudes to the world that Christianity had generated in the course of Western history and that had an impact on modern culture.

At the meeting, Troeltsch’s presentation immediately set off a heated debate among Ferdinand Tönnies, Georg Simmel, Eberhard Gothein, Martin Buber, Hermann Kantorowicz, and Max Weber. In this debate Weber clarified issues that were fundamental for his section on *Religious Communities*. First he opposed Tönnies, who argued that the various social forms of Christianity had been caused by their dependence on different economic classes. Weber rejected this explanation, holding that religious antagonisms were never caused by economic antagonisms. Second, he accepted the three types of social forms of Christianity that Troeltsch had outlined, but emphasized that, in reality, these three generally occurred in mixed forms. He also disputed Troeltsch’s assertion that the church had had a greater cultural impact than sects. Here, he cited the example of the United

States—the country Weber considered most religious in terms of numbers of believers and their level of commitment—where Christianity became strong and popular because it was organized by sects and not churches. Finally he reacted to Georg Simmel, who expressed doubt that Christianity could assume an effective *social* form at all due to its indifference to mundane issues and claimed that it has its genuine place only inside the intimate relation between the soul and God. Martin Buber urged a similar point, rejecting mysticism as a social form and identifying it as a purely psychological form. Responding to both, Weber remarked that even a world-rejecting religion involves practices necessary to prove one's convictions; these practices infuse all kinds of religion with a social dimension. Weber's remarks anticipate his later work that emphasizes the tremendous impact that world-rejecting religions had on the rise of modern institutions and attitudes.

DISSECTING “ACTION”: MOTIVATION VERSUS MEANING, RATIONALITY VERSUS CORRECTNESS

In order to incorporate the new paradigms of history of religions into his project, Weber dissected the category of action. In 1913, he published an essay on “Some Categories of Interpretive Sociology”, which—as he explained in a footnote—he hoped would provide “a systematic basis for substantive investigations”, including those in *Economy and Society* (1913[1981]: 179 n. 1). In the very same footnote, Weber declared that he intended “to separate sharply subjectively intended meaning from objectively valid meaning (thereby deviating somewhat from Simmel's method)”. Years later, in the first part of *Economy and Society*, he repeated his point: “The present work departs from Simmel's method...in drawing a sharp distinction between subjectively intended and objectively valid ‘meanings’, two different things which Simmel not only fails to distinguish but often deliberately treats as belonging together” (1978: 4). Weber posits this distinction in regard to his notion of action: “Action (including intentional omission and acquiescence) is always intelligible behavior towards objects, behavior whose ‘actual’ or ‘intended’ *subjective meaning* may be more or less clear to the actor, whether consciously noted or not” (1913 [1981]: 152). Weber recognized well that Simmel too had distinguished understanding the meaning of an action from understanding an actor's motives; but Simmel had not adhered to this distinction, he objected. Simmel indeed, like other representatives of vitalism, assumed that religions have their roots in an irrational dimension of human life—a claim central to what later became known as “Phenomenology of Religion”,

one of the master paradigms in twentieth-century religious studies. This was, however, a view to which Weber was opposed. According to him, religions provide actors with concepts of meaning. Even if an actor is unable to explicate these meanings, they nonetheless remain part of his or her social interactions. Weber insisted, therefore, that meaning differs from personal motivations, and that it must be retrieved by observation, not by empathy. Only when one appreciates this argument can one understand Weber's interest in looking for meanings governing social interactions. Such meanings are generated in religious communities.

Closely connected with the first distinction is another one that Weber draws between rational and correct action:

Subjectively rational instrumental action and action 'correctly' oriented toward objectively valid goals ('correctly rational') are two very different things. An action which the researcher is seeking to explain may appear to him to be instrumentally rational in the highest degree and yet be oriented to assumptions of the actor that are totally invalid to the researcher. Action oriented toward conceptions of magic, for example, is often subjectively of a far more instrumentally rational character than any non-magical 'religious' behavior, for precisely in a world increasingly disenchanted [or divested of magic], religiosity must take on increasingly (subjective) irrational meaning relationships (ethical or mystical, for instance). (1913[1981]: 154–5).

This distinction became the point of departure for analyzing religion in the section "Religious Communities":

Religiously or magically motivated behavior is relatively rational behavior, especially in its earliest manifestations. . . . Only we, judging from our modern views of nature, can distinguish objectively in such behavior those attributions of causality which are 'correct' from those which are 'fallacious', and then designate the fallacious attributions of causality as irrational, and the corresponding acts as 'magic'. (1978: 400)

That is to say, while 'rationality' of life conduct is independent of falsification or verification by empirical proof, it is, on the other hand, dependent on a religious disenchantment of the world. This disenchantment is caused not by an increasing body of knowledge but by acknowledging ethics and mysticism as subjective means of securing meaning in one's life. The primary place of disenchantment of the world is in the area not of knowledge but of religiously constituted meaning.

RELIGION AS COMMUNAL ACTION

Weber conceived of religion as a "particular type of communal action (*Gemeinschaftshandeln*)" (1978: 399). What Weber means by "community" (*Gemeinschaft*) and its

opposite, “society” (*Gesellschaft*), has been clarified by Klaus Lichtblau (2000). Weber was in need of a notion that explained the validity of rationality without referring either to correctness or to personal psychological motivations. Here he introduced the notion of communal action. Communal actions have a structure and laws of their own (*Eigengesetzlichkeit*); they are attached to social interactions as an “overarching relationship” and affect the exchange of goods and the obedience to rules and persons. The process of rationalization, Weber’s main concern, penetrates primarily the sphere of communal action, and only by this detour becomes an essential factor in supporting or obstructing certain types of social interactions. Although economic conditions are often of decisive causal importance for communities and communal actions, conversely, the economy is usually also influenced by the autonomous structure of communal action. Weber conceived of this interrelationship in terms of “elective affinity” between concrete communal structures and concrete forms of economic organization: whether they further or impede or exclude one another—whether they are ‘adequate’ or ‘inadequate’ in relation to one another. This perspective explains Weber’s abiding interest in religious communities as the matrix for practical attitudes to the world. The entire structure of *Economy and Society*, with its cross-references back and forth between different topical sections, rests on a model that traces interrelationships between types of communal actions and social orders.

Avoiding the difficult task of defining religion in general, Weber posits that an understanding of religious behavior “can only be achieved from the viewpoint of the subjective experiences, ideas, and purposes of the individuals concerned, in short from the viewpoint of the religious behavior’s ‘meaning’.” The most elementary forms of behavior motivated by religious or magical factors are oriented to *this* world.” Clarifying the last point, Weber quotes the Bible: “That it may go well with thee . . . and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon earth” (Deut. 4: 40; Eph. 6: 2 ff.) (1978: 399). It is most important to realize that, in contrast to cultural anthropologists, who use the category “meaning” epistemologically, Weber conceives of it as an expectation transcending the realities of the world. Weber’s entire exposition depends on this loaded understanding of “meaning”; the difference between religious and non-religious behavior lies, for him, solely in the subjective expectations of the actor, not in the type of action itself.

Weber was interested not in isolating religion, but in detecting its social effects on the constitution of social orders. This required a different approach from defining religion. Already in his essay on *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* he argued that any historical concept cannot be determined by way of definition. “It must be composed from its individual elements taken from historical reality.” “This is in the nature of ‘historical concept-formation’, which for its methodological purposes does not seek to embody historical reality in abstract generic concepts but endeavors to integrate them in concrete configurations which are always and inevitably individual in character” (1904/5 [2002]: 8–9). To attain that goal, Weber forged the instrument of the ideal type. Ideal types are not generic

terms, under which reality is subsumed; they are notions, by means of which an observable reality can be analyzed in terms of the ‘meaning’ encoded in an action. The instrument of the ideal type enables the scholar to recognize subjective ‘meaning’ even in actions that appear dominated by mundane interests. From Weber’s perspective, via the exchange of practical meaning between individuals and classes, world views and ethics of religious communities are permeating the social orders of law, politics, and, not least, economics.

TYPES OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

In order to bring the various types of religious communal actions into sharper focus, Weber drew, upon the concept of “symbolic representation” that Hermann Usener had introduced in 1896. The choice was well-founded. Usener developed an approach to religion that did not privilege unmediated human experience at the expense of human symbolic expression. The earliest human experience of the unfathomable powers as “mana”, “orenda”, “maga”, or “charisma” constituted practical attitudes towards the world; by means of a process of symbolic abstraction, they crystallized into distinct spiritual beings who answered to the human quest to live in a “meaningful world”.

In Weber’s view, that quest went hand in hand with the emergence of various types of religious specialists, which Weber specified according to their manner of mediating. He identified the magician, the priest, the prophet, and the intellectual as divergent types concerned with conceiving and controlling the mysterious powers and evoking highly different expectations among their followings. Though he continually speaks about development, he does not present the historical data as cases of a linear evolution, but as evidence for a differentiation, as his examples drawn from the past as well as the present demonstrate.

The starting point is the magician, a figure whose charisma is represented by ecstasy. “For the laymen this psychological state is accessible only in occasional actions. . . . [It] occurs in a social form, the *orgy*, which is the primordial form of religious community (*Vergemeinschaftung*)” (Weber 1978: 401). Urged on by political necessities, this occasional form of association was replaced by more regular ones. In this context, Weber points to the interdependence of community and society: “There is no concerted [communal] action (*Gemeinschaftshandeln*), as there is no individual action, without its special god. Indeed, if a [social] association is to be permanently guaranteed, it must have such a god” (1978: 411). By this route, the gods of religious communities became “guardians of the legal order”, a development accompanied by the emergence of priests and stable cults

that, together, ensured the permanence of social association, while believers, in their practical lives, began conceiving of the entire world as an “enduringly and meaningfully ordered cosmos” (1978: 430). Historically, acceptance of this postulate stimulated the spread of legal orders and ethical requirements, while simultaneously eliciting an awareness of the rift between expectation and the inevitable experience of a reality devoid of meaning. In this circumstance, according to Weber, prophets arose to furnish an explanation for this experience and to address the increasing ethical demands that the gods seemed unable to answer. In order to specify different types of prophecy, Weber adopted from the scholarship of his time the distinction between a strict, transcendent God who demands loyalty, and a divine being that is immanent in man and can be approached by contemplation. The former conception dominated in the Middle East and was at the origin of Western rational life conduct, while the latter conception prevailed in India and China. The two types correspond, respectively, to Weber’s “ethical” and “exemplary” forms of prophecy. Finally, turning to intellectuals, Weber presented this group as driven by “metaphysical needs”, by the urge to reflect on ethical and religious questions and to “understand the world as a meaningful cosmos and to take up a position toward it” (1978: 499). These intellectuals play a crucial part in suppressing belief in magic and promoting the world’s disenchantment.

When communities around these specialists included laymen, their needs had to be met; accordingly, religions showed variations according to “what religion must provide for the various social strata” (1978: 491). Different social strata ideologically adopted world views and ethical doctrines that conformed to their economic and political position. Thus, the religious preferences of peasants, a stratum dependent on the unpredictability of nature, were mostly for tradition and magic, while warrior nobles inclined toward a religion of conquest, and bureaucrats toward a manipulation of religion as a means to domesticate the masses. The religious preferences of bourgeois strata were less uniform, dependent on the bourgeoisie’s economic situation and its access to political privileges.

RELIGIONS OPERATING IN THE DISENCHANTED WORLD

Weber directed his comparison to religions that developed a fully fledged congregational religiosity, rather than only occasional gatherings. Such congregations faced a major challenge, however, when religion took the direction of world rejection as the means to salvation. For, in Weber’s account, the more a religion of salvation developed

and became systematized and internalized as an *ethic of commitment*, in contrast to an ethic of compliance with laws, the more its adherents experienced ‘tensions’ with the world—tensions that elicited new forms of religiosity.

Weber for the first time sketched this truly revolutionary analysis of religion in the modern world in the section on Religious Communities in *Economy and Society* (1978: 576–610). He later revised and expanded that outline in his “Intermediate Reflections” (*Zwischenbetrachtung*) 1915 [1946]). Necessarily, tensions a rise between ethics requiring brotherly love and the ethically neutral autonomous spheres of economics, politics, sexuality, and art; the “*Zwischenbetrachtung*” added science. These tensions are resolved by either fleeing the world or mastering it, by either mysticism or ascetism. These new religious practices are typical and fundamental to religions operating in the disenchanting world.

Weber conceived of modern culture not as godless culture, as Marianne Weber suggests in her account. The rational culture, with its awareness of the unethical character of the social orders and powers, unleashes new kinds of religiosity. Weber’s exposition abounds in examples. When Calvinism abandoned the prohibition of usury, due to the inherent forces of economics, it organized charity for the poor and needy. Mystical religions chose the opposite path and practiced—at least in principle—a loving self-surrender: not for the sake of the poor, but for the sake of surrender itself. Likewise, in the sphere of politics, congregational religiosity did not merely oppose the use of violence by the state; it favored either a world-fleeing pacifism or an active employment of force to fight the powers of sin. In the case of sexuality and art, practices of a re-enchantment of the world surfaced that rivaled world rejection: eroticism and art became means of escaping “the cold skeleton hands of rational orders” (1915 [1946]: 347).

The less the inhabitants of modern culture are able to find meaning in nature and history, the more the quest for meaning is thrown back onto the individual. In this context, the religions handed down from the past are turned into sources of conduct of life, based on subjective individual decisions. In this guise, the gods are still alive, as Weber declared in his famous speech “Science as Vocation” (1917): “Today the routines of everyday life challenge religion. Many old gods ascend from their graves; they are disenchanting and hence take the form of impersonal forces. They strive to gain power over our lives and again they resume their eternal struggle with one another” (1917: 149)

For years, Weber’s sociology of religion was read as a theory of secularization: With the rise of modernity, social institutions are separated from religious ones, and religious beliefs and practices are declining and marginalized to the private sphere. But this reading does not correspond to the relationship that Weber assumed between religion and modernization. According to him, the process of disenchantment when establishing secular orders as autonomous spheres becomes a propelling force for new types of religiosity; “meaning” is moving from the objective side of history and nature to the side of subjective conviction; institutional religion

yields to individual religiosity. Recent studies of the contemporary rise and spread of apocalypticism and esotericism would benefit from Weber's sociology of religion, if they would take notice of his concept of disenchantment.

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CHAPTER 4

MAX WEBER ON ISLAM AND CONFUCIANISM

THE KANTIAN THEORY OF SECULARIZATION

BRYAN S. TURNER

INTRODUCTION: RELIGION AS A 'MORALIZING FAITH'

THERE has been considerable academic debate about the coherence or otherwise of Max Weber's sociology as a whole. Much of the analysis has focused on the notion of rationalization as the master theme of his sociological work. By rationalization, Weber referred to a set of interrelated social processes by which the modern world had been systematically transformed into a rational system. Among these various processes, rationalization included the systematic application of scientific reason to the everyday world and the intellectualization of mundane activities through the application of systematic knowledge to practice. Rationalization was also associated with the disenchantment of reality that is the secularization of values and attitudes. The sociology of religion was therefore a central aspect of Weber's

sociological interests as a whole. An influential interpretation of this theme of religion and rationalization was developed by Friedrich Tenbruck (1975; 1980) in his essays on the thematic unity of Weber's work.

Tenbruck questioned Marianne Weber's description of the posthumous two-volume *Economy and Society* as Weber's principal work (*Hauptwerk*). In directing attention away from *Economy and Society*, Tenbruck argued that there is no particular key to the interpretation of *Economy and Society*, precisely because that text is a conglomerate of disparate elements which do not constitute a recognizable major work. Instead, Tenbruck identified the underlying anthropological dimension of Weber's sociology: namely, his account of humans as 'cultural beings'. This cultural activity involved the construction of the meaningfulness of the everyday world, especially with respect to the brute necessity to satisfy economic needs. Tenbruck thus emphasized the centrality of the idea of 'the Economic Ethic of World Religions': namely, Weber's interest in the sociology of religion with respect to the rationalization process. The various studies of Judaism (1952), Confucianism and Taoism (1951), Hinduism and Buddhism (1958*b*), and the incomplete studies of Islam and Islamic law, or Shari'a (Turner 1974), represent a series of empirical applications of the theme of religious prescriptions for economic behaviour. These works on the economic ethics represent the principal consolidation of the initial argument of the essays on the Protestant ethic. The Protestant ethic thesis was simply a component of the central analysis of religion and economics which occupied the *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religions soziologie* (Weber 1921). Tenbruck also underlined the special importance of the 'Author's Introduction' (*Vorbemerkung*) to the sociology of religion as a whole, which was included by Talcott Parsons in his 1930 translation of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Weber 1976). Weber wrote an additional introduction in 1913, which was published in 1915 with the title 'Intermediate Reflections' (*Zwischenbetrachtung*) and which was conceived after the 'Author's Introduction' was already in print. The *Zwischenbetrachtung* was translated by Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills in *From Max Weber* (Gerth and Mills 1961: 323–62) as 'Religious Rejections of the World and their Directions'. Tenbruck's thesis is thus that the analysis of 'the Economic Ethic of the World Religions' dominated Weber's intellectual activities from around 1904 to 1920. Because his publications on religion occupied this creative period of Weber's life, it is these texts on religion and economics that should be regarded as his principal work, rather than *Economy and Society*.

In this exegetical framework, the thematic unity of these texts in the comparative sociology of religion is a study of the ways in which religious orientations towards the world did or did not lead to an ethic of world mastery: that is, to a process of rationalization. In the 'Introduction', the 'Intermediate Reflections', and 'the Author's Introduction', Weber developed a universal and historical conceptualization of these rationalization processes. This development is wholly compatible with Weber's

notion of interpretative sociology, because it was these meaning systems within religion that generated specific world views that acted as the motivations for action. This interpretation is also consistent with the idea of the fatefulness of world images in Weber's meta-theory, because it was the irrational quest for salvation which generated a rational solution to our being in the world (Turner 1981).

Weber's interest in the religious quest for salvation resulted in an anthropology of the rules which govern the practical conduct of life (*Lebensführung*). In this anthropology of conduct Weber distinguished between a theodicy of good fortune (*Glück*) and a theodicy of suffering (*Leid*). In coming to terms with fortune and suffering, human beings extend their conception of their personal experience beyond the everyday material world. It is these experiences of fortune and suffering which undermine the rational or purposive categories of pragmatic orientation to reality. However, it was primarily within the monotheistic and ascetic religions that the rationalization of the problem of theodicy reached its ultimate fruition. The development of the concept of a universal God in a framework of history and salvation, demanding a human quest for salvation, produced a rational theodicy of reality as such. In short, it was the legacy of the Judaeo-Christian world, based upon the notions of ethical prophecy and monotheism, which was crucial to the development of a radical solution to theodicy in terms of highly intellectual, rational soteriologies. For example, the intellectual rationalism of the Protestant sects was critical in pushing European civilization towards a pattern of religious individualism involving strict norms of personal discipline and salvation. In short, Weber was in the process of developing a comprehensive sociology of piety as the core issue of his sociology of religion.

Many of these issues were taken up and further elaborated by Wilhelm Hennis (1988) in his important study of Weber in his essays in reconstruction. For Hennis the central question in Weber's sociology concerns the issues of personality and life orders. Hennis argued that it was the historical development of *Menschentum* that was the central issue in Weber's sociology: namely, how certain cultural developments produced a particular type of personality and a particular rational conduct of life (*Lebensführung*), particularly in the idea of a calling as part of the constitutive question of modernity (Staught and Turner 1986). In more precise terms, Weber's sociology addressed the historical origins of life regulation as rational conduct in the development of modern vocations in the social world. Weber's analysis of the ascetic regulation of life is therefore simply one dimension of this analysis of *Lebensführung*, or the study of the personality effects arising from particular kinds of religious activity. The rationalization theme to which Weber draws attention in the Protestant ethic thesis involved a transformation of discipline and methodology relevant to particular forms of economic life regulation. Weber's analysis of capitalism was concerned not so much to explain its economic structure and functions as to understand the ways in which forms of capitalist economic activity had an 'elective affinity' with forms of personality and life order.

By 'personality' Weber did not have in mind what we would now call 'the personality system' within an empirical social psychology, but rather what kind of ontology would be produced by different life orders; that is, Weber asked an existential question from the perspective of German cultural values.

The intellectual motivation behind the exegesis of Hennis and others such as Keith Tribe (1989) was to re-establish Weber as a figure in classical political philosophy, thereby emphasizing his wish to understand the political order of society as the basis of ethics and ontology. In this respect Weber belongs to a tradition of political philosophy that started with Aristotle, in the sense that Weber's sociology of religion sought to contrast the virtues and habitus behind the various world religions, since out of these different personality constructs there evolved the virtues (or pieties) of different religions.

These exegetical issues, particularly as they impinge upon questions of liberalism and democracy, have dominated much of the philosophical debate about the implications of Weber's work in contemporary Germany. This critical (re)interpretation of Weber was specifically directed against Talcott Parsons's interpretation of Weber as one of the founding fathers of the sociology of action. By contrast, Hennis has been explicit in attempting to re-establish Weber as contributing to a German tradition of political and philosophical enquiry. According to Hennis, Weber's central question was about the ethical character of human existence, not the narrower one of the cultural foundations of Western capitalism in the theology of the Protestant sects. As a result, we can better understand the claim that 'Weber was a *German* thinker, from the land of "Dr Faustus"' (Hennis 1988: 195). The tragic problem of Weberian sociology is that the heroic personality of Protestant asceticism is no longer compatible with the secular world of capitalism—'Today the spirit of religious asceticism—whether finally who knows?—has escaped from the cage'—as he declared at the end of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Weber 1976: 181).

This interpretation of Weber is in fact compatible with an article by Karl Löwith that first appeared in the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* in 1932, and was translated in 1982 as *Max Weber and Karl Marx* and was recently reprinted in a new edition in 1993. Löwith sought to demonstrate that, regardless of the very real differences between Karl Marx and Weber, their sociological perspectives were joined by a common philosophical anthropology, as a result of which there is an important convergence in their attitudes towards the destructive features of bourgeois civilization which Marx developed through the idea of alienation and Weber through the theme of rationalization. In terms of their ontology, both Weber and Marx saw capitalism as a destructive economic system, but one which also opened up new possibilities through the transformation of tradition.

The common theme in these accounts is the recognition of the profoundly ethical character of Weber's social theory and its underpinning in an anthropological theory of personality and life orders. Both Tenbruck and Löwith share this interest

in the religious theme within Weber's life and work, particularly the focus on questions relating to theodicy in which the rationalization theme was a product of the existential question of meaning. One can conclude that, first, the differences between Tenbruck and Hennis (between seeing Weber as either a sociologist or a political philosopher) are not significant. Both insist on the ethical character of Weber's work. We can argue that Weber was working towards a sociology of piety: namely, the rules of pious activity in the everyday world. Piety eventually produces 'character' as a result of such training. Secondly, we can better understand Weber's concern for the interconnections between piety and ethics by recognizing the long-lasting impact of Immanuel Kant's philosophy of religion on Weber's sociology as a whole.

In his comparative studies, Weber sought to preserve the view that the radical message of Protestant Christianity involves a heroic struggle for self-mastery or piety, the consequence of which is the radical transformation of the traditional world. For Weber, there were two related issues here. In order for the radical ethic of Christianity to function, religion had to be clearly separated from the state, otherwise the religious ethic was subordinated to the secular interests of power. This fusion of religion and politics constituted the problem of 'caesaro-papism', the authoritarian domination of society by the confusion of sacred and secular power. Weber's view of the necessary separation of religion and politics is a core aspect of liberal philosophy, but in the German case it also reflected Weber's experience of the political legacy of Bismarck and the *Kulturkampf* in which the German chancellor had successfully manipulated anti-Catholic liberal sentiment to political advantage, in simultaneously attacking clerical control of education and traditionalists within the Reich. Weber's views on political power reflected his experiences of Bismarck's statecraft, which had destroyed many of the institutions that could have kept the state accountable to parliament. Bismarck had destroyed liberalism and reinforced the political passivity in Germany that was also the legacy of Lutheranism, which defended law and order over liberty of conscience.

As a liberal, Weber was not sympathetic to Catholicism, and he was in any case deeply influenced by his mother's Protestant piety, specifically by the moral teaching of William Ellery Channing, who emphasized rational control over the instincts rather than emotional experiences of divinity (Mitzman 1971: 29). Catholicism remained an issue in Weber's sociology of religion. While he did not devote much explicit attention to the social consequences of Catholicism in Europe, devoting most of his intellectual energies to Protestantism, we can assume that he regarded Catholic piety as a conservative social force.

Furthermore, religion as an ethical activity of self-creation had to be distinct from popular religion as merely a set of rituals for bringing good fortune and good health. Religion as a radical faith of self-transformation had to be concerned not with *Gluck* but with *Leid*. This was the problem of routinization, in which a radical religion of inner conviction became merely a therapeutic practice of folk religiosity.

In adopting these moral issues from Kant, Weber also had to, as it were, look over his shoulder to Friedrich Nietzsche, and especially to the questions: Are these Christian morals in fact merely driven by resentment, in which case they are not a self-reflexive moral world view. And secondly, is a warrior religion somehow 'healthier' than the religion of slaves—namely, early Christianity? To what extent is Islam, which does not privilege suffering and repentance, healthier (a life-affirming doctrine) than the religion of the crucified Jesus?

Given Weber's ethical concerns, both Islam and Confucianism offered him two useful case studies, since, as far as Weber was concerned, neither wholly rejected caesaropapism. First, Weber's treatment of Confucianism is somewhat ambiguous because, while he classified it as a world religion, in practice he interpreted it as the ethics of the literati within the Chinese court system. Secondly, while Weber was forced to recognize Islam as a member of the monotheistic, Abrahamic tradition, in practice he interpreted it as a warrior religion in which there was no fundamental separation of secular and sacred power. Confucianism was simply a court ethics whose principal value was filial piety. For Weber, Islam was a warrior religion whose soteriological doctrines were transformed by a history of imperial power. Christian ethics were also corrupted by the history of the medieval Catholic Church; but the radical message of the primitive church was constantly revived by the Protestant sects whose ethical demands produced a reformation of personality.

THE KANTIAN LEGACY

The word 'religion' (*religio*) has two distinctive roots. First, *relegere* from *legere* means to bring together, to harvest, or to gather (in). Secondly, *religare* from *ligare* means to tie or to bind together. The first meaning indicates the religious foundations of any social group that is gathered together, while the second points to the disciplines or morality that are necessary for controlling human beings and creating a regulated mentality. The first meaning describes the role of the cult in forming human membership, while the second indicates the regulatory framework of religious practices and doctrine that discipline the passions. This dichotomy formed the basis of Kant's philosophical analysis of religion and morality. In *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* Kant (1998) distinguished between religion as cult (*des blossen Cultus*), which seeks favours from God through prayer and offerings to bring healing and wealth to its followers, and religion as moral action (*die Religion des guten Lebenswandels*), which commands human beings to change their behaviour in order to lead a better life. Kant further elaborated this

argument through an examination of 'reflecting faith', compelling human beings to strive for salvation through faith rather than the possession of religious knowledge. The implication of this distinction was that (Protestant) Christianity was the only true 'reflecting faith', and in a sense, therefore, the model of all authentic religious intentions. Kant's distinction was fundamentally about those religious injunctions that call human beings to (moral) action and hence demand that humans assert their autonomy and responsibility. These authentic moral demands in true religions contrast sharply with those folk practices that are essentially magical in seeking a technology to manipulate the world. In order to have autonomy, human beings need to act independently of God. True religion is a technology of the self; false religions are a magical technology of manipulation. The real psychological tension in radical Christian soteriology was that the faithful could not influence God by prayer or magic, and hence divinity was hidden from the eyes of the believer. In a paradoxical fashion, Christianity implies the tragic 'death of God' because it calls people to freedom, and hence the Christian faith is ultimately self-defeating.

Alongside these concepts of life orders and personality, Weber developed the idea of various spheres of life into which the world is divided. These different spheres make demands on both the individual and social levels, and can combine or conflict with each other. This analysis of the spheres of life in the two lectures on 'politics as a vocation' and 'science as a vocation' found a more elaborate classification in the 'Intermediate Reflections', where Weber identified a wider range of life spheres or value spheres: economics, politics, aesthetics, the erotic, the intellectual, and the religious. The different world religions represent different resolutions of the various levels of contradiction between religion and 'the world'. One central question for Weber was whether religion is simply a sphere of values or in fact the principle that guarantees or determines the other spheres. Is religion a component of life spheres ('the world') or that source of values that determines the life spheres of the world? If religion is in tension with the other spheres (as in the notion of religious orientations and their rejection of the world), then Weber's sociology implies a special status for religion. If religion is simply one institution, then there is no essential conflict. The problem of historicism implied that through the differentiation of the spheres of life with secularization, religion had become a separate institution alongside the other life spheres. The differentiation of the spheres meant that no single coherent meaningful life was possible, hence this polytheism of values was the 'fate' of modern people (Gerth and Mills 1991: 357). The attempt to preserve charisma through the cultivation of 'a cosmic brotherhood' could only be an aristocratic religious response, unlikely to succeed in an age of mass democracies and rationalized bureaucratization of politics. In this Weberian sense, therefore, religious studies are a product of the differentiation of the life spheres, the disenchantment of reality, and the assimilation of religion by culture.

Weber adhered to the assumption that it is possible to create a hierarchy of religions in terms of their inner consistency to a radical this-worldly asceticism. Weber may therefore have accepted a hierarchy of values mapped on to a hierarchy of religions, with Calvinism and Lutheranism at the top of this chain of radical engagement with the world, through the emotional and pietist sects, to the Old Testament prophets of Judaism. Islamic prophecy fell below that of Christianity and Judaism, but was more significant than the religions of the Orient: namely, Confucianism and Buddhism. Weber's study of the economic ethics of the world religions implied a hierarchical order of the ethical contents of religious rejections of the world and their consequences. This 'intellectual solution' has been frequently criticized, and any hierarchical arrangement of religion has in recent scholarship been rejected as a species of Orientalism (Said 1978). The notion of a clear hierarchy of religious orientations to the world does not fit easily into a global context of religious studies. Weber's attempts to create a value-free science of society left him poorly equipped to offer specific advice or guidance with respect to desirable ends of action, and the values that underpin the idea of a secular vocation appear to be arbitrary. Weber's secular science of society has been rejected by philosophers such as Leo Strauss (1953), who did not accept Weber's sociology as an adequate grounding for politics or the modern study of religions. In defence of Weber, although his views may be unfashionable, they raise a number of challenging questions that continue to influence modern analysis: Is something equivalent to the ascetic piety of Puritanism necessary as a challenge to the secular spheres, especially the spheres of politics and economics?

These Kantian principles were translated into Weber's distinction between mass and virtuoso religion in his *Sociology of Religion* (1966). While the mass of the population seeks comfort from religion, especially healing, the virtuosi fulfil the ethical demands of religion in search of spiritual salvation or enlightenment. The religion of the masses requires saints and holy men to satisfy their needs; hence charisma is in the long run corrupted by the demand for miracles and spectacles. More importantly, Weber distinguished between those religions that reject the world by challenging its traditions (such as inner-worldly asceticism) and religions that seek to escape from the world through mystical flight (such as other-worldly mysticism). The former religions (primarily the Calvinistic radical sects) have had revolutionary consequences for human society in the formation of rational capitalism. The implication of this tradition is paradoxical. First, Christianity (or at least Puritanism) is the only true religion (as a reflecting faith), and secondly, Christianity gives rise to a process of secularization that spells out its own self-overcoming (*Aufhebung*).

The most influential account of this 'moralizing faith' of course was presented in Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, in which he argued that the religious practices of the virtuosi had been taken out of the monastery and into the ordinary household, and from there piety, or 'this-worldly asceticism', had

undertaken ‘to penetrate just that daily routine of life with its methodicalness, to fashion it into a life in the world’ (Weber 1976: 154). Perhaps the most celebrated version of this penetration of the world in Britain was undertaken by John Wesley (1703–91) and the Methodist chapels. The Wesleyan sect took its name ‘Methodism’ from the methods by which the laity came to regulate their lives, such as modesty in dress, regularity of prayer, and acts of charity towards the poor. The sociological consequences are well known (Thompson 1963). Pious practice and biblical study produced a disciplined and literate Methodist laity, which came to exercise some degree of political and cultural leadership among the British working class. As a result, Methodists came to be predominantly a comfortable bourgeoisie, moving gradually away from their original piety. The experience of Methodists came to be identified by sociologists of religion as a key feature of a more general process of secularization.

In summary, a true religion is one which is motivated by moral dispositions, and it has been noted that in Kant’s account there is no real need for revelation, because religion involves inward commitment to a moral order. Hence Kant argued that most of humanity were in fact committed to adherence to what he called ‘faith’—that is, the institutional structures of religion. The various faiths were merely popular manifestations of a more serious religious vocation, which was available to the elite (Kant 1998: 116–17). When we describe somebody as a Protestant, a Muslim, or a Buddhist, we are in reality describing their faith, rather than the true religion. Weber’s ethical sociology appears to accept this view at least implicitly: for example, in the discussion of the routinization of charisma, and the distinction between the mass and the religious virtuosi.

THE SOCIOLOGY OF ISLAM

Weber did not produce a complete study of Islam, and his view of Islam has to be reconstructed from a variety of sources, most notably his sociology of law and his classification of types of prophecy. By comparison with his work on Protestantism and the ‘religions of Asia’, Weber’s sociology of Islam has been somewhat neglected. The principal exceptions have been Maxime Rodinson’s *Islam and Capitalism* (1978), which appeared originally in 1966, my own *Weber and Islam* (Turner 1974), and Wolfgang Schluchter’s edition on Islam (1987), which has been translated as *Max Weber and Islam* (Huff and Schluchter 1999). These works interpret Weber’s commentary on Islam as an aspect of his more general project: namely, to show why modern, rational capitalism appeared uniquely in the Christian West.

In retrospect, I now see Weber’s intention within both a broader and a narrower framework. Let us start with his more general set of questions. First, Weber sought

to understand the status of Muhammad as an ethical prophet, and how the Prophet articulated a set of revelations in the Qur'an to challenge the traditional values of Arab society. In this respect, we can see the commentary on early Islam as a contribution to the more general study of authority, of which charismatic authority was a major dimension. Weber's view of the Prophet, by comparison with his analysis of the Old Testament prophets in *Ancient Judaism*, was not complimentary, and Weber was more impressed by the Prophet as a military leader who creates a state. On this basis, Weber developed a set of significant contrasts between Christianity and Islam. For example, Islam has no church as such, and no sacerdotal priesthood. The *ulema* do not exercise authority over institutionalized grace, and their authority is not derived directly from the Prophet but from their training and the consensual recognition they receive from the community; whereas in the Roman Catholic Church, religious authority is ultimately inscribed in papal authority and the bishops, such that the 'keys of grace' are located in a centralized, hierarchical, and ultimately bureaucratic structure.

In the case of Islam, Weber was aware of an important difference between Shi'ism and Sunni Islam. While the Shi'ites identified authority with the descendants of the Prophet and anticipated the eventual return of a spiritual leader (the *Imam*), the Sunni tradition recognized the caliphate as the legitimate system of authority. The pre-Islamic Iranian priestly model of despotism was imitated by later Islamic regimes, whose aristocratic power was legitimized by the *'ulama*. For example, the works of al-Mawardi (974–1058) described a rigid social world composed of aristocratic horsemen, priests, peasants, and merchants. The model was both functional and hierarchical. In response to these despotic institutions, political conflict in Islam has subsequently been organized around utopian criticism of the urban hierarchy, a utopian opposition that often appeals nostalgically to the egalitarian solidarity (*asabiyya*) of the foundation community. For example, in the Iranian revolution of 1977–9, Ayatollah Khomeini mobilized the oppressed and the innocent in the name of a radical Islamic state against the urban elite, who were the principal agents of the Shah's authoritarian programme of economic modernization. The revolution involved a successful alliance between the clergy behind Khomeini, sections of urban working class, and the dispossessed (*Mostaz'afin*) who were typically landless rural migrants. In radical Islamism, the voice of the people became an expression of divine will against the inequalities of the secular state. Authority in Sunni Islam is communal, devolved, and localized; hence there is considerable dispute over the correct interpretation of law and tradition in a religious system in which legal decisions (*fatwas*) can be posted on the Internet by any teacher who claims to represent a religious community. In this respect, the *ulema* have, sociologically, a much closer relationship to the Jewish rabbis as respected religious teachers and scholars. Neither Judaism nor Islam has a social role that approximates to the sacerdotal priesthood of Western Christendom.

Secondly, Weber was interested in a related set of relationships between state and church, which we can summarize under the sociological concept that was implicit in the structure of *Economy and Society*: namely, the issue of caesaropapism. As prophetic, Abrahamic religions of revelation, both Christianity and Islam stand in opposition to the empirical world in which violence, inequality, and cruelty reign supreme. The problem with all revealed religions is the establishment of religious authority over secular processes of political power, economics, and social structures. This endless struggle between the ideal world of the brotherly community of love and the brutal reality of everyday life has been the principal religious leverage towards social change in human societies (Parsons 1966: p. xlvii). The core components of worldliness in the Abrahamic religions have been sexuality and money, which represent the corruption of power and selfishness. The religious orientations of asceticism, mysticism, and 'legal-mindedness' represent the historically dominant religious rejections of the fallen world. This sacred–profane dynamic is particularly important in Islam. Its first theological premiss is the affirmation in the Qur'an (the *sura* of unity, cxii): He is God alone, God the Eternal. Islamic doctrine is radically egalitarian, because its monotheistic fundamentalism precludes any ontological hierarchy in either human society or nature; but there is a permanent contradiction between theology and the history of hierarchy and inequality in actual societies (Marlow 1997). While the divine purpose is to establish peace between human beings, the early history of the Islamic caliphs was violent: 'Umar, 'Uthman, and 'Ali, the successors or caliphs of the Prophet, were assassinated.

Thirdly, Weber provided a comprehensive analysis of Islamic law which contributed an additional illustration to his study of charismatic authority (in the form of revelation) and rationalization. Islam is a revealed religion that came to mankind through the prophetic agency of Muhammad. This revelation is contained within a sacred text, the Qur'an, which was assembled after the death of the Prophet. Once this process of collection was complete, the Qur'an as the word of God was closed and transformed into a canon of revelation (*mushaf*). This closure of orthodoxy was known as the closing of *ijtihad* (intellectual effort or legal judgement). Western sociologists such as Max Weber argued subsequently that the rigidity of Islamic cultures was a consequence of the attempt to contain legal and theological speculation within a narrow framework (Turner 1974). In addition to the Qur'an, Muslims have the tradition (*sunna*) of the Prophet known through a chain of authority of witnesses (*isnad*). This tradition is the *hadith*. We might say, therefore, that the law, the book, and the Prophet constitute Islam. More precisely, Islam as a religion is the beaten path (*sunna*) of the Prophet.

Fourthly, Weber was interested in the sociology of the city as either a military camp or a site of democratic institutions. In *The City* (1958a) Weber argued that the city in the West had distinctive features that promoted the rise of citizenship and democratic civil institutions. The European city was not based on tribal affiliation; it was not simply a military base; and finally, it was relatively autonomous as a self-governing set

of institutions. Christianity had contributed to these developments by creating a social bond that was based on a religious fellowship rather than on blood. Weber argued that, by contrast, the city in the Middle East was essentially a military camp, and that tribal and familial allegiance had never been totally broken down by the idea of religious belonging. The city in the history of Islam had not emerged as a basis for civil institutions to limit the power of the state.

At its inception Islam was an egalitarian brotherhood that assumed the equality of free (male) believers, developing neither church nor priesthood. This religious egalitarian monotheism was reinforced by Arabic tribalism, which also had an egalitarian ethic. These religious doctrines were compromised, however, by the success of Islamic military expansion, which encouraged the growth of a more status-conscious and hierarchical social order. The prominent religious role that was played by the wives of the Prophet (in particular Khadija and 'Aisha) was eventually overshadowed by the patriarchal cultures of the Islamicate societies in which women, outside the elite, became socially invisible (Ahmed 1992). These tendencies were increasingly legitimized by the Islamic incorporation of Greek political thought, which conceptualized the city as a hierarchical political formation. In the polis, social order required the harmony that was produced by a wise but despotic leader. In Iraq and Iran in the Sassanian period, social inequality became progressively hereditary, and the dominant class was recruited from the landed nobility.

Finally, Weber's narrower concern was with piety. This concern suggests that sociology should examine fundamental differences between religious traditions in terms of the emergence of the self. At the core of Christianity was a world view based on the notions of personal responsiveness to the redemptive love and historical actions of a personal God, operating in a corrupt world through a series of sacrificial acts (Hodgson 1960). The crucifixion of Jesus was the foundational event in this cosmic history of salvation. By contrast, the core of Islam was the demand for personal responsibility towards God, who has established a framework for moral order through the revelation of the law. The ethical concerns of Irano-Semitic monotheism, as expressed through its ethical prophets, were embodied in the law, on the one hand, and by the quest for mystical understanding of God, on the other. The unity of Islamicate culture was developed through 'Sharia-mindedness'—a moral code which constituted the inner conscience of Islam, and which expressed an opposition to the hierarchical and despotic systems of power that often characterized the Mughal, Safavi, and Ottoman empires (Hodgson 1974: i. 238). The community of the pious and learned (*'ulama*) developed the religious activities that cultivated this Sharia-mindedness as a major religious orientation in Islam.

Sharia-mindedness, which was carried down the centuries by *'ulama* and Sufis, was founded on a sense of justice, and thus stood in opposition to the culture of the emerging military states of Islamicate empires. The practices that developed