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Christendom and European Identity

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Christendom and European Identity

The Legacy of a Grand Narrative since 1789

For Anthony

As soon as we define man as apart from [the] natural world, the question of our identity, collective and individual, begins to arise. We begin to tell ourselves stories about who we are. We draw an imaginary line around ourselves and say, this is my space, my territory, this is where I belong. The attributes of that space decide the way we see ourselves. But our ancestors' space was also imaginary, and we are the children of the physical and mental journeys they undertook.
[Hilary Mantel]

The difference between . . . post-Christian Western historians and their Christian predecessors is that the moderns do not allow themselves to be aware of the pattern in their minds, whereas Bossuet, Eusebius, and Saint Augustine were fully conscious of it. If one cannot think without mental patterns – and, in my belief, one cannot – it is better to know what they are; for a pattern of which one is unconscious is a pattern that holds one at its mercy.
[Arnold Toynbee]

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Explanatory Notes on the Text

To use a cartographical analogy, this book is more like a small-scale atlas than a large-scale ordnance survey map. This has certain consequences; if the text is to be clear and readable, not all the fine detail that would be possible in closer and more analytical studies can be accommodated. With regard to quotations: where English translation is necessary, the text is cited *only* in this form, and not in the original language. Published translations have been used when accessible and reasonably good; otherwise, I have provided my own. Occasionally, I have referred to two different translations of the same work where each has particular merits in relation to specific passages.

Again, for reasons of scale, little biographical detail is given concerning the thinkers whose work is explored (their dates are given in the Index). This is not because such detail is deemed unimportant or irrelevant but simply because of the number of thinkers cited and the constraints of appropriate volume length. Such detail is given only where it seems essential to the understanding of a particular thinker's argument or position.

Regarding the selection of texts: this does not reflect an attempt to maintain balance between different regions and nations or between different languages. The selection has been made simply on the basis of one or more of the following factors: the extent of their relevance as illustrations of particular points of argument, my judgement of their significance for, and influence on, the history of European ideas, and their contribution to what I have called the grand narrative of 'Christendom'. French and German texts and thinkers predominate, since these were the principal and most influential sources of analysis and debate concerning European and national identity.

Finally, a matter of presentation: in order to avoid a confusing plethora of sub-headings, I have drawn attention to sub-divisions of chapters simply by formatting the text so as to leave an extra line-space between one section and another where this seems to clarify the structure.

Introduction

Europe, it has been suggested, is 'not so much a place as an idea'.[1] There is also, according to Hugh Seton-Watson, a 'mystique of Europe' which 'derives from the earlier mystique of Christendom.'[2] This book is concerned with 'Christendom',[3] as a crucial constituent of the history of the idea of Europe, and as a powerful narrative of European identity which has persisted despite the secularization[4] of culture and society over the last two centuries.

The explication of human experience through narrative, argues the historian, Herman Lebovics, 'satisfies in ways the most elegantly theorized social science statements cannot.'[5]

> Historians can very well enhance understanding of complex and murky
> historical phenomena, especially where intellectual history touches the study
> of power in society, by continuing to tell stories with people in them, as long
> as they remain clear in their own minds . . . that there are many stories, and
> 'people' may be most safely understood as a useful heuristic device to
> advance the story's plot.[6]

It is a necessary premise of this book that any adequate understanding of the idea of 'Europe' must depend, at least in part, on such story-telling and, in particular,

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1 Peter Burke, 'Did Europe exist before 1700?', *History of European Ideas* (1980), I, no. 1, 21–29, p. 21.
2 Hugh Seton-Watson, 'On trying to be a historian of Eastern Europe', *Historians as Nation-builders. Central and South-East Europe*, ed. Dennis Deletant and Harry Hanak (Basingstoke, Macmillan Press Ltd., 1988), p. 7.
3 'Europe' and 'Christendom' seem to fit nicely among those 'compounds' or 'complexes' which A. O. Lovejoy described in his book, *The Great Chain of Being* (1936), and to which, he believed, the analysis of the historian of ideas needs to be applied. Like the '-isms' to which he referred (pp. 5–6), these terms represent 'a very mixed collection of ideas, the combination of which into a conglomerate bearing a single name and supposed to constitute a real unity' has been 'the result of historic processes of a highly complicated and curious sort' (p. 6). 'Europe' and 'Christendom' might also be described in terms of Lovejoy's category of 'unit-ideas' (pp. 3–4) since there are, in both, identifiable continuities of association and meaning across centuries of western intellectual history; and parallels — conceptual, thematic, figurative — which have provided them both independently and interdependently with a recognizable core of qualities and characteristics across the passage of time. See 'Introduction', *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1936).
4 This term is problematic. See p. 10 n. 37 below.
5 Herman Lebovics, *True France. The wars over cultural identity, 1900–1945* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 9.
6 Ibid.

on the [hi]story of the many sub-narratives which both constitute and reflect a 'grand narrative' of European identity: that of Europe-as-Christendom.[7]

To say that 'Europe' and 'Christendom' are ideas does not contribute much, of course, to precise definition. Despite all that has been written on the subject over the last two centuries, particularly in periods of crisis, attempts at definition have failed to achieve general consensus.[8] The issue became noticeably problematic after the French Revolution. In 1795, for example, a message was sent to the French National Convention by Count Boissy-d'Anglas.[9] The Count offered both a definition of Europe and an appeal for definition in the same sentence: 'Europe considered as a whole as a great federation of states requires first of all a decision on the question: "What is Europe?"' Clearly he found the idea of Europe as a system of states insufficient. Noting that 'Russia, the sole proprietor of the limits of Europe to the East, [had] recently drawn a frontier between Europe and Asia',[10] he nevertheless insisted that 'it is not a question of this geographical and sterile decision.'[11] In fact, neither a balance of political power nor geographical boundary could provide an adequate definition.

Some forty years ago, it was suggested that Europe could be defined, at least 'in a narrow sense', as 'the area between the Atlantic and, say, a line running from Odessa to Riga',[12] but the complexities of political and cultural identity-consciousness

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7   The type of grand narrative portrayed here is quite different from the rather short-lived 'Grand Narrative of the West' which David Gress describes as 'a convincing and comprehensive story of Western identity and of America as the legitimate culmination of that identity.' *From Plato to Nato: The idea of the West and its opponents* (New York, Free Press, 1998), p. 29. The American grand narrative of the 1960s, for example, was based on a belief in multicultural liberalism as the product of 'excellence, reason, science, and assimilation'. The narrative of Christendom, as described here, is, in contrast, not based on conviction, despite its religious roots. It is historically-evolved, culturally and psychologically assimilated and independent of any particular political or social affiliation.

8   For notable examples of contribution to the debate on this subject in the 20th century see Paul Valéry's essay, 'The European' (1922), *History and Politics*, vol. 10 (1962) of *The Collected Works of Paul Valéry*, 15 vols. (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957–1975), pp. 307–323. Also Max Beloff, *Europe and the Europeans* (London, Chatto & Windus, 1957). For debate at the end of the century see also Manfred Fuhrmann, 'L'Europe—Contribution à l'histoire d'une idée culturelle et politique', *History of European Ideas* 4:1 (1983), 1–15; André Reszler, 'L'Europe en tant que civilisation (unité et diversité)', *History of European Ideas* 3:4 (1982), 355–369; Tony Judt, *A Grand Illusion. An Essay on Europe* (London, Penguin Books, 1997); *The Idea of Europe from antiquity to the European Union*, ed. Anthony Pagden (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002) .

9   François A. Boissy d'Anglas was a political leader and historian of moderate views and substantial influence during the revolutionary period in France.

10   This was probably a reference to the Treaty of Jassy in 1792.

11   Boissy d'Anglas, *Épitre du mieux cosmopolite Syrach à la Convention Nationale de France* (1795), pp. 121–122.

12   René Albrecht-Carrié, *The Unity of Europe. An Historical Survey* (London, Secker & Warburg, 1966), p. 27. See also Gonzague's demarcation of 'two Europes'; below, p. 5.

which have developed since then make this unhelpful. The demarcation of those areas commonly called 'western' and 'eastern' Europe is equally unclear and the recent emphasis on 'central' Europe has little to contribute in so far as a historical perspective is required.[13] The intensity of the debate has increased in recent decades particularly in relation to expansion of the European Union.[14] One of the difficulties here is that, in terms of political boundaries, the artificial categories of the European Union may have little correspondence or correlation to any histori-cally-conceived identity. Also, current research, opinion polls and media surveys have indicated that the peoples of the member states are not persuaded to give precedence to European over national identity merely by the imposition of the common political, economic and social policies of the Union. At the same time, questions regarding the supranational identity of Europeans have become increas-ingly significant in relation to issues of immigration, defence, security and the need to counter the threat of terrorism. In addition, the need to foster a sense of European identity has been coupled with the perceived desirability of creating a counterweight to the hegemony of the USA in international affairs. It has also taken on a new importance in Europe's post-colonial relationships with Africa and Asia.

If Europe defies precise definition, what of Christendom, and in what senses can it still be said to exist? David Chidester has recently represented it on traditional lines and in purely historical terms: as, variously, the imagined 'spiritual centre of a religious world' (for early Christians, Jerusalem) 'in opposition to Islam', as a realm of Christian unity (the empire of Charlemagne), and as the source of Christian mission to the rest of the world.[15] His description seems to tally with the widely accepted view that the last two hundred years have borne witness to the demise of Christendom. '[T]he civilization formerly designated by that name', writes Bernard Lewis, 'has undergone a process of reform and secularization and has come to be known, in various contexts, as Europe, as the free world, and, now-adays, principally as the West'. Clearly, Christendom no longer exists as a polity united under dual sovereignty, temporal and spiritual, although Lewis's claim that the term is now rarely used 'except by historians'[16] might be countered by a simple search of electronically-accessible data. It is still used extensively, for example, by religious groups and institutions to refer simply to those who share their beliefs, or to the world-wide Church as a body of believers which spans denominational and sectarian boundaries.[17] However, this book explores Christendom not as a

13 See e.g. Judt, *A Grand Illusion*, pp. 51–52.
14 Issues of identity have been raised, for example, in relation to membership and expansion of the Union, and in relation to competing sovereignties (e.g. questions of subsidiarity) and tensions between national and European identity.
15 David Chidester, *Christianity. A Global History* (London and New York, Allen Lane. The Penguin Press, 2000), pp. 175–194.
16 Bernard Lewis, *Islam and the West* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993), vii.
17 The term sometimes has ecumenical implications, pointing beyond these boundaries to a unity of belief which transcends them. In contrast, for some evangelical and funda-

community of faith, nor as an extinct historical realm but as an enduring idea and narrative of European culture and identity; one, moreover, which has consistently represented that identity as infused with concepts, values and traditions stemming from the entwined roots of ancient Greece and Rome and Judaeo-Christianity.[18] This narrative continues to be reflected in every area of European life and thought: in, for example, the continuing historical, social and political significance of canon law within European constitutions,[19] in the 'high' culture of art, music and literature which reflects not only the Christian world-view but also the powerful status of the Church and its relations with the State, in the architecture which still provides the day-to-day context of European city life, and at every level of education.[20]

'Christendom', then, is a historically-conditioned term with complex connotations. As if the religious claims with which the term is inextricably associated were not, themselves, sufficiently problematic, they are compounded by political and cultural nuances. The idea of Christendom reflects changing social contexts and assumptions and is constituted by clusters and compounds of ideas and beliefs, principles and theories, assumptions, prejudices, received opinions and cultural conditioning. Historically, it has represented a realm of 'common mind' once rooted in the discourse of scholars, in the advanced learning of the universities which were themselves grounded in the teachings and authority of the Church. For these Universities and scholars the *a priori* starting-point and concern was knowledge in the context of religion, knowledge which was God-ordained. This

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mentalist groups 'Christendom' refers to the continuance of a kind of spiritual elect: those who are believed to be spiritually 'born again' and to stand in their redeemed state against the corruptions of the modern world.

18 It should be said, however, that this is not a study of religion in the light of 'cultural discourse' and cultural history—the kind of study the methods and potential of which have been expertly analyzed recently, for example, by Hans G. Kippenberg and Kocku von Stuckrad [*Einführung in die Religionswissenschaft. Gegenstände und Begriffe* (Munich, C. H. Beck, 2003)]. Rather, it is concerned with the shaping of cultural discourse and of cultural identity by the ideas of powerful intellectual elites who, while their thought is impregnated with the religious, theological and philosophical concepts and beliefs underlying the western intellectual tradition, are not, themselves, always or necessarily preoccupied directly with religious or theological issues or criticism. Many, but not all, address the social and cultural implications and consequences of religion in relation to the idea and identity of Europe. Others, we shall see, simply assume and assert the reality of Europe-as-Christendom in the context of political or historical theory, or in expositions of national and/or European identity.

19 Some idea of the influence of the Christendom narrative on canon law can be gained by browsing the following website: http://www.droitcanon.com/Summaries/english_ summaries97.html.

20 Hans G. Kippenberg and Kocku von Stuckrad emphasize that *Religionswissenschaft* must take note of 'the role of religious semantics' not only within religious communities, in the context of religious beliefs, or as a factor within political discourse but also in relation to the whole public system of symbols from architecture to the modern mass media. *Einführung in die Religionswissenschaft*, § IV.I.

was not only the source of the humanities but of modern science as well: 'The relation of *credo* and *intelligo, pistis* and *gnosis*, is inherent in the Judaeo-Christian tradition' insists Hans-Georg Gadamer.[21]

> This is what accounts for the fact that modern science-based culture is both definitive and problematical, that it comprehends the whole earth, yet is formed by Christendom, where the Judaic emphasis on personality and Greek rationality are united. Modern civilization based on science has achieved such technological superiority in controlling the powers of nature that no other culture can displace it, even if it is rooted in a completely different religious tradition.[22]

From this perspective, 'Christendom' signifies a realm in which rationality, freedom and the development of individual personhood are fully developed. Here alone—according to this view—humanity has been able to undertake the intellectual pursuit and comprehension of the relationship between thought and phenomena, between universal and particular reality, between natural law and freedom. This secularized narrative of Christendom—which, I shall argue, not only survived but informed the Enlightenment—still has resonance with many Europeans at both conscious and unconscious levels. Despite the weakening of its spiritual roots, it has continued to shape European identity-consciousness and to influence perceptions of Europe in relation to its 'Others'.

Like 'Europe', 'Christendom' is only loosely associated with geographical boundaries. If, for the moment, we allow Gonzague de Reynold's division of Europe into 'L'Europe occidentale' and 'L'Europe orientale' with the frontier imagined as a line 'from Danzig to Odessa',[23] then this book is concerned mostly with the former, and, therein, with those regions the history of which has been dominated by the legacy of Rome rather than of Byzantium. Moreover, I have given proportionately greater attention to French and German thinkers and texts than to those from other parts of Europe since they have contributed most to the perpetuation and/or modification of what I have called the Christendom narrative over the last two centuries.

Britain's role in relation to this narrative has been significant but equivocal. Historically inseparable from the legacy of Christendom as a whole, it is in many ways a special case, not least, of course, because of the impact of the English Reformation. However, Friedrich Heer dates the essential difference from an earlier point: 'England does not belong to Europe. Since the eighth century England has considered itself another world, *alter orbis*,[24] circling the Continent like the comet

21 Hans-Georg Gadamer, 'Reflections on the Relation of Religion and Science' (1984), *Hermeneutics, Religion, and Ethics*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1999), p. 121.

22 Ibid.

23 Gonzague de Reynold, *Qu'est-ce que l'Europe?*, vol. 1 of *La Formation de l'Europe* (1944–1945), 7 vols. (Fribourg en Suisse and Paris, Egloff, 1944–1957), p. 52.

24 Heer gives a reference to Wilhelm Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1946), p. 173.

on the Bayeux tapestry which was regarded as an omen of the Norman conquest
in 1066.'[25] In the mid-19th century, the French historian, Frédéric Ozanam,
remarked with wonderment that '[t]wo islands of the West had escaped the
sovereignty of Charlemagne.' 'Great Britain and Ireland' had 'avoided absorption
into an empire which reached from the mouth of the Rhine to that of the Tiber,
from the Elbe to the Theiss'.[26]

There are substantial historical reasons, then, why British identity may be less
firmly rooted than that of other nations in the narrative of Europe-as-Christendom
and why an alternative idea of Christendom emerged from English and American
Protestant traditions and gradually detached itself from European roots. We shall
explore similarities and differences between Britain and the rest of western Europe
in this respect, particularly in relation to theories of Church, State and sovereignty
and to nationalist and imperialist aspirations. There is no scope in this book for a
detailed examination of the Anglo-American version of the narrative over the last
two centuries, though this would be a rich seam of research. All that can be said
here is that the most important differences between this alternative version and
the grand narrative of Europe explored here arise from the fact that the idea of
Christendom in the former has become mostly moral and religious in character
and emphasis, while in the latter, it has retained a strong sense of historical,
cultural and socio-political significance even in its secularized forms. The Anglo-
American narrative, for example, is rooted in Protestant (specifically Puritan)
thought and in the idea of a community of believers the shared ethics of which are
all-important and inherently exclusive. These ethics, closely connected to an ethos
of patriotism, define behaviour of individuals in the family, the work-place, and
in the associations to which they belong. The narrative of Europe-as-Christendom,
in contrast, has at its core historical tensions between national and European
identity and between diversity and unity. It both sustains and is sustained by an
intellectual history and by social and cultural traditions and mythologies which
combine the legacy of ancient Greece and Rome[27] with that of Christianity and it

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25   Friedrich Heer, *The Intellectual History of Europe* (1953), trans. Jonathan Steinberg (London,
      Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1966), p. 348.

26   A. Frédéric Ozanam, *History of Civilization in the Fifth Century*, trans. Ashley C. Glyn,
      2 vols. (London, W. H. Allen & Co., 1868), 1, p. 33.

27   It could be argued, however, that the Classical heritage of European Christendom was
      also appropriated in the 18th-century construction of the political institutions (e.g. the
      Senate) and architecture of the USA, and that, in this sense, and through the grand project
      of colonization, Americans could see themselves as the Romans of the New World. The
      huge expansion of the USA in power, prosperity and influence during the 19th and 20th
      centuries and some of its interventions in foreign affairs have fuelled criticism of a
      perceived imperialism. Recently, analyses and discussions of US policies have revived the
      idea of the Americans as the new Romans. See e.g. the following online articles: Major
      General (retd.) Ashok K. Mehta, 'Lessons from the New Romans'. May 15, 2003: 'The
      Americans are being called the New Romans for their unilateralism in a world divided
      as probably never before.' http://www.rediff.com/news/2003/may/15ashok.htm. Also

is expressed in forms which reflect the inherent diversity of Europe itself. It is this
European narrative, with all its nuances and implications, its determination of
ideologies, theories and concepts, policies and perceptions which is the focus here.

I want to stress that this book is concerned with the idea of 'Christendom', not
with Christianity.[28] By no means all those whose work was infused or obsessed with
the Christendom narrative were believers.[29] The beliefs, teachings and practices
of the Christian Church are secondary here and relevant only in so far as they be-
came key components of the ideas of sovereignty, of social and political commun-
ity, of history, and of European identity. Moreover, while Europe-as-Christendom
is arguably the most enduring and pervasive[30] narrative of European identity, it
is certainly not the only one. I am not suggesting that 'Europe' *should* properly be
understood as 'Christendom', still less that it should remain essentially Christian.[31]
Besides, any sound analysis of European history and identity would show that
many of the values or concepts often claimed for 'Christendom' exist in other
traditions and cultures, and their provenance and development owes much to ex-
ternal influence. That which is distinctively European about the 'grand narrative'

Jonathan Freedland, 'Rome, AD . . . Rome, DC?', Special Report for the Guardian news-
paper, Wed. Sept. 18, 2002. http://www.guardian.co.uk/usa/story/0,12271,794163,00.html.

28 Hence I have side-stepped the discourse which explores the identification of religion itself
as a determination of singularity and otherness, superiority and inferiority, with all its
significant concomitants. There is no doubt that western scholars of the 19th and 20th
centuries often identified both a highly developed historical consciousness and the
superiority of their own 'World religion' with the idea of Europe-as-Christendom. Imperi-
alism and colonization tended to adopt and reinforce such attitudes. For more on this see
e.g. Jonathan Z. Smith, 'Religion, Religions, Religious', *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*,
ed. Mark C. Taylor (Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 269–284.

29 See chps. 3 and 17 below, for example, where the significance of the narrative to Proudhon
and Nietzsche is discussed.

30 Samuel Huntington has summarized those elements which, he believes, constituted
Western civilization before modernization: the Classical legacy, Catholicism and Protes-
tantism, European languages (e.g. the multiplicity of them), separation of spiritual and
temporal authority, rule of law, social pluralism, representative bodies, individualism
[*The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York, Simon & Schuster,
1996), pp. 69–72]. Huntington accepts that the list is not exhaustive, nor were these
characteristics 'always and universally present in Western society'. He acknowledges that
they appeared in other civilizations: 'Individually almost none of these factors was unique
to the West. The combination of them was, however, and this is what gave the West its
distinctive quality. These concepts, practices, and institutions simply have been more
prevalent in the West than in other civilizations. They form at least part of the essential
continuing core of Western civilization' (p. 72).

31 Richard King observes that '[o]ne consequence of the modern distinction between the
spheres of religion and politics has been to foster a suspicion among Westerners that any
linkage of the two realms is an example of a "merely rhetorical" use of religious discourse
to mask some underlying political, ideological or "worldly intention"' [*Orientalism and
Religion. Post-colonial theory, India and 'the mystic East'* (London and New York, Routledge,
1999), p. 13]. My emphasis here seeks to forestall any such suspicion.

is to be found, rather, in particular combinations of these values and concepts, in particular emphases, contexts and applications.[32]

The legacy of the narrative has continued to resonate with ideas of Charlemagne and the religio-political realm of medieval Europe, but its lasting significance and influence is not confined to Latin or Catholic thought or tradition. Protestantism has strongly developed the model of Christendom as a realm of the mind and spirit, an 'intellectual Republic' characterized by freedom and by a unique faculty of historical and philosophical understanding which sets Europe apart from the rest of the world.

Certain critical and theoretical issues should be clarified. By 'narrative', for example, I mean a story, composed and constantly retold, reasonably coherent and following certain established rules. Of course, 'narrative' must be understood as a complex and often ambiguous or inconsistent interpretation or reading of the past which has itself to be interpreted or reconstructed, but, in any case, this book does not seek to establish some logical or structural consistency within the grand narrative of Christendom, nor its veridical relation to historical fact. I am concerned here only with the power, range, extent and duration of its influence. It has been suggested that '"being historical" . . . is a matter of more or less outwitting' the 'compelling narrative truth' and '"thick descriptions," of a certain wholeness of a past' so that 'some forgotten moments and contours of the past "flare up". . . in order to illumine and decompose the compulsive narrativity of history that dictates the ideology of the present'. However, the possibility of this 'outwitting', of the 'flaring up' of illuminating discrepancies—even the desire for this—is dependent upon the power and coherence of the narrative in the first place.[33] While there is no reason why the Foucauldian concepts of 'discontinuity (threshold, rupture, break, mutation, transformation)'[34] should not be applied to the grand narrative of European identity, I shall argue that it is, for all that, recognizable and enduring. It possesses a sufficient degree of continuity and coherence to be a powerful factor both in intellectual history and in the collective unconscious of contemporary Europeans. In practice and effect, grand narratives are almost never fatally undermined by theoretical challenges, partly because their greatest power is at the level of the unconscious mind, collective and individual.

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32   This study does not include theoretical or comparative linguistic analysis of, for example, the use of the term 'Christendom' and its non-English equivalents in the texts on which it draws. Such analysis, however potentially interesting and valuable, would require a book to itself. Here I have drawn, rather, on an assumed implicit understanding of the *idea* of Christendom which was consciously shared by those who contributed to the narrative and to whom such analysis would have been foreign.

33   Tomoko Masuzawa, 'Culture', *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, ed. Mark C. Taylor (Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 70–93.

34   Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge [L'archéologie du savoir]* (1969), trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (London, Tavistock Publications, 1972), p. 5.

Since this is a history of ideas rather than a philosophical analysis I make no attempt to evaluate the moral, ethical or logical status of the Christendom narrative, nor of its constituent narratives. I do not mean to imply that these should be viewed as mere ideologies in the derogatory sense sometimes attached to that term within sociological or political analysis. Their value status is determined by their application in particular discourses of particular individuals or groups, not by their very existence as narrative ideologies. Clearly the identity implied by the term 'Christendom', like that of 'Europe' or 'nation', is open to question; it *may* be invoked through the exclusion of the 'other' and is frequently constructed on the basis of claims to preeminence. On the other hand, it may also be used to appeal to, or create, a sense of community based upon common values which aspire to the highest good for humanity as a whole. Both cases are significant in terms of understanding the history of ideas of Europe and European identity.

I have not addressed questions as to whether, or how far, relations of cause and effect can be established between ideas and historical facts; for example, how the changing *ideas* of (for example) 'Europe' were related to particular developments within the vast and radical transformation of political, social, industrial and economic reality over the last two centuries. Obviously, such questions are of great importance[35] but to deal with these issues would require a second volume if not a second book. Again, since I do not share—or, at least, not unequivocally—the confident assumptions which undergirded sociological debates concerning ideology and identity in the latter decades of the 20th century,[36] I have taken an approach which leaves such questions open. Having said that, it is important to re-emphasize that disengagement from the analysis of hierarchies of *cause-and-effect* should not be taken to imply that ideas can somehow be 'separated out' from facts, events and developments in history, or to claim that ideas exist *independently* of such historical realities.

Given my own national and European identity and the influence of social and political norms and historical perspectives which accrue from this, it is clear that, to some degree at least, my book must itself be a product of the Christendom narrative. Moreover, like all narratives and identities, it necessarily involves the artificial construction and imposition of unity through a process of exclusion (or, at least, selection). When I suggest, for example, that there is some implicit or explicit agreement or common ground between different thinkers on the issue of European identity, or draw attention to the shared use of common language or expressions in relation to this identity, there may be strong and well-founded

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35 See Owen Chadwick's discussion of the 'secularization of the European mind' and whether the cause of this should be sought within social or intellectual history. *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 10–14.

36 See e.g. the conclusion that '[a]ll beliefs, scientific and ideological, are socially determined or socially caused'. Nicholas Abercrombie, Stephen Hill and Bryan S. Turner, *The Dominant Ideology Thesis* (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1980), p. 191.

objections to be made that, if due attention was given to all the historical, social and cultural differences between them, it will be seen that they did not really mean the same thing. Moreover, an array of critical obstacles to this enterprise might easily be erected from almost any branch of critical theory which has emerged in recent decades. If any kind of coherent intellectual history is to be attempted, however, it cannot avoid such criticism, valid to a greater or lesser degree. Therefore, while due attention is given here to broad factors of historical and cultural difference, I do not engage with issues of, for example, 'authorial intention' or with 'reception theory' and I leave aside questions as to the nature and function of 'signifiers', the quagmires of meaning, metaphor and metonymy. Partly because these issues have already been dealt with in great detail, I have not, either, explored issues of sociological debate such as the nature of secularization,[37] of the 'de-Christianization' of Europe, or the social causes of ideology in relation to identity.[38] Such criticism as this book is likely to attract on these grounds alone will be welcome if it stimulates reviews and exchanges which contribute to correcting the imbalance and omissions of my own narrative.

Gerard Delanty has argued that '[t]he idea of Europe as a cultural model began to take shape in the eighteenth century',[39] though he denies that the universalism of 'a tiny group of intellectuals' produced any real concept of European unity. Jørgen Nielsen's bold claim that 'European intellectual history is one unending chain of ideas on the move' may be somewhat unsubtle, but many would agree that 'there is an important sense in which the late eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have become a watershed separating the past from the present.'[40] My reason for taking the French Revolution as the starting point for this

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37 An important debate continues—for example, in the arena of the sociology of religion—concerning the nature and extent of 'secularization'. See e.g. David Martin, *A General Theory of Secularization* (1978) (Aldershot, Gregg Revivals, 1993); also Steve Bruce, *God is Dead. Secularization in the West* (Oxford, Blackwell, 2002). For the purposes of this book, I have accepted that the idea of Christendom has become 'secularized' in so far as the cultural, political and social values which it has supported over the last two centuries have been distanced, increasingly, from explicit connection with particular religious authorities and beliefs. Those who support the 'secularization paradigm' are convinced of 'a long-term decline in the power, popularity and prestige of religious beliefs and rituals' (*God is Dead*, p. 44) in the West. However, this has had little impact on the Christendom narrative since it has, in any case, become largely independent of such beliefs and rituals. Its continuing power and influence remain evident across the whole spectrum of European thought.
38 While ideas concerning religion and society in their historical context are central to this book, as a history of ideas, sociological theory and criticism and questions of specific religious belief are not; or at least, not as objects of detailed analysis. However fascinating such analysis might be in relation to the idea of Christendom, it would require a different book.
39 Gerard Delanty, *Inventing Europe* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1995), p. 71.
40 Jørgen Nielsen, *Muslims in Western Europe* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2nd edn. 1995), p. 153.

book[41] is two-fold; firstly because I intend to challenge the common view that it marked the final demise of the idea of Europe-as-Christendom, and, secondly, because the Revolution still stands as one of the most dramatic crisis points in European intellectual history following which questions of national and European identity became more pressing than ever before. These questions provoked a reexamination of history in order to discover the fundamental elements of a common European identity. At the end of the 18th century, Edmund Burke declared: 'All circumstances taken together, the French revolution is the most astonishing that has hitherto happened in the world.'[42] 'Instead of the religion and the law by which [the French] . . . were in a great politic communion with the Christian world, they have constructed their republic on three bases, all fundamentally opposite to those on which the communities of Europe are built. Its foundation is laid in regicide, in jacobinism, and in atheism.'[43]

Those, like Burke, who regarded the Revolutionary principles with horror as the subversion of the basic principles of European identity, of religion, law and monarchy, were convinced of the necessity of restating the fundamentals of that identity through an appeal to the witness of history.[44] Those, on the other hand, who grasped the ideals of the Revolution with enthusiasm saw them as the foundations of a new understanding of Europe based on the sovereignty of peoples, on a new religion of humanity, and on the construction of legal and institutional frameworks based on scientific, rather than historical, principles. In either case, the assumed consensus of a common European-ness had broken down and the meaning of 'Europe' had to be recovered or reconstructed. While the French Revolution can be seen as a turning point in terms of its challenge to previously secure social and political identities and its stimulus to the creation of new ones,[45] it was also a crisis point for the whole idea of Europe as a system of monarchical states, a civilization with common cultural and historical roots. It was not only internal events that precipitated a crisis of confidence; the rapid development, during the 19th century, of the two power-blocks (Russia and the USA) appearing to the East and to the West, challenged the idea that Europe was the centre and the power-house of human civilization and progress. However, there can be little doubt that one of the most important factors in the destabilization of the old balance of power was the

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41 I should add here that the chronological boundaries are often overstepped in both directions, as a consequence of the necessity of providing the historical context of the ideas, theories, assumptions and beliefs represented here.

42 *Selections from the Speeches and Writings of Edmund Burke* (London, George Routledge & Sons, 1893), p. 103.

43 Ibid., p. 148.

44 Louis de Bonald, *Réflexions sur l'intérêt général de l'Europe* (Paris, Le Normant, 1815), p. 9.

45 Georg Lukacs argued in 1946 that the French Revolution was the source of the crisis of the European Spirit which reached its apex in the first half of the 20th century; 'a crisis of democracy, of the idea of progress, a crisis of belief in reason, of humanism'. *L'esprit européen*, ed. Julien Benda *et al.* (Neuchâtel, Éditions de la Baconnière, 1947), 165–194, p. 166.

growth of chauvinistic nationalism during the 19th century. Given the dramatic political and social changes, and the demands for national autonomy and recognition, 'Europe' had to be reconsidered. As Carlo Curcio put it, '[i]n the year 1789, Europeans rediscovered Europe'.[46] Martyn P. Thompson has described the period of the French Revolution and the European wars which followed as 'the modern "European moment," the moment when contemporary ideas of Europe were first crystalized out of an enormously complex historical inheritance and when they began their contemporary careers in political and intellectual history'.[47]

Since 1789, other major crisis points have provoked debate as to the nature and boundaries of Europe and the complex tensions between European and national identity. Most significant of all, of course, in terms of shattering confidence in the idea of a common European culture, were the crises of the First and Second World Wars.[48] However, the movement towards European Union from the mid 20th century has also been a constant stimulus to such debate, as has the challenge of defining specifically European culture and interests in the face of 'globalization', or expanding immigration. As we shall see, the response of leading Europeans in the fields of politics, academia and the arts has often been to emphasize that it is the 'spirit of Europe' which must be defended and/or restored; that Europe faces a *spiritual* crisis which can only be overcome through appeal to the narrative of Christendom.

For the most part, the question 'What is Europe?' was confined to the discourse of scholarly elites until the final decades of the 20th century. Unless provoked by the crises of internal conflicts of one kind or another, issues of European identity have not, generally, been at the forefront of public concern or reflected in popular culture except in the representation of stereotypes and caricatures. This book focuses on those ideas of Europe which were influential in the 'corridors of power'; that is, on the ideas, writings and influence of a white, predominantly male, highly educated élite;[49] the descendants of J. G. Herder's 'Republic of Intellectuals' which, he claimed, constituted Europe itself: 'Europe . . . partly thanks to a great internal

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46   Carlo Curcio, 'Le problème historique', *L'Europe du XIXe et du XXe siècle. Problèmes et Inter-prétations Historiques. 1815–1870*, ed. Max Beloff *et al.*, 2 vols. (Milan, Marzorati, 1959), 1, p. 125.

47   Martyn P. Thompson, 'Ideas of Europe during the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 55:1 (1994), 37–58, p. 38.

48   See Menno Spiering and Michael Wintle, 'European Identity, Europeanness and the First World War: Reflections on the Twentieth Century — an Introduction', *Ideas of Europe since 1914. The Legacy of the First World War*, ed. Spiering and Wintle (Basingstoke, Macmillan, Palgrave, 2002), pp. 3–4.

49   There is no scope here for analysis of the vast range of sources which it would be necessary to pursue in order to give an adequate social and/or cultural history of the narrative of Christendom as it was received by non-elites over two centuries. I have concluded that to 'dip one's toe into the water' in this respect would be to expand arbitrary selection to an unacceptable degree and to diffuse the focus of the book unhelpfully. Again, this different kind of study would clearly be immensely valuable, but it must be undertaken elsewhere.

rivalry, partly, during the last centuries, thanks to precious resources which she has sought over the whole face of the earth, has known how to give herself an ideal form only perceived by intellectuals and used by men of state. . . .'[50] This community of intellectuals presented European history as the epic drama of 'universal history', and itself as the key player. However dubious its prejudices and principles might seem to later generations, its members held the reins of government, created diplomatic initiatives, and produced bodies of political, social and economic theory which, in turn, influenced affairs of State. The discourse of this community easily crossed ethnic, religious and political boundaries. It reflected the monopolistic culture of universities steeped in Classical and Christian traditions the cultural and historical norms of which were perceived as the essence of a common European civilization.

The members of this 'Intellectual Republic' were often passionately proud of their own particular nations and cultures. At the same time, they wrote primarily, and self-consciously, for each other. They were, largely, those whom Samuel Taylor Coleridge represented as a 'Clerisy': the learned of all denominations and professions, of 'all the so called liberal arts and sciences'.[51] They held the positions of power and from their ranks came the leaders who were prominent and powerful players in the theatres of national and European politics.[52] Many leading thinkers and statesmen edited, or regularly contributed to, newspapers and journals which became vehicles of their particular political or religious views.[53] Through a rapidly-expanding Press their ideas were disseminated beyond their own circles to a wider European audience. In this way, the narratives of European identity, drawn from those shared conceptions, assumptions, prejudices and beliefs, were assimilated, socially and culturally, at other levels and strongly influenced the self-perception of ordinary Europeans as to their relations with each other and with the rest of the world.

Woven from the learning, aspirations and common cultural inheritance of elites, the Christendom narrative was self-endorsing in so far as it then became the

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50 Johann G. Herder, *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. B. Suphan, 33 vols. (Berlin, Weidmannsche Buch-handlung, 1877–1913), 14, p. 36.

51 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *On the Constitution of the Church and State*, ed. John Colmer; vol. 10 of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 16 vols. (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul etc., 1976), p. 46.

52 Friedrich Meinecke has described the enormous political influence of German academics in the mid 19th century: 'The will of the bourgeois class to have its way in politics, to make the nation unified and powerful in the world was directed and nourished to an incal-culable degree by the politics of scholars.' See 'Drei Generationen deutscher Gelehrten-politik', *Staat und Persönlichkeit* (Berlin, 1933), p. 136. Across Europe, national and European politics were, largely, decided by this group, at least until after the Second World War.

53 See Marius A. Hughon, *Journals and Periodicals Published in France and other Countries during the Revolution and Napoleonic Period, 1789–1815* (Versailles, M. A. Hughon, 1910). This catalogue provides examples of the role of leading writers of the period as editors and contributors to prominent journals and newspapers.

basis of claims to authority. The texts and thinkers represented here reflect the fact that the narrative is drawn from the strata of 'High Culture'. It will become clear that, like Edward Said (and *unlike* Michel Foucault), I acknowledge 'the determining imprint of individual writers upon the otherwise anonymous collective body of texts constituting a discursive formation'[54]; in this case, the eponymous grand narrative. Certainly, those thinkers and writers committed to the idea of Europe-as-Christendom have often seen themselves and their peers as its defenders. One has only to think of Julien Benda's famous book *La Trahison des clercs* which expressed the view that the *intelligentsia* had either succumbed during the war (1914–1918) or had betrayed European civilization for the sake of nationalism. Benda argued that the future of Europe and the core values of its civilization depended upon the restoration of this group. The French poet, critic and thinker Paul Valéry also emphasized the role of intellectuals in preserving the 'European Spirit'[55] and Hermann von Keyserling, who took part in the League of Nations conference in 1933 on 'The Future of the European Spirit', described European intellectuals as 'the representatives of the spirit'.[56]

Until recent decades at least, the education of European elites—those in positions of political power, of intellectual or cultural influence—took place in long-established schools and universities steeped in the historical legacy of the Christendom narrative. It is hardly surprising that the institutions and organizations which they headed tended to reflect its values and principles. However, whenever Europe is rocked by dramatic national or global events, it is not only among these elites that the idea of Europe-as-Christendom continues to resonate.[57] The processes of modernization and secularization are not always as straightforward and irreversible as contemporary communications media sometimes suggest[58] and this particular grand narrative retains its potency, for better or worse, as the core of the idea, the culture and identity of Europe at the beginning of the 21st century.

Because the idea of Europe and that of 'Christendom' have been joined in a complex network of relationships—political, social, historical, philosophical, cultural and religious—this book moves deliberately between different disciplines. I shall suggest that the historical representations of Europe, the political projects by which it is constructed and reconstructed and ideas of European 'spirit', culture or consciousness, are, in any case, interdependent. The three parts of the book explore how the Christendom narrative has shaped socio-political ideas, concepts

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54 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (1978) (London, Penguin, 1995 edn.), p. 23.
55 Paul Valéry, 'The European Spirit' (1935), *History and Politics*, p. 328.
56 Hermann von Keyserling, *Das Spektrum Europas* (Heidelberg, Kampmann, 1928); qtd. in Jan Ifversen, 'The Crisis of European Civilization after 1918', *Ideas of Europe since 1914. The Legacy of the First World War*, ed. Menno Spiering and Michael Wintle (Basingstoke, Macmillan, Palgrave, 2002), p. 24. See also chp. 18 below.
57 See Conclusion.
58 The census in Britain in 2001 showed that 70 % of the British population described themselves as 'Christian'.

and theories of history, and the question of European identity since 1789. Part 1 explores those strands of the narrative—both Catholic and Protestant—which have had enormous influence not only on ideas of sovereignty and relations of Church and State but in the formation of political parties, movements and policies, even where the principles of the narrative have been detached from any specific religious ethos or affiliation. Part 2 examines the ways in which the legacy of 'Christendom' has shaped the representation of 'true' historical consciousness as a specifically European phenomenon, one inextricably associated with European philosophy. This appropriation of history has played a huge part in shaping the identity-consciousness of Europeans and their attitudes to the rest of the world. Part 3 looks at the use of the grand narrative in relation to both national and European identity; on the one hand, to foster national pride and to support nationalist ideologies, on the other, to develop the idea of a 'European spirit' either as the ground of European unity and cooperation or to support imperialist agendas or, again, to create various forms of exclusion of non-Christian or 'non-western' groups.

PART 1

OLD AND NEW MODELS
OF SOVEREIGNTY IN
EUROPE-AS-CHRISTENDOM

Chapter 1

Christendom revived:
Catholic and Romantic visions of Europe

Politics and religion are, according to the narrative of Europe-as-Christendom, clearly distinct, but, just as clearly, inextricably related. From this perspective, Christian belief and doctrine has largely determined the evolution of the European State and relations between the individual and the State, between the governed and those who govern. In turn, the narrative tends to present as axiomatic the idea that religion, whether in institutional form or as practised by individual believers, cannot and should not ignore political issues or avoid political judgement.[1]

Certainly, relations of Church and State remained a powerful dynamic within European political history long after the emergence of the secular State. Moreover, despite the gradual alienation of individuals from institutionalized religion, these relations have continued to shape not only social and political debate and policy-making but also the identity-consciousness of Europeans, and their sense of a common history. At the core of relations between Church and State is the question of authority. In his controversial book, *The Clash of Civilizations* (1996), Samuel Huntington included the separation of spiritual and temporal authority among those distinctive elements which, he argued, constituted Western civilization before modernization. The narrative of Christendom, however, does not emphasize *separation* in the sense of isolation or detachment but, rather, marks and maintains the importance of rigorous *distinction* between spheres of authority. What is clear, is that, during the 19th century at least, the idea of sovereignty, at the core of the Christendom narrative since medieval times, provided the conceptual framework within which issues of spiritual and temporal authority were usually discussed.[2]

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1   Again, the distinction between 'Christendom' and 'Christianity' must be borne in mind here; clearly, there are some forms of Christianity which resist all forms of political consciousness and involvement; e.g. see below, pp. 49–50 for Kierkegaard's defence of Christianity against Christendom.

2   The following definition of sovereignty is given in *Black's Law Dictionary* (St. Paul, Minn., West Pub., 6th edn., 1990): 'The supreme, absolute, and uncontrollable power by which any independent State is governed; supreme political authority; paramount control of the constitution and frame of government and its administration; the self-sufficient source of political power, from which all specific political powers are derived; the international independence of a State, combined with the right and power of regulating its internal affairs without foreign dictation; also a political society, or State, which is sovereign and independent.'

In Part 1, we shall explore some of the issues of sovereignty which were central to many of the power-struggles between Church and State in 19th-century Europe. Of course, in the 20th century, the significance of political and constitutional relations between Church and State varied considerably between nation-States and by this time sovereignty had become almost exclusively secular as far as the business and practicalities of most European State and governments were concerned.[3] In Europe as a whole, however, despite the diminishing resonance of ideas of spiritual sovereignty, the Church continued to exercise enormous influence on socio-political movements and on policies and debates concerning the nature and limits of political sovereignty. In the 21st century the legacy of dual sovereignty—spiritual and temporal—remains at the core of European identity in all kinds of cultural-historical references and in the traditions, the 'language' and rituals of both constitutional monarchies and republics. It is one of the factors which have contributed to the historical marginalization of non-Christian groups within Europe, and to the exclusion of those who would like to join the European 'club'.[4] In what follows, we shall explore the ways in which issues of sovereignty in the context of Church and State grew out of the medieval roots of the Christendom narrative. We shall see that this narrative, at some level and with modifications, remained powerful in modern, secularized Europe. It has contributed both to conservative and radical socio-political theory and ideology; to both the (so-called) 'Left' and 'Right' of the political spectrum.

According to the political historian, Harold J. Laski, all concepts of sovereignty have theological origins: 'All significant concepts of the modern theory of the State are secularized theological concepts not only because of their historical development—in which they were transferred from theology to the theory of the State, whereby, for example, the omnipotent God became the omnipotent lawgiver—but also because of their systematic structure.'[5] The concept of sovereignty grew, originally, from two major roots: the Roman concept of *majestas*, the absolute sovereignty of an imperial ruler, and the Hebrew concept of the God-anointed king who

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Laski has emphasized the importance of historical context in any definition of sovereignty: 'Sovereignty, liberty, authority, personality—these are the words of which we want alike the history and the definition; or rather, we want the history because its substance is in fact the definition.' Harold J. Laski, *The Foundations of Sovereignty and Other Essays* (London, George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1921), p. 314.

3   However great the influence of Roman Catholicism on politics in, for example, the Republic of Ireland and Poland, there is no question in either of questions of spiritual sovereignty impinging directly on State authority or the business of government.

4   See below Part 3.

5   Qtd. Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology. Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab (Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press, 1985), p. 36. For more on the relation between theology, sovereignty and legitimacy see e.g. Hans Blumenberg's analysis of the differences between himself and Carl Schmitt on these issues. Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age* [*Die Legitimität der Neuzeit*, 1966], trans. Robert M. Wallace (Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1983), pp. 89–101.

symbolized the covenant between the chosen people and their God. It was the Voice of the People which consented to government by him and which thus, in temporal terms at least, legitimated his authority. Fused in this way from both the Classical and Judaeo-Christian traditions the idea of sovereignty was inextricably bound up with the interdependence of the idea of law and the sense of the sacred.

In the Europe of the Middle Ages, the sovereignty of the *Respublica Christiana*, derived from the legacy of imperial Rome, was understood as reflecting the unity of temporal and spiritual spheres no matter how truculent, in practice, the relations of Church and State.[6] At this time, however great the imperial power, it was ultimately subject to the *plenitudo potestatis* attributed to the Vicar of Christ, the pope, as the Head of the universal Church. When, for example, in 800, Pope Leo III 'gave' the Roman Empire to Charlemagne as a gift, transferring it 'from the Greeks to the Germans', this only served to confirm the idea of the supremacy of the pope over any temporal monarch.[7] From the time of the Reformation, the sovereignty of the universal Church, vested in the papacy, began to diminish and the preeminence of the popes gradually gave way to the sovereignty of nations, embodied in the person of the monarch. In the 19th century, with the final demise of the Holy Roman Empire and the rise of modern nation-States, sovereignty in Europe became ever more closely associated with nations as peoples, as moral entities, and with their State institutions. However, in some important respects popular sovereignty maintained and even deepened its connection to the sacred, to the idea of an anointed and consecrated people and even to the concept of divine right.[8]

The historian John Morris Roberts is one of many to argue that the relation between Church and State has been crucial for the development of democracy in Europe: 'One very important thing . . . in the evolution of libertarian ideas in Europe, was in fact the presence continually of a tension between Church and State. When they fell out, there was room for people to start insisting on a little

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6   The doctrine of the 'two swords', or two authorities, representing the idea of a society under dual control, was given authoritative statement at the close of the 5th century by Pope Gelasius I. It became the accepted tradition of the early Middle Ages and the basis for settling points of rivalry between pope and emperor. This accorded with the teaching of St Augustine, in *De civitate Dei*, that the distinction between spirituals and temporals, as an essential part of the Christian faith, is a rule for every government under the Christian dispensation. For the early Fathers of the Church, mankind formed a single society under two governments, each with its own law, its own institutions and agencies for legislation and administration, and its own sphere of right: 'Far beyond the period in which the relation of the two authorities was a chief controversial issue, the belief in spiritual autonomy and the right of spiritual freedom left a residuum without which modern ideas of individual privacy and liberty would be scarcely intelligible'. George H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory* (London, George G. Harrap, 3rd edn. 1963), p. 196.
7   Léon V. Poliakov, *The Aryan Myth. A History of Racist and Nationalist Ideas in Europe*, trans. Edmund Howard (London, Chatto and Windus; Heinemann, for Sussex University Press, 1974), p. 58.
8   See below, chp. 3.

more freedom, elbowing the gap a little wider between them, and so on.' Morris sees the tension between Church and State as 'enormously valuable', and his exclusion of Russia from Europe is closely linked to his conclusion that this tension 'was not present in, for example, Russian Orthodox society in anything like the same degree.'[9]

However, in the 19th century, many of those opposed to the ideals of the Revolution and horrified by the cataclysmic events which were set in train in 1789, saw the rise of popular sovereignty as a threat to the relationship between Church and State which had been, since the time of Charlemagne, the very essence of Europe and the basis of a stable political order. For these the counter-revolutionary struggle was for the survival of Christendom. The French Revolution seemed to them to have cut at the roots of the ancient tree of European civilization. Though the concept of Christendom had long since ceased to have the powerful political and social resonances which had belonged to it, for example, before the Reformation, it remained, for many, the only sure foundation of Europe's common culture, laws, and institutions. To these—and they were not only Catholics—Europe was threatened by atheistic philosophy, by a denial of natural law in favour of the arbitrary whims of those who had grasped power by illegitimate means, denying the irrevocable link between religious and political principles. They were convinced that the separation of political and social theory from spiritual and religious principle would lead to disaster because politics, religion and society were inextricably linked in the living process of history.

This belief was at the core of counter-revolutionary thought, whether that of Edmund Burke in England, of Joseph de Maistre and Louis de Bonald in France, or of Juan Donoso Cortés in Spain.[10] Maistre warned that: 'If England ever banished the words *Church and State* from its political vocabulary, its government would perish just like that of its rival [France].'[11] To him, and to Bonald, Christendom was an arena of dual sovereignty, spiritual and temporal. Their concept of

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9   'Christian Europe? John Morris Roberts', an interview with presenter Stephen Crittenden for ABC [Australian Broadcasting Company] network: 'The Religion Report', Wed. 10/7/2002. See http://www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/8.30/ relrpt/stories/s603157.htm.

10   As Hans G. Schenck points out, the British historian, 'Lord Acton [see Cambridge University Library, Ms. Add. 4967] . . . emphasizes Burke's influence on Catholic political writers, and without going into details of analogies, indicates the progression: Burke—de Maistre—Bonald—Chateaubriand—Gentz—Müller.' *The Aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars. The Concert of Europe—an experiment* (London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd., 1947), p. 7. Gentz of course never became a Catholic, but he had an immense empathy with Müller and greatly admired Maistre. 'Gentz admired the Catholic Church from afar as a historian, an aesthete, even as a statesman, and understood fully its power to unite not only individuals but the masses, yes, whole nations; but as for himself, he was unable to become a part of it.' Golo Mann, *Secretary of Europe. The Life of Friedrich Gentz, Enemy of Napoleon*, trans. William H. Woglom (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1946), p. 61.

11   *Considerations on France*, trans. Richard A. Lebrun (Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1974), p. 113.

sovereignty was rooted in natural law which was also the ground from which familial and communal relations had evolved. Natural law was the key to European identity and unity and its workings could be understood only in the light of history as the outworking of providential design.[12]

This view of history restated the core principles of an earlier authority: Bossuet's great *Discourse on Universal History* (1681). Bossuet had impressed upon the Dauphin, for whom it was written, the importance of remembering that history 'is the progression of these two things, I mean religion and empires'. '[S]ince religion and political government', he declared, 'are the two points around which human affairs revolve, to see what is said about them ... and thus to discover their order and sequence is to understand in one's mind all that is great in mankind and, as it were, to hold a guiding line to all the affairs of the world'. The great events pertaining to religion and politics, then, were the focus of the 'epochs' in terms of which human history might be understood.[13] Of this, Maistre and Bonald were equally persuaded. They were convinced that European unity and civilization rested on the indispensable pillars of natural and moral law which must be reinforced where they were in danger of toppling. True sovereignty could only exist where political principle was based upon moral and spiritual principle. Indeed, reason itself—for which so much was claimed by the radical, free-thinking *philosophes*—could only be trusted in so far as it conformed to the hierarchy of spiritual and moral truths. The relation of Church and State from which sovereignty was derived was crucial to the stability and prosperity of nations. This was the true foundation of Christendom.

Maistre argued that all valid Constitutions evolved historically according to a divinely-ordained generative principle. Forms of sovereignty would differ accordingly: 'Each method of exercising sovereignty is the immediate result of the will of the Creator, like sovereignty in general. . . . The different forms and degrees of sovereignty have given rise to the belief that [sovereignty] is the work of nations which have modified it at will. Nothing could be further from the truth. Every nation has the government suited to it, and none has chosen it.'[14] However, where human reason had set itself up against the natural and moral laws instituted by the Creator—for example, by devising a 'social contract', instead of respecting the monarch as the symbol and embodiment of the Constitution of Church and State—there was bound to be social and political disaster. Bonald argued similarly, but in the context of a far more reactionary politics,[15] that: 'Religion, [is] . . . the

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12 For more on the continuing influence of this view of history see below, Part 2.

13 Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, *Discourse on Universal History* [*Discours sur l'histoire universelle*, 1681], ed. Orest Ranum, trans. Elborg Forster (Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1976), pp. 4–5.

14 'Study on Sovereignty', *The Works of Joseph de Maistre*, trans. Jack Lively (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1965), pp. 99, 104.

15 Bonald opposed all attempts at liberalism in religion and politics. In 1815 he proposed the law against divorce which was passed the following year. He made a prominent

society which unites, which binds, from *religare*, because it is the bond and reason for the other societies'.[16] 'If God made man,' he declared, 'then there is in God, as in man, *intelligence* which willed, *action* which executed. There is thus similarity, and *man is made in his image and likeness*. There are thus relationships, a society; and I see, throughout the universe, religion as soon as the family, and the society of man and God as soon as the society of man and man; this primitive religion is called *natural* or *domestic*.'[17]

The Catholic ideal of Christendom presupposed European unity. According to Bonald, '[t]here is not a single statesman worthy of the name who does not think the unity of the various religious communions the greatest good which Europe could expect from her leaders because it is the only means of saving the Christian religion in Europe, and with it civilization and society'.[18] Both he and Joseph de Maistre had no doubt that the papacy was essential to European unity: 'We have just seen the social structure shattered to its foundations,' wrote Maistre, 'because there was too much liberty in Europe and no longer sufficient religion. There will be still more upheavals, and good order will not be thoroughly consolidated until either slavery or the true religion is restored. . . . With slavery, there is no morality properly speaking; without Christianity, no general liberty; and without the Pope, no true Christianity, that is to say, no active powerful, converting, regenerating, conquering, *perfecting* Christianity.'[19] 'Today, one would have to be blind', he declared, 'not to see that every European sovereignty is weakening. On every side, they are losing men's confidence and love. Sects and the spirit of individualism are multiplying in a frightening manner.'[20] Only the 'Supreme Pontiff' could bring about true liberty and unity: 'He alone made this liberty possible in his character of sole head of that religion which was alone capable of moderating wills and which could deploy its full strength only through him.'[21]

The ideas of Maistre and Bonald inspired the Spanish thinker, Donoso Cortés whose work, in turn, would later deeply influence the controversial German political theorist, Carl Schmitt.[22] Cortés, too, insisted that true political and social insight was dependent upon true religion: 'He possesses political truth who understands the laws to which governments are amenable; and he possesses social

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contribution to the law of 1822 which abolished the liberty of the Press and was himself president of the committee of censure which was established at the same time.

16 Bonald, *On Divorce* (1801), trans. Nicholas Davidson (New Brunswick, Transaction Publishers, 1992), pp. 3–4.

17 Ibid., p. 49.

18 Bonald, *De l'Unité Religieuse en Europe* (1806), in *Œuvres Complètes de M. de Bonald*, 3 vols. (Paris, Migne, 1859), 3.iv., pp. 675–676.

19 *The Pope* in *The Works of Joseph de Maistre*, 143–146, p. 145.

20 Ibid., p. 146.

21 Ibid., pp. 145–146.

22 See e.g. José R. H. Arias, *Donoso Cortés und Carl Schmitt. Eine Untersuchung über die staats- und rechtsphilosophische Bedeutung von Donoso Cortés im Werk Carl Schmitts* (Paderborn, Ferdinand Schöningh, 1998). See also below, p. 315.

truth who comprehends the laws to which human societies are answerable. He who knows God, knows these laws.' For Cortés, 'every affirmation respecting society or government, supposes an affirmation relative to God; or, what is the same thing ... every political or social truth necessarily resolves itself into theological truth.'[23] He rejected the view of European civilization put forward by Protestant thinkers such as the French statesman and historian, François Guizot, who, he judged, 'had seen, in this complex and prolific civilization, all that was to be seen, except this civilization itself.'[24] Although he admired Guizot's clarity of insight, and his 'solemn, formal, and austere' approach to religious questions, Cortés believed his view of Europe to be flawed by a failure to perceive that 'visible things, although distinct, combine to form a harmonious, hierarchical, and united body, animated by an invisible force'.[25] That force was the Catholic Church. 'Placed in contact with her,' wrote Cortés, 'Roman society, without ceasing to be Roman, became that which it had never been; it became Catholic. And so of the Germanic nations.'[26] Catholicism was thus the true spirit of Europe:

> [I]n the common mass of European civilization, which, like all other civilizations, and in a greater measure than others, is composed of unity and variety, all the other elements combined and united only give it what it possesses of a diverse or varied character; while to the Church, and to the Church alone, it is indebted for its unity. But in its unity dwells its very essence, and that from which every institution derives what is most essential to it—its name. European civilization was not called German or Roman, absolute or feudal, but was called, and it calls itself, Catholic civilization.[27]

Cortés, as so many other Catholic thinkers of the period, idealized what he saw as the social, political and religious unity of medieval Christendom. A similar desire to restore the unity of European civilization through the restoration of Christendom had inspired the underlying consensus which impelled the business of the Congress of Vienna in 1815 when Cortés was still a child. Its members were committed to the old ideas of temporal and spiritual sovereignty, to belief in the dependence of social and political order upon religious truth and moral law, and to the restoration of the balance of power in Europe. Tsar Alexander I's project of a Holy Alliance as the spiritual and religious basis for Europe's future security, progress and prosperity was dedicated to this end but whereas Maistre and Bonald combined historical, rational and pragmatic considerations with the deep conviction that, without an emphasis on Christian unity, no wider social, political unity could endure, the Tsar's proposal was characterized by peculiar mystical

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23 *Essay on Catholicism, Liberalism and Socialism considered in their Fundamental Principles*, trans. M. V. Goddard (Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1862), p. 20.
24 Ibid., p. 88.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid., p. 89.
27 Ibid., p. 90.

syncretisms. It showed the influence of Franz von Baader who combined philosophy and mysticism in the search for a European 'society' of which the underlying principle was love, the organic and organizing principle of life. This would be the basis of a new Christocentric European brotherhood.[28] In 1815, Baader wrote a pamphlet addressed to the Tsar, to the Catholic emperor of Austria, and the Protestant king of Prussia. Its message was that lasting peace in Europe could only come about through religious unity, but that this in turn was unattainable except by agreement. The main branches of the Christian Church must merge, he insisted, until there evolved, ultimately, a supra-denominational form. This concept of an alliance of political and religious powers became the basis of Alexander's plan, which, despite being disdained by Castlereagh and rejected by the Pope, was endorsed by the three sovereign powers, Russia, Prussia and Austria in September 1815. These declared their agreement 'to consider themselves all as members of one and the same Christian nation'. Their rulers were acknowledged to be 'merely designated by Providence to govern three branches of the One family, namely, Austria, Prussia, and Russia, thus confessing that the Christian world, of which they and their people form a part, has in reality no other Sovereign than Him to whom alone power really belongs.'[29]

The language in which the treaty of the Holy Alliance was couched is clearly that of the Christendom narrative; a Christendom extended to include Russia, whose increasing power and influence could not be ignored:

> Their Majesties the Emperor of Austria, the King of Prussia and the Emperor of Russia having, in consequence of the great events which have occurred in the course of the three last years in Europe, and especially of the blessings which it has pleased Divine Providence to shower down upon those States which place their confidence and their hope on it alone, acquired the intimate conviction of the necessity of settling the steps to be observed by the Powers, in their reciprocal relations, upon the sublime truths which the Holy Religion of our Saviour teaches; [sic] They solemnly declared that the present Act has no other object than to publish in the face of the whole world their fixed resolution, both in the administration of their respective State and in their political relations with every other Government, to take for their sole guide the precepts of that Holy Religion, namely the precepts of Justice, Christian Charity and Peace, which far from being applicable only to private concerns must have an immediate influence on the Councils of Princes and guide all their steps as being the only means of consolidating human institutions and remedying their imperfections.[30]

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28   See Heinz Gollwitzer, *Europabild und Europagedanke. Beiträge zur deutschen Geistesgeschichte des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, C. H. Beck, 1951), p. 235.

29   See Sylvester J. Hemleben, *Plans for World Peace through Six Centuries* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1943), pp. 96–104.

30   Augustus Oakes and R. B. Mowat (eds.), *The Great European Treaties of the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1918), p. 34.