CHRISTIANITY, MODERNITY, SOCIOLOGY: AN IDEOLOGICAL HISTORY

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation titled "Christianity, Modernity, Sociology: An Ideological History" by Mr. **Kunnath Basil Philip**, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy**, has not been previously submitted for any other Degree of this or any other University. To the best of our knowledge this is an original work.

We recommend that this Dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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INTRODUCTION

The idea of a 'rupture' in the historical process has been fundamental in the understanding of European modernity- both within the academia and outside of it- and has most commonly been characterized in terms of the break of modern society from Christian tradition. According to the sociological version of this 'rupture', modern social institutions are understood as having undergone a process of differentiation according to their social function- religion itself is thus reduced to a limited sphere of action, just as quintessentially modern institutions including a democratic polity, a market-based or industrial economy, a bureaucratic administration, and a scientific academe, are functionally differentiated from each other (Wagner, 2009: 247, 250), and autonomous from the influence of religious authority and belief (i.e. secular). More importantly, it is not just the sub-field of the sociology of modernity that has worked with such an idea of modern societies as distinctly unique and discontinuous from the past, the disciplinary identity of sociology as a scientific pursuit distinct from its theological predecessor too derives from the distinction between a Christian past and a secular modernity.

This sociological understanding of modernity is implicated in multiple tropes, including that of colonialism (which cast the encounter between the colonizers and the colonized itself in terms of the break of modernity from tradition), but more self-consciously in that of the European Enlightenment. This is quite understandable, as the disciplinary origins of sociology are commonly traced back to the Age of Enlightenment that spawned positivism as a system of thought and the possibility of the scientific study of society. It was the same Enlightenment philosophy that framed typologies of social evolution which signified the modern age as one of progress that could positively surpass the achievements of the ancient world and the ignorance, dogmatism and superstition of the Middle Ages. To the extent that sociology thought of itself as a distinctly modern

discipline then, it identified the Enlightenment with the origins of modernity, and took for granted the opposition between secular reason and religious faith.

A major problem however arises in that this conceptual understanding of modernity, as Peter Wagner has noted, never really matched the historicity of European societies: "Were one to insist that a full set of functionally differentiated institutions needs to exist before a society can be called modern, socio-political modernity would be limited to a relatively small part of the globe during only a part of the twentieth century" (2009: 250). It is a basic motive of this study to make sociology answerable to recent trends in the historiography of early modern Europe that have begun to demonstrate that the transitory period from the medieval to the modern ages cannot be understood simply in terms of the triumph of secular reason over religious authority and dogma. Building on the hypothesis that secular, Catholic and Protestant cultures overlapped to a great extent in modern Europe, this study rejects as flawed the identification of the modern solely with the secular, and thus opens space for research on the Christian basis of Western modernity.

And finally, the purpose behind such a broad re-reading of standard Western history is to suggest the implications of the same for sociological theory and practice, including in a non-Western context. By demonstrating how vital assumptions of the sociological perspective derive from Christian themes and concerns, this study seeks to confront disciplinary sociology with the particularities of its European origins in a manner that has seldom been attempted before.

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That which initially provoked me to take up this study was the realization that certain fundamental homologies between Christianity and the modern secular culture in the West which were quite obvious at the metaphorical level, were counter-intuitive at

the level of the disciplinary imaginary of sociology, given its commitment to the production of secular and scientific knowledge.

Thus for instance, truth, when misunderstood in biblical terms or mistakenly circumscribed in rational terms, has tended to follow the same metaphor for its expression in Western culture. Jesus Christ, the *light* unto the world, had announced the recovery of *sight* to the *blind*, and instructed the *witnesses* of his miracles to go out into the world and proclaim the truth of salvation. Likewise, the European En*light*enment, as the term should amply suggest, marked the dawn of a movement forward from the age of reason, which was to liberate 'men' from the superstition and *blind* faith that was characteristic of the *dark* ages of Christian tradition. The Enlightenment only inverted the metaphor of sight and blindness that the Christian Bible had applied effectively against its own Other, the Pharisees[1]; the charge of blind faith and ignorance now fell on the Church itself. In the late medieval period, with all of Europe divided into rivaling sects preaching competing theologies, the certainty associated with the theological interpretation of truth was no longer tenable. Scientific reason was now to bring *clarity* of perception and empirical observation into a world where truth lay *obscured* by religious dogma and superstition.

In both the Christian and modernist regimes of truth, the metaphor of light/sight also represented the *guidance* and the *warmth* of solace or security offered by the certainty of true knowledge, associated as it was, for instance, with the assurance of an eternal afterlife in paradise or the promise of a future free society. But more importantly, the *illuminative* aspect of truth in both these scopic regimes had depended on a contra-distinction with *darkness*: sight here had always been expressed as a function of faith or reason leading man out a fallen state of blindness or darkness associated with false gods and idols, Satan, superstition, dogma, ignorance, and so on. Jesus' restoration of sight to the blind had more of a metaphoric value, figurative as it was of the manifestation of his divine power to eradicate physical and moral/spiritual disability in

[1] "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are. Woe to you, blind guides! ...Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the dish, and then the outside will also be clean." *Matthew* ch.23: v.15-16, 26.

humans, for he also healed the sick and the lame, expelled demons from men, and raised the dead. Disability here is symbolic of human sinfulness (Kelly, 2005); and for the sinner to be *saved* (and hence the term *salvation*[2]) Jesus demanded only the admission of faith in God. The Enlightenment, in assuming that a culture of reason and freedom would lead humanity into a future of progress and a better life, followed the same metaphor- for reason and science was to now rescue peoples who had for centuries remained in the darkness of ignorance and poverty, under the rule of priests and monarchs (Pagden, 2008: 322-323). Indeed, this point is indisputable if one is to understand the Enlightenment motivation of colonialism. The Western colonizers zealously promoted western science and education in their respective colonies, for they were convinced the same would in time loosen the hold of local customs and superstitions over the natives, until all the nations would one day attain the state of civilization already enjoyed in Europe. Thus, if the doctrine of the Fall was central to Christian theology and legitimized Christ's role as a savior, the symbol of the fallen individual was equally implicated in the liberatory narrative of the Enlightenment.

This fundamental cultural ground of Western civilization has even the practice of disciplinary sociology implicated in it, though the same has seldom been raised to critical scrutiny. Varied critiques of the institutional and disciplinary practice of sociology, including that attempting to purge its Eurocentrism, have attempted to problematize the theorizing, methodology and epistemology of sociology in relation to the conditions of its emergence and development in post-Enlightenment Europe and in relation to the "project of modernity" in which the discipline was complicit (Wallerstein, 1997: 93, 94; Smart, 1991: 134). Yet the sacred-secular divide in the conceptualization of modernity has meant that the above critiques have avoided their extension to a point beyond the so-called 'rupture' between modernity and tradition. Both sociology and the critiques of its practice assume that the problems studied by it are distinctly modern, in the sense of having little to do with the past. Scant attention is thus paid to the important ways in which the modern West has been and still remains "Christian in inspiration"

[2] Salvation' is from the Latin *salvare* meaning 'to save', and the original sense in which the term 'save' was used in the 13th century meant 'to deliver (one's soul) from sin and its consequences'.

(Pagden, 2008: 320), and to the subtle ways in which Christian concerns still impregnate the sociological imagination.

Barry Smart has noted that even in the face of the recent skepticism regarding the project of modernity that had sought the realization of personal freedom and societal rationality, and in which sociology had long collaborated (though not uncritically), sociologists have continued to legitimize their practice in terms of its social productivity. In fact, it has long been a foundational assumption of sociology that with an adequately developed corpus of knowledge about social living, along with a vision of the "good society", it would be possible for us to transform society along those lines (Ibid: 136). While such optimism has largely been tempered in the language used by sociologists today, they have continued to value the amelioration of social problems, maintenance of social order, and the emancipation of Man as reasonable goals of the research endeavor. Even the postmodern trend in the social sciences awkwardly continues the emancipatory project of the Enlightenment, while nonetheless critiquing its cultural ground in Western society (Gray, 1995: vi).

Yet in assuming that the scientific knowledge they produce may be unproblematically applied for the eradication of *evils* in society, for remedying the problems of social organization and communication, sociologists only manage to maintain alive that one-sided metaphorical association between truth and light, knowledge and the *good*, that has dominated the narrative of Western history since the days of Christendom. Theirs is not the wisdom that light and darkness, good and evil, order and disorder, happiness and suffering are interlinked such that if we wish to experience more of one, we must also embrace more of the other (Gyrus, 1996); that each constituent of these pairs are not contraries of the *other*, but *intimate* bedfellows. Sociologists have conveniently appropriated Nietzsche in ways that suited them, but seem to have forgotten his admonition about the Christian ethic: "How little you know of human happiness, you comfortable and benevolent people, for happiness and unhappiness are sisters and even twins that either grow up together or, as in your case, *remain small* together" (Nietzsche, in *The Gay Science*; cited in Gyrus, 1996; emphasis original).

It is the intended purpose of this study to trace out in historical detail the above elaborated vital persistence of Christian symbolism in modern discourses including that of sociology. The basic strategies employed in such a task should be evident from the preview of the remainder of this document presented below.

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The first two chapters of this study present counter-histories of God and Satan in the modern age that go against the secular marking of the two as irrelevant categories in modern science and ethics. 'An Architecture of Foundations', the first chapter, works on the assumption that it was cleavages within the larger Christian fold itself that initially precipitated the tectonic shifts that later came to be characterized as the onset of modern society in Europe. In particular, the unease with which Greek philosophy had been synthesized with Christian revelation is explored, in the contexts of early Christian Gnosticism, the contact with Arabs during the medieval period, and finally the nominalist challenge to the medieval Church's reigning scholasticism in the fourteenth century. A re-reading of key events and thinkers leading up to the onset of the modern age in Europe, including the Copernican and Scientific Revolutions, the Black Death, and colonialism is then attempted to build the case that it was the metaphysical figure of a transcendent, omnipotent and authoritarian monotheistic God as Christianity had marked Him, that undergirded the discourses of modern science and of the modern secular state. The break of modern society from Christian tradition is thus reinterpreted in the sense that while the Church as an institution lost much of its erstwhile significance and moral authority in late medieval Europe, the metaphysical assumptions that underlay the emerging modern institutions and the modern conception of the individual in fact shared a synergy with Christian theological developments of the said period.

But if the transition between late medieval and early modern Europe cannot be suitably explained in terms of the sacred-secular divide, the second chapter, 'A Demonology of Morals', dwells into some of the major transformations that modernity

actually entailed. The main argument pursued to this effect is that the birth of modernity coincided with and was complicit in the marginalization of magical beliefs and practices and other aspects of popular culture rooted in a pre-Christian or pagan past- a fact which cannot be explained by way of the conflict between, but only in terms of a congruence of, Christian and secular interests in the said period. The most significant casualty of this marginalization, effected in the context of the Inquisition and later the Reformation, it is argued, involved the assimilation of the polyvalent and ambiguous category of the 'demonic' that informed magical beliefs and practices, but also much of Renaissance scholarship, into the absolute and dualistic category of the 'diabolic'. The ascendance of the mechanistic model of natural science and the constitution of the modern notion of the rational autonomous self, commonly understood through secular tropes, are shown to involve a repression of the demonic aspects of nature and the self and thus to be derived from a Christian dualism. The genealogical origins of this dualism and absolute split between good and evil, God and Satan, are then traced forward from their initial union in a single figure, and shown to have been sustained down the centuries and including in the modern age through the actual repression and persecution of imagined diabolic Others.

The third chapter involves an attempt to situate disciplinary sociology within the ideological history of the modern West identified in the previous two chapters. The theological bases of Western sociological theory are unmasked through a reading of the works of Marx, Durkheim, Parsons and Habermas. Particularly raised to critical scrutiny are the sociological attempts to theorize rationally ordered societies, the denial of full-ontological status to evil and the neglect of violence in sociological theorizing, and the artificial separation it has erected between magic and religion, nature and culture, that derives from Christian distinctions. The concluding chapter of this study then makes the effort to take stock of and rid sociology of its deep-seated Christian influences, and to attempt a conceptual restitution of order and disorder, nature and culture, good and evil, in sociological theorizing.

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Now for a flurry of clarifications that should make apparent the conceptual emphases, distinctions, and methodological orientations informing this study:

Firstly, I wish to make it evident that while it is widely recognized that Western civilization shares a Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian heritage, my basic argument in this study is that the formative influence on modern Western society and culture was decisively Christian. It is important to recognize here that the claims I make regarding Christianity are not simply from the perspective of the sociology of religion, but also from that of the history of ideas and practices. Thus while Christian apocalypticism derives most productively from its original Judaic version, the latter's influence on the European populace and their culture is meager when compared to the apocalyptic zeal the Church whipped up during the days of the Inquisition and the Black Death, and even during the Reformation.

This dual emphasis on Christianity as a system of ideas and in terms of its European historicity, as both a theological and an institutional complex, would require a nuanced reading of the material presented in this study. Thus it is not my intention to suggest that the themes and concerns I identify with Christianity are exclusive to it or that they are not evidenced in other religions and historical/cultural contexts. My point is more precisely a claim regarding the decisiveness of the historical influence of Christianity in the marginalization of certain beliefs and practices in early modern Europe, and the ascendance of certain others.

This also means that I do not identify Christianity with some unchanging set of core beliefs, but interpret it in terms of the historical and cultural changes it has undergone. It is in this sense that I choose to focus more on the overlaps between Catholic and Protestant cultures in late medieval Europe. The Reformation in the sixteenth century was not simply a wholly Protestant affair, but induced far-reaching changes in Catholic theology and practice, and it is these continuities between rivaling sects (and also the cumulative effects of the rivalries played out between them), I argue, that is more instructive about the early modern scene in Europe.

Modernity is typically the generalized term used to make sense of a series of gradual and contingent though inter-related historical events including the rise of industrialism, capitalism, nation-states, secularization, rational forms of knowledge production and surveillance, and so on (Barker, 2004: 125). In my conceptualization of modernity, I would add the formative influence of colonialism to the above list, and reject the dichotomy often presupposed between secularism and Christianity. Commonly this dichotomy is construed along a temporal dimension, in terms of a Christian past and a secular modern; in my scheme however, Christianity is both an aspect of tradition and modernity- indeed, considerable attention is devoted in this study to developments in Christian theology during the early modern period. As stated earlier, this study is framed along the synergy shared between theology and science, Christianity and secularism in early modern Europe. I however do not intend to deny that the conflict between Christian and secular institutions and ideologies is real, the popular imagination of the modern West being structured in terms of the sacred-secular divide. Thus I would consider the analytical frameworks of both 'synergy' and 'conflict' to be valid in the study of Christianity and secularism in the modern age- in this study however, I pursue only the former approach, the more neglected among the two. No effort is made here to reconcile these two approaches, to get them to talk together, or to get them to fight out their differences. That this leaves the study somewhat incomplete is neither denied, nor regretted.

As the title indicates, I have designated my study an 'ideological history'; the term 'ideology' however has multiple connotations both within and outside the academia, and a clarification of its use in this study is only appropriate. In its classical Marxist sense, ideology refers to false consciousness. In my own usage however, I avoid the truth-falsehood valuation, and replace it with the 'good-evil' valuation, understood in the sense of Nietzsche's genealogical reading of Western morals (See Nietzsche, 1996). My treatment of the late medieval, early modern, and modern ideologies of Western history shares with and derives from Nietzsche's demonstration that that which is held to be universally and naturally positive in the enlightened West had at its roots impulses of resentment and revenge against that which was originally considered noble, powerful, and beautiful, stemming from a sense of inferiority ("slave morality") first expressed in

Judaic theology. The effort in this study has been to demonstrate that discourses about the good, whether patently Christian, modern or sociological, have proceeded in terms of a diabolization, criminalization, or pathologization of the powerful, chaotic and uncanny aspects of human, natural, and social living. Yet my use of the term 'ideological history' is more akin to Foucault's genealogical analyses which are more actively engaged with the details of contingent events in history, than that of Nietzsche. In terms of the conceptual distinctions I employ, Nietzsche's genealogy would be more ideological, while not being ahistorical, whereas Foucault's treatment is more properly ideological-historical. Thus while I would largely concur with Nietzsche that the *ideological* basis of Western morality is Judeo-Christian, as clarified earlier, in terms of *historicity*, I accord greater weight to the Christian influence.

Finally, I also think it important to mention that I locate myself within the sociological academe and its prescribed inventory of methodologies somewhat hesitantly. Throughout the course of this study I have never felt constrained or primarily been influenced by the resources offered by sociological theory or by those of other academic disciplines. Thus while I have covered a broad conspectus including the disciplines of sociology, theology, history, psychology and the physical sciences, I do not consider my work to be inter-disciplinary. The deepest motivations for this study- while there is nothing necessarily unique about it- stem from outside the accepted boundaries of the academia, some of which would become evident from a close reading of the remainder of this document.

CHAPTER ONE

AN ARCHITECTURE OF FOUNDATIONS

[I]

At least one irony of the modern age has been that we are toady reminded of its *monument*ality only in its *ruins*. What makes the irony even starker is that the failure of the modern project is quite enthusiastically cheered from within the walls of that modern *edifice*, the academe, by scholars who are not just fascinated by, but are often the architects of ruins, of *deconstruction*. But such a contradiction seems inevitable, insofar as scholars now are uncertain of the *ground* that they stand on.

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[II]

Leading sociologists of the day like Giddens (1990) and Beck (1992) explicitly base their theorisation of late modern societies in the West on the categories of risk and uncertainty. The category of risk, of course, had already emerged during the transitional decades from the Middle Ages to the early modern era, in the context of maritime trade and a volatile capitalist economy. But risk here was institutionalized, implying calculation of and insurance against losses in the industrial process. Such a notion of risk embodied the typically modern orientation toward the future as open-ended, as devoid of the possibility of divine or mysterious intervention, and precisely for

this reason amenable to human steering in the direction of progress with the help of positivist science and technology (Zinn, 2008: 4-10).

An optimistic orientation toward the future as progress drove the early development of modern science, industry and political democracy in the West. The *tower*ing heights modernity thus scaled, its scientific innovations and technological marvels, but also its experiments in political democracy and social justice, were erected on what was assumed to be the stable and secure ground of reason. The application of practical *reason*, alongside a *faith* in progress, itself irrational, thus informed the semantic architecture of modernity- its industrial houses, parliaments, and universities.

Such a lethal combination of reason and faith, the spatial-temporal *framework* of the modern West, has largely come undone by the present century. The experiences of the two World Wars, the Holocaust, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Stalinist attempt at social engineering, fascism, the Chernobyl disaster, and more recently the 9/11 attack, the global economic meltdown, along with real and imagined specters of global warming and nuclear warfare have brought about a semantic shift in the modernist notion of risk. Risk now connotes threat, damage, and loss of control, over and above its earlier associations.

It is in this later sense of the term that sociologists have incorporated risk into their vocabulary. Giddens breaks it down to us quite starkly: "Today risk is gaining a new importance because we no longer succeed in controlling the future... Risk was supposed to be a way of regulating the future, of normalizing it and bringing it under our dominion. Things haven't turned out that way" (1999). And for Beck: "The irony of risk... is that rationality, that is, the experience of the past, encourages anticipation of the wrong kind of risk, the one we believe we can calculate and control, whereas the disaster arises from what we do not know and cannot calculate" (2006: 330). Manufactured risks- in an age where capitalism operates on a truly global scale and where flows of capital, labour and information form complex transnational networks- are such that the industry, government and the scientific experts can no longer approach the application of technology in terms of the control and predictability of outcomes. Sociological theory now conceptualizes risk as a *breach* in the spatial-temporal framework of modernity

outlined above, which assumed a robust future could be *built* on the solid base and autonomous ground of scientific reason.

Also Beck, in his treatment of 'risk society', arranges the ecological movement, feminism, mass unemployment, and so on, as developments that challenge the prioritization of technological and economic progress over its humanitarian and environmental costs: "The gain in power from techno-economic 'progress' is being increasingly overshadowed by the production of risks" (Beck, 1992: 13). Risk society thus signifies an unstable, shifting, and fractured ground in the landscape of modernity that threatens to bring crashing down (as did the twin towers of the World Trade Centre) its impressive skyscrapers symbolic of both stability and growth.

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Sociology today has had to creatively respond to a condition wherein many sections of the public are no longer enthusiastic about the promise of modernity, nor firm in their faith in progress. Disciplinary sociology then has traversed quite some distance since its early decades as a torch-bearer and conscience-keeper of modernity.

For a long time sociology has functioned as the *foundation*alist discourse of modernity, as if charged with the duty of policing the rationality of modern institutions, and thus safeguarding the possibility of social progress[3]. The cornerstones of the modern project were also the landmarks of theory-*building* in sociology, namely, the intelligibility and malleability of the social order, which provided the distinct possibility of directing the future course of modern society by rational mastery (Zanotti, 1999: 451). In risk society, however, modernity is no longer a *project* imbued with the hopes and aspirations of the European Enlightenment. To characterize an era in terms of risk and uncertainty is to acknowledge limits to the powers of prediction, calculability and control

[3] This is in spite of the fact that individual sociologists have also been skeptical about the possibility or the desirability of societal progress and perfection through reason.

one attributes to science. A casualty of late modernity or postmodernism then has been an embarrassment with sociological attempts to theorize and secure the conditions for a more rationally ordered society.

Social forms are today defined in terms of their *contingency* as opposed to their stability or solidity (Ibid.: 457); the search for ultimate and universal grounds for the epistemic claims of sociology has already been challenged (Seidman, 1991: 134), and the "orthodox consensus" around Parsonian structural functionalism has collapsed (Smart, 1991: 134; Zanotti, 1999: 452), making the way for *fragmented* discourses, *fractured* perspectives and *groundless* practices (Gray, 2005: 147). As rightly noted by Vattimo (2002: 5), reality can no longer be conceived of today as a *structure tied to a sole foundation* that academic disciplines would have the task and capacity of knowing. What fate then awaits sociological theory-*building* in a *liquid* modernity (Bauman, 2000)[4] with *fluid* topographies?

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[III]

The range of responses organized in 'risk society' has all to do with the future direction of capitalist/industrial development. Apocalyptic visions of future as doom, of impending ecological disaster, and others not as dystopian, have gained a wide currency; the erstwhile Enlightenment idea of unilinear progress has now had to compete with cyclical notions of boom and decline in the market. However, such an obsession with the future only buys into the self-assertion of modernity that claims itself as discontinuous, as a radical break from the past. When Giddens points to risk, uncertainty, disembedding and ontological insecurity as *consequences of* modernity, as opposed to

[4] Bauman uses the term 'liquid modernity' to describe the late modern scenario wherein the economic, political and social institutions of modernity can no longer be understood in terms of the *rigidity of their structures* that once helped them serve as *stable* frames of reference for individuals in making their life choices.

mere features of late modernity, his diagnosis of risk society too is based on a discontinuous view of modernity: "The views I shall develop have their point of origin in what I have elsewhere called a "discontinuist" interpretation of modern social development. By this I mean that modern social institutions are in some respects unique-distinct in form from all types of traditional order" (1990: 3).

Another theme both Giddens and Beck develop in their analysis of late modern societies is that of reflexive modernization. In Beck's scheme reflexive reason is articulated primarily in terms of a critique of science that is held largely responsible for the creation of risks, along with industry (Lash & Wynne in Beck, 1992: 2). Likewise, for Giddens too "the reflexivity of modernity actually subverts reason, at any rate where reason is understood as the gaining of certain knowledge" (1990: 39). Premised as these approaches are on a discontinuous view of modernity, they pronounce judgment on the crises of modernity by holding as guilty the instrumental rationality of industry and the idea of science as certitude[5]. Its merits notwithstanding, such an approach will nonetheless be found lacking in that it treats modernity as just a reason-based development over the past, and not simultaneously as a faith-driven system.

As opposed to *raising* fears about the future direction of capitalist development, I shall instead stick my probing finger *downwards* to suggest that modernity was never actually *erected* on a solid ground independent from the past, that modernity was not some castle built in the air floating freely as if in a vacuum. The discontinuist view of Giddens would seem to imply that modernity is an enterprise entirely planned along the lines of a science and an industry only too certain of its rationality and technological prowess. Instead, I shall contend that the architecture of modernity in the West grew organically over the older Christian topography it gradually came to replace. At places the ruins and decay that set into European Christianity in the Middle Ages provided a fertile ground on which the modern age gradually rose. At the

[5] Reflexivity and reflexive reason is all too often propped up in the social sciences today as a mode of engagement with and amelioration of the excesses of instrumental reason. This trend is altogether faulty, as should be clear when Zizek points out that racism itself is becoming reflexive (2000: 6), a lesson that holds good for other such banes of society.

same time certain Christian *forms* never really gave away, and modern structures were only extensions of their earlier forms in these cases.

Unlike Giddens then, I am interested not in the consequences of modernity, but in the architecture of its *foundations*. To reveal these obscure spatial anchors of an era that has sought to identify itself merely in terms of its temporal dimension, I shall employ that method which invokes the architectural metaphor only to reject its sense of place and boundaries- deconstruction.

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It is quite evident that the very notion of the modern implies a break from the past, a contrast with tradition. The emergence of modern society in both Europe and North America is historically linked to the differentiation between the church and the state, and from the eighteenth century onwards, to the development of a rational public sphere. The institutional and conceptual architecture of the secular modern thus involved a dichotomization between the public and the private spheres- the former was the domain of reasoned debates over salient political issues of the day, whereas to the latter was confined all matters pertaining with religion (Shuger, 1994: 1; Allen, 2008: 768).

Of course the distinction between the temporal and the spiritual orders had already been consolidated by Augustine long before the eighteenth century, but in practical terms the membership of both the church and the state was the same, allowing for a continuum between social and religious existence, an entanglement of political and religious affairs (Shuger, 1994: 1). Following the Reformation however, such an intertwinement of the religious and the political climaxed into one hundred and thirty-one years of religious wars between rival Catholic and Protestant factions. By the time the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia secured lasting peace between the divided monarchies of Europe, the stage was already set for the emergence of modern nation states premised on the banishment of religion from international politics. The treaty of Westphalia that

effectively allowed the king to decide the religion of his kingdom was essentially a secular solution, and understandably the only power that rejected the terms of the treaty was the papacy (Pagden, 2008: 307). The Enlightenment myth of progress, informed by such historical events, celebrated the same as liberation from a past that came to be associated solely with religious superstition and authority. The spatial dichotomy of the public (reason) and the private (religion) spheres was thus actually modeled on a temporal frame, with Christianity representing the past in the secularization narrative, and therefore an anachronism in the present.

But the radical autonomy of the modern age from Christian tradition is not simply a *construction* of the secularists and rationalists; fundamentalist Catholics too identify modernity solely in terms of its individualism, materialism, and hedonism construed as irreconcilable with the Christian doctrine (Vattimo, 2002: 70). Also, the response of the Catholic Church to the changed circumstances of modern society, until recently, seemed to confirm the secular positioning of Christianity as a relic from the past. Until the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), the Church sought to root itself in the certainty of medieval Scholasticism, as a measure of guarded seclusion from the profane culture of modernity. Following the re-confirmation of the radical opposition of the Catholic Church to modern thought in the First Vatican Council, in 1879 Pope Leo XIII had made the philosophico-theological system of the medieval scholastic Thomas Aquinas mandatory for the whole church (Daly, 1985: 775). Leo XIII promoted Thomism as an alternative to the modern philosophies and notions of progress and liberty that he termed 'errors', and as a theological antidote to the 'evils' of modern society (Ventresca, 2009: 146-147).

Daly has likened such an approach of guarded isolationism to being *walled up* against modernity: "In the period between the two Vatican Councils the Catholic Church resembled a village encompassed by a high wall which separated the villagers from the surrounding jungle. An effective system of taboos and cautionary tales severely discouraged them from venturing beyond the wall which both protected and imprisoned them. This artificial village had been specifically designed to preserve the last remnants of a classical and medieval culture which, outside its walls in the surrounding

terrain, had long since yielded to the advancing jungle of post-Enlightenment life and ideas" (1985: 777). Not surprisingly, Pope John XXIII, who convoked Vatican II in a bid to re-define the Church's role in the modern world, spoke thus: "I want to throw open the windows of the Church so that we can see out and the people can see in" (New World Encyclopedia). To the many critics of the Council though, such an opening only unleashed seismic forces that have *crumbled* the ideological and institutional structure of the Church. The Catholic dilemma with modernity thus persists.

The equation of mainline Protestantism with modernity however, has been unlike that of Catholicism. In posing itself as a 'Reformation', the Protestant movement from the sixteenth century onwards employed the same metaphor which constituted Catholicism as a moribund presence in the modern age. By blanking out the reform movements within the Church that sought to correct the abuses of the clergy even before the Protestant rebellions broke out, Catholicism in this period was construed solely in terms of the Counter-Reformation, as a reaction to Protestantism, as a static and corrupt influence that was soon to be overcome in a distinctly Protestant modernity (Miola, 2007: 4-7).

Catholic critics have been at pains to suggest that the development of secularism in the West is an expression of the historiography of early Protestantism such as that presented above. Charles Taylor has noted that, far from denying religion, secularization involves "a new placement of the sacred or spiritual in relation to individual or social life" (2007: 437) - the secular modern is in fact a religious view of the social good, sustained by a notion of the private individual as the appropriate repository of religious sensibility (Allen, 2008: 768) - a *belief* with obvious affinities to Protestant theology. The chief complaint of Catholic thinkers like Jules-Paul Tardivel against secularism then is that it denies entry into the public sphere Catholic ideas of political participation, based as it is on a universalized version of Protestant thought (Ibid: 766-769).

Equally, the Protestant affinity to modernity is driven primarily by its need to define itself in opposition to Catholicism, which is accomplished by associating itself

with notions of progress and political liberty and caricaturing Catholicism as a static presence. Keenan has called this division between an enlightened Protestantism and a Catholicism identified with the dark ages of the *ancien régime* a "convenient theological half-truth" that has served as a foundation myth of the American nation (2002: 284). The tenuousness of such a relationship between Protestantism and secular modernity is revealed when one examines the conservative line within the former, the resurgence of which in U.S. politics from the 1980s onwards was itself articulated in terms of a "war with modernism" and secular humanism that had diminished the political role of religion (Hammond, 1983: 281).

The above description should make it amply clear that no simplistic view of a confrontation between a Christian past and a secular modern is tenable.[6] Crucial cleavages in modern society seem to be premised on sectarian divisions within the larger Christian fold. An acknowledgement of the same should encourage us to delve deeper into the possibility that internal conflicts and contradictory elements within Christianity had a role in the distinct origins and expression of modernity. And it has been suggested that the critical internal divide within Christianity leading to the threshold of modernity was effected a few centuries before the Protestant movement even began[7].

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Implicit in modernity's culture of futurism is also a disdain for the past. Such an orientation toward the future in contra-distinction with the past, had gained wide acceptance among natural philosophers in Europe only by the end of the sixteenth

[6] The historiography of early modern Europe has for the large part concentrated on the confrontations between secular, Catholic and Protestant cultures. It is only with recent scholarship (See Miola, 2007) that increased attention is being paid to the frequent exchanges and common ground (anti-Semitism, for instance) between these three over-lapping cultures. It follows then that the identification of the modern solely with the secular is flawed, thus opening space for research on the Christian *basis* of modernity.

[7] Crucial to our examination here is the period from the fourteenth century onwards, when the medieval synthesis between Christian belief and Greek philosophy, particularly the highly influential Scholasticism of Thomas Aquinas that drew from Aristotle, comes to be challenged *from within the Church*.

century. A number of physicians and artisans then began eschewing the erstwhile practice of citing ancient authorities in order to lend credibility to their works, and instead adopted the rhetoric of empiricism and direct investigation of nature (Iliffe, 2000: 428). Already in the fourteenth century Petrarch had provided a contrast of the present with the 'dark ages' that had followed antiquity, thus laying the ground for the idea of a 'new' time, though he and other Italian humanists only believed it possible to *re*store the ancient values and achievements of classical Greece (Gillespie, 2008: 4). With the remarkable developments in the field of mechanical arts informing the age however, from here it was only a step away from the possibility that the moderns could positively rival the ancients, a view that was expressed most influentially in Francis Bacon's '*Novum Organum*'. Bacon proclaimed modernity superior to antiquity, and set out to develop a method of science that would lead to the future perfection of man's dominion over nature. In his '*Masculine Birth of Time*', Bacon made it clear that this method and project would involve weeding out the influence of the philosophical masters themselves- Plato, Aristotle, Hippocrates and Galen- as well as their followers and critics (Gaukroger, 2004: 106-107).

But the crucial point to be recognized for our deconstruction of the dichotomy between a Christian past and a secular modernity is that the question of Greek antiquity was never really resolved in Christianity itself. The Hellenistic world of late antiquity, viz. the first and second centuries, was characterized by an intense intellectual and spiritual ferment between early Christianity, eastern religious beliefs and Neoplatonism, besides a number of other ancient philosophical views. By the time it was adopted as the official religion of the Roman Empire, Christianity had already assimilated, often in contradictory ways, much of the pagan philosophy of antiquity, setting up a permanent tension within itself between revelation and divine omnipotence on the one hand, and a rationalism derived from Greek philosophy on the other, arbitrated of course by the various councils that formalized into doctrine the many conflicting strains of the early Christian Church (Gillespie, 2008: 19-20).

Hans Blumenberg, in his important work '*The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*', has argued that the early Christian synthesis achieved by the Church Fathers in the

beginning of the medieval period had as "the unity of its systematic intention" the task of subduing the late-antique and early-Christian Gnosticism (1983: 126). Gnosticism was official Christianity's intimate enemy that had attempted a synthesis of revelation and Neoplatonism more radical than that of the latter. The question of the origin of evil in the world had been left unsolved in ancient Greek philosophy, and the Church Fathers were faced with the problem of explaining the existence of evil in a world created by a benevolent God. In the Gnostic system such a problem was avoided since the world was a demiurgic creation, and a second, separate, judging God, the God of salvation, was untainted by the evil of this world (Blumenberg, 1983: 127-128; Bassler, 2001: 163-164). The Gnostic God was thus a transcendent deity with no responsibility for the world, his omnipotence rendering the salvation of men itself arbitrary. Given the consistency of Gnostic thought and the obvious challenge it posed to the authority of the Church Fathers, Blumenberg notes, "that the formation of the Middle Ages can only be understood as an attempt at the definitive exclusion of the Gnostic syndrome. To retrieve the world as the creation from the negative role assigned to it by the doctrine of its demiurgic origin, and to salvage the dignity of the ancient cosmos for its role in the Christian system, was the central effort all the way from Augustine to the height of Scholasticism" (1983: 130).

The Church Fathers however failed in containing Gnosticism, for it re-emerged at the end of the Middle Ages in the form of the nominalist challenge to late medieval scholasticism, the overcoming of which was modernity's distinct claim to legitimacy (Ibid. : 126). Scholastic theology had for long sustained medieval Christianity by delicately balancing Christian belief and pagan rationalism, but the growing influence of Aristotelianism (and of the more extreme Averroism) both within and outside the Church that followed the contact of Christian Europe with the Arab world, was soon construed as a political and theological threat by the Church leaders. Consequently, Aristotelianism was condemned in 1270 and 1277, and divine omnipotence came to be emphasized over and above the notion of a rational God. The decisive development however came with the nominalist theology of the Franciscans Duns Soctus, and more importantly, William of Ockham (Gillespie, 2008: 20-21).

In his theological speculations Ockham presented a voluntaristic God whose creation of the world was an act of sheer grace, comprehensible only through revelation (as against reason); such a God was not bound by the laws of the world he creates or by his previous determinations, the divine omnipotence of whom made the world unreliable and its inhabitants powerless to improve their condition. The realistic cosmos of scholasticism based on Platonic universals, humanly relevant and dependable, was rejected for the radical chaos of individual and diverse entities (Gillespie, 2008: 22; Yack, 1987: 255).

Given that the crisis precipitated by nominalism originated from within Christian theology, the latter could no longer be looked forward to overcoming the same. The major contention of Blumenberg then is that, it is only the self-assertion of the human potential to transform nature in conformity with human needs, best expressed in the natural philosophy and science of Francis Bacon, which finally overcomes the problem of Gnosticism revived by nominalism. In his words, "Only insofar as physics could be thought of as producing real human power over nature could natural science potentially serve as the instrument by which to overcome the new radical insecurity of man's relation to reality" (1983: 155). And again "...only after nominalism had executed a sufficiently radical destruction of the humanly relevant and dependable cosmos could the mechanistic philosophy of nature by (sic) adopted as the tool of self-assertion" (151).

As per the above thesis then, the human self-assertion[8] of reason against tradition, the foundationalist discourse of the Enlightenment, was the necessary and legitimate response of the modern age to a late medieval Christian world that lay in

[8] It may be useful to note here that such a self-assertion is not as radical as it is often made out to be, when compared to the earlier self-assertion of Christianity, in the context of its religious rivalry with Greco-Roman paganism and Judaism, namely that its revelation alone was true and different from any account that preceded it. Thus, in his introduction to Albert Camus' *Christian Metaphysics and Neoplatonism,* Srigley notes: "Christianity insists and has always insisted that its revelation offers a unique insight into the human condition that differs qualitatively from any account that preceded it. It is therefore both historical and apocalyptic in the strongest sense. Ancient Greek oppositions or antitheses worked differently. They always took place against an enormous backdrop of agreement and shared meaning. Another way to say this is that the ancients never allowed the self-affirmation or self-interest inherent in the assertion of their difference to eclipse their awareness of the profound sameness of all human things. In Christianity that restraint is severed. Though the historical results of that severing were in no way inevitable or fixed (people could have simply chosen to ignore it), it is arguable that much of what we know as the modern project was informed and inspired by it" (Camus, 2007: 23-24).

rubble. The crucial question that now remains to be answered is that, though at the threshold of modernity science, politics and natural philosophy had achieved a critical distance from Christian dogma and theology, was the new circumstance decidedly secular, atheistic and anti-Christian?

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[III]

It is indeed a curious case when both modernists and Christians understand each other in terms of the sacred-secular divide. A naturalistic modern science, as opposed to the supernaturalism of religion, is then adjudged thoroughly profane by Christians, in the sense that God has no role in the affairs of a this-worldly science, the findings of which are of little consequence to their faith in Him, and that the modern academic edifice is a structure bereft of metaphysical guarantees that lend an ultimate purpose to life. This is in fact an admission or acceptance at face-value of the Enlightenment self-foundation in reason, as against in religion or tradition. Of course this is all too convenient for the Christian critics, for seated on the hallowed throne of sacrality they can then heap abuses galore on such science for the ills, nay, the 'evils' of modernity.

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To begin with, the assumption that scientific activity achieved independence from religious authority only in the modern age is historically erroneous. By the fifteenth century itself theologians such as Gerson had complained that natural philosophy was being pursued in such a manner that its reconciliation with theology was

no longer considered paramount (Gaukroger, 2000: 204). The problem had to do with the fact that, as already noted, Christianity itself had never adequately reconciled with antiquity. When in the twelfth century it was realized that the Aristotelian system fitted less than perfectly with Christian revealed theology, Aristotelian natural philosophy gradually came to be separated from his metaphysics, in order to maintain the close connection of the latter with Christian theology. It is not surprising then, that philosophers based at the University of Padua like Pomponazzi taught from the perspective of Aristotelian natural philosophy that the death of the body also resulted in the disappearance of the soul, while simultaneously accepting on faith the Church dogma of the immortality of the soul (Ibid. : 204-205).

It was the destruction of Aristotelian physics that eventually paved the way for the emergence of modern science in Europe, and Christian theological differences with Aristotelian philosophers had no meager role in this turn of events (Hodgson, 2001: 152).

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Francis Bacon, who is often regarded today as the father of modern science, too had called for a rejection of the authority of the ancients, Aristotle included; and though he criticized theological styles of investigating nature, it was religion (and by this I can only mean Christianity) that ultimately *underpinned* his new scientific vision. As Rob Iliffe notes, "His notion of 'reform' owed much to his understanding of the reasons for the Protestant split from Rome, while his call for an instauration of learning was typologically modelled on the construction of Solomon's Temple" (2000: 442). That the Baconian programme for the recovery of natural philosophy and its future progress, his 'Great Instauration' of learning, was not a secular scientific advance over traditional religion, but one that drew on Christian and Renaissance humanist sources of faith in order to *support* scientific investigation, may be discerned from what follows.

Bacon articulated his programme for the advancement of learning in terms of a restoration of mankind's original relation to God and nature in the times that preceded the Fall (McKnight, 2005: 95). In doing so he drew on the general consensus in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that Adam (not Eve, and hence I use the term '*man*kind' above and below) had possessed an encyclopedic knowledge greater than that held by the natural philosophers regarding nature, for it was to Adam alone that God had granted dominion and mastery over His creation[9]. Adam's Fall from grace, and the consequent loss of his esoteric knowledge and dominion over the beasts, was commonly viewed as resulting from the loss of control reason exercised over passion and the senses. Bacon believed that his scientific method could bring about the termination of such error, and thus the sciences would restore the knowledge and mastery over nature that mankind originally enjoyed. It was such rhetoric permeated by religious references that played an important role in legitimizing the goals and methods of the new naturalist philosophy (Harrison, 2002: 240-244). What needs to be highlighted is that the mastery and control over nature that Bacon aimed for was couched unambiguously in terms of divine providence and human destiny, as opposed to the destructive and conquering instrumentalist orientation toward nature that science is today attributed with.

What deserves even more careful notice is the deliberate modeling of Bacon's Great Instauration along the rebuilding of Solomon's Temple, as presented in his fictional work 'New Atlantis'. In the biblical account, the rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem was providentially guided and signified the restoration of God's relation with his chosen people, and it is in this sense of *rebuilding* that Bacon uses the term 'instauration'. The Baconian edifice thus referred to the construction of knowledge (edification), while the reference to the wise and merciful King Solomon was symbolic of the enlightenment and prosperity it was believed science would now usher (McKnight, 2005: 89-90). Thus insofar as the foundations of modern science were first secured by Bacon, the structure he desired to rebuild was not the hubristic Tower of Babel Christian critics claim modern science to be, but the Temple of Jerusalem itself. What Bacon aspired for was not just the material prosperity of England, but also a spiritual quest back

[9] 'Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and conquer it. Be masters of the fishes of the sea, the birds of heaven, and all living animals on the earth' (Gen.1: 28).

to Eden as paradise. When Bacon links knowledge to power, it is to be understood not in terms of a Faustian exercise of egomaniacal power, but in terms of the charitable power of King Solomon who requests knowledge to meet the needs of his people (Ibid.: 99)[10].

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The above is not be interpreted in the sense that early modern science was solely motivated by and designed along the lines of a Christian spirituality, for that would only miss the point I wish to emphasize, namely that the precarious architecture of early European modernity meant the initial developers of science had to (consciously or otherwise) interact with the Christian tradition time and again to con*solid*ate the foundations of a self- assertive project that was otherwise devoid of metaphysical absolutes. The implication of this is that modern discourses, self-understood as secular and *based* on the autonomous ground of reason, are actually *ungrounded* (logically speaking) in metaphysical principles such as God and transcendent Truth (Kordela, 1999: 790). An examination of God in the Cartesian system should clarify my point.

Cartesian science is grounded on an autonomous subject, the subject as cogito, the thinking subject, who not only transcends nature but is able to challenge and replace God as the master and possessor of nature (Gillespie, 2008: 55). The autonomous subject is understood in the Cartesian system in terms of the mind-body divide, with the human mind representing the seat of knowledge, and the errors to which the mind is prone being avoided by relying on clear and distinct ideas. To this extent Descartes follows the script of the *self*-grounding of reason. But the Cartesian subject is able to thus replace God, only because Descartes invests in the human mind "a sort of spark of the

[10] As Bacon put it in his *Instauratio Magna*: "Lastly, I would address one general admonition to all; that they consider what are the true ends of knowledge, and that they seek it not either for pleasure of the mind, or for contention, or for superiority to others, or for profit, or fame, or power, or any of these inferior things; but for the benefit and use of life; and that they perfect and govern it in charity. For it was from the lust of power that the angels fell, from lust of knowledge that man fell; but of charity there can be no excess, neither did angel or man ever come in danger by it" (cited in Klein, 2003).

divine, in which the first seeds of useful ways of thinking are sown" (Descartes, *Rules for the Direction of the* Mind, cited in Harrison, 2002), and because he allows that man may partake in the same infinite will that constitutes God (Gillespie, 2008: 55). In other words, Cartesian science is grounded in the notion of the subject as cogito, only to the extent that the subject itself is grounded in the prior notion of God's reasonableness and infinite will. The subject may ultimately doubt God, but this doubting subject itself requires God for its grounding (Kordela, 1999: 792).

Kordela therefore infers about the shift from theocratic tradition implicated in the narrative of a secular modern science that, "far from being a shift from a discourse grounded on God to a discourse grounded on human reason, it is a shift from a discourse consciously grounded on God to one that disavows its being grounded on God and that is thus unconsciously grounded on God" (Ibid.: 793).

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I contend that it is the Christian Godhead, of course refracted through the Greco-Roman heritage and the historical particularities of late medieval Europe, which came to be transfigured as the metaphysical or theological basis of early modern science in Europe[11]. It was the transcendence and omnipotence of the Christian God that came to be refigured in modern science as the possibility of objective knowledge and willful control of nature.

It is the Christian notion of a transcendent God located in a heavenly abode, wholly distinct and detached from His creation, as opposed to a God that animates the entire universe pantheistically, on which is modeled the objective gaze of the scientist and the universal scope of the knowledge thus produced, premised as modern science is

[11] A. N. Whitehead puts it thus: "My explanation is that the *faith* in the possibility of science, generated antecedently to the development of modern scientific theory, is an unconscious derivative from medieval theology" (cited in Hodgson, 2001: 155; emphasis mine).

on the possibility of transcending the circumstances of the body and the locale (See section below). The same notion underlies the modern scientific view of nature as inanimate matter that may then be rationally mastered for the benefit of man[12].

The medieval Christian notion of God as geometer/architect, of Christ as divine logos, marks the entire creation as logical, intelligent and orderly (Hodgson, 2001: 148). Consequently modern science may understand the universe rationally in terms of immutable laws of the Book of Nature. Of course nature itself came to be deified, and natural law came to be invoked for legitimation in the social and political spheres, but nature here did not replace God[13] as much as it was enslaved to a metaphysics of regularity and uniformity that derived form the notion of God's creation as orderly and uniform, of nature itself as an artifact (Datson, 1998: 150, 166). It must be remembered that post-nominalism, if anything, it is the divine omnipotence of God that comes to be emphasized over the earlier Thomist notion of the partial autonomy of nature. This "image of a monarchial God who ruled from above by imposing his divine law on it" (Fritjof Capra, cited in Ellerbe, 1995) was a crucial metaphor for modern science and classical physics that had come to rely on the idea of a mechanistic and deterministic universe.

Moreover, the Christian doctrine that God created the universe out of his free will and literally out of nothing means that he is not the First Cause or Prime Mover of a necessary universe in the Aristotelian sense. The universe therefore cannot be understood in terms of *a priori* reasoning alone, but has to be studied empirically by the conduct of experiments (Hodgson, 2001: 148), and it is such experimentation that came to be definitive of the new scientific method.

Of course early modern science incorporated a rather filtered view of the Christian God, for it does not consider all his attributes, for instance the notion of God as mystery. The authoritarian and moral Christian God too seems an unlikely candidate for

[12] This point is dealt with in greater detail in the following chapter.

[13] Datson comments that: "It is doubtful that the authority of nature alone would have sufficed to justify seventeenth- and early- eighteenth-century political regimes. Natural phenomena, ordinary or extreaordinary, carried weight in human affairs only if God's authority was additionally invoked" (1998: 171).

the modeling of modern science, when Einstein says that "I believe in Spinoza's God who reveals himself in the harmony of all that exists, not in a God who concerns himself with the fate and actions of man" (cited in Poole, 2009). Nothing could be further from the truth. It is in the connections between modern science and the moral God of Christianity that one can in fact trace most poignantly the contours of what has been called the darker side of modernity- colonialism.

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[IV]

The most important development in the field of astronomy informing the scientific revolution was the paradigm shift from a geocentric model of the universe, to a heliocentric one. Commonly referred to as the Copernican revolution, this shift has long served as a metaphor for describing the break of an objective modern science from a Christian tradition steeped in dogma. At the time Copernicus proposed his new astronomical system however, there was little evidence to choose between the erstwhile Ptolemaic system and that of Copernicus, barring the fact that the latter brought about a greater ease in the descriptions and calculations of the astronomer (Swabey, 1929: 145). Also, in arranging his astronomical observations into a neat system Copernicus was guided by a metaphysics of light most distant from any positivist notion of the scientific method, as should be clear from this quote : "In the center of all rests the sun. For who would place this lamp of a very beautiful temple in another or better place than this wherefrom it can illuminate everything at the same time?" (Copernicus, *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*; cited in Stump, 2002). Yet another secular myth busted, though adding more such examples to our tally is barely my concern now.

The earlier geocentric conception of the universe had found favor with the Church, for it confirmed the privileged place of humanity in all of God's creation. The medieval Christian world had for long operated with a notion of the human and the

terrestrial as a microcosm of the celestial order (Lilley, 2004: 300). A *homology* between the celestial and the terrestrial domains was allowed, though mediated within a definite spatial *hierarchy*. The transcendent God had his abode in the heavens, and the rightful place of lowly humans was down below, this hierarchy being breached only upon death when the soul is redeemed from sinful body and reunited with the celestial order. With the Copernican revolution however man and his earth is hurtled away to some insignificant corner of the universe. The universe is now directionless, rendering meaningless the erstwhile signification of a heaven *above* and an earth *below*, and jeopardizing the entire cosmological framework of hierarchy, grace and redemption (Dillon & Bradley in Fletcher, 2009: viii). As Nietzsche has noted, "Since Copernicus man has been rolling from the centre toward X" (cited in Harries, 1984). In such a universe with neither center nor boundaries, human concerns would seem petty in the grand scheme of things (if there is at all a grand scheme), and nihilism would seem our only appropriate response. Instead, that early modern science proceeded along a purposeful and ambitious trajectory should itself direct our attention to the theological anchor that supports scientific practice[14].

Given the syncretism between Greco-Roman pagan culture and early Christianity, when at the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.) the divinity of the Son (Sun) of God became doctrine, Christ was refigured as the sun God Apollo of imperial Rome. Having inherited the imperial imperative of Rome, Western Christianity would from now onwards be a universalizing teleology, the authoritative center of which was located in the Apollonian gaze, high above in the heavens, from where radiated divine illumination,

[14] The above is not to be construed in the sense that things remained fundamentally unchanged after the Copernican Revolution. In fact, the changes it effected were as revolutionary in Christian theology as it had been in science. With its traditional conceptions of a meaningful cosmos now obliterated, theology now left the world to the vagaries of science, and retreated to the interiority of the believer. Fletcher thus provides the example of Teresa of Avila: "In the act of rearranging the specific cosmological positions of subject and object, Teresa offers a thoroughgoing expression of the eradication of a cosmic experience. The cosmos is related to the spiritual individual in the form of a concept of the human as *microcosm* but, unlike the patristic use of this concept (if not the actual term), the early modern mystical rendition of the 'human' relates to the interior life of individuals as an alternative site of the cosmos rather than any analogical correspondence between 'human nature' and the structure of the world or, as part of this (super)natural order of things, the divine... it is certainly no accident, then, that while Teresa makes use of the concentric circles of the pre-Copernican cosmology, they now mark 'the interior development of the soul which is due to the "sun" within the human heart, and no longer an ascent through a series of heavens'" (2009:7).

power and order directed towards a globe signified as Christendom (See Cosgrove, 2001).

In the early modern period, the sudden burst of knowledge obliterated the Old World and expanded the mapped universe- and it was not just the Copernican revolution that was responsible for this. Maritime trade and explorations had brought Europe in contact with distant lands and peoples of vastly different cultures; and the circumnavigation of the globe had enlarged in scope the traditional cartography of the earth. No longer could Europe and the Mediterranean region be considered the locus of all human affairs (Stump, 2002). In searching for an ordering principle of unity amidst all this bewildering diversity and a privileged place for European humanity in the new scheme of things, early modern science located its scientific vision in that very Apollonian ordering gaze of the Christian godhead it was now capable of replacing. It was in the ascension of the scientific gaze to Apollo's eye, imbued as the latter was with the Christian notion of God's rationality and omniscience, that the early moderns could consider the possibility of a rational, detached, and objective orientation toward the world. It was in the uprootedness from the body and the earth that the Apollonian gaze provided, and in its intermeshing with the imperialist universalizing teleology of Western Christianity, that modern science could forget its own particular locatedness in history and pose itself as a universal discourse.

The above gains significance, for the European encounter with the New World possibly assumed a trajectory of conquest, colonization and radical assimilation of cultural difference only because monotheism, and its ideological derivation, universalism, informed the cultural logic of early modern science and society (Kupper, 2003: 364).

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The standard narrative of secular modernity projects the maritime expeditions beginning from the fifteenth century in terms of scientific discovery that

along with other developments in the mechanical arts culminated in the sixteenth century as the scientific revolution, the far-reaching effects of which laid the ground for the Enlightenment and the French revolution that officially inaugurate the modern age. The emphasis on scientific developments and rational ideas in this narrative would give the impression that modernity is some form of cerebral development over the past. What such a narrative of course hides is the fact that scientific discovery in this broad historical period is simultaneous with colonialism, and that technological modernity would never have been possible without the plunder that colonialism facilitated, and more importantly, obscured is also the fact that Christianity remained the overarching imaginary of the modern/colonial world (Mignolo, 2000a: 285) in this transitory period from the late-medieval to the early modern ages.

The cultural environment in fourteenth century Europe was marked by a curious union of eros and violence in Christian symbolism. The Crusades had legitimated killing in the service of God as a route to paradise, by way of a theology of atonement wherein it was interpreted that Jesus had died on the cross only to redeem humanity of its sins- the suffering of Christ at Calvary, his Passion, had already earned forgiveness for the sins of the Crusaders (Brock & Parker, 2008: 21). The Inquisition first launched in 1231 further extended this culture of redemptive violence in that the torture of the heretics for the protection of faith was invested with the value of purification, reinforced once again by the imagery of Calvary wherein both a good thief and a bad thief had been crucified along with the Christ (Ibid: 310). The limits of such Chrisitian symbolism and theology were however revealed when death and suffering befell upon the believers themselves (and not just the infidels and the heretics) during the devastating plague (the Black Death) that had spread along the length and breadth of Europe in the fourteenth century. Post-plague Europe now actively sought escape routes outside the Old World (Ibid: 313-316).

Tales of far-away lands blessed with peace and health became popular all over Europe, such as the fables of the Christian king Prester John whose distant kingdom was believed to be nourished by the rivers of paradise; and it was beliefs such as these that had motivated the colonial expeditions. These maritime explorations were

nonetheless inspired by the same apocalyptic zeal of the Crusades. The Church had already interpreted the plague, epidemics, famines and wars in Europe in terms of the apocalypse, the end of times was believed to be nigh, and thus the plunder of the colonies was legitimated as an anticipation of Armageddon and a New Jerusalem (Ibid: 319). Also, the discovery of the Americas in 1492 and the establishment of the Atlantic commercial circuit along which modern capitalism would henceforth expand, coincided with the expulsion of the Moors and Jews from Spain, thus setting the stage for the emergence of the 'Western hemisphere' defined solely in terms of Christianity (Mignolo, 2000a: 30).

The colonial expeditions financed by the Spanish and Portuguese crowns and blessed by the Pope meant that the discovery of the Americas as the New World could only be seen as an extension of the crusading banner, 'Order of Christ', which appropriately adorned the sailing ships of Prince Henry the Navigator of Portugal (Brock & Parker, 2008: 319). The colonial explorers found the new lands abundant with the wealth, gold and spices they had hoped for, yet the vastly different cultures of the natives contradicted the expectations of the explorers. That such radical alterity in terms of cultural difference could be swiftly assimilated by way of conversion, pauperization and enslavement of the indigenous populations points to the fact that the New World was in fact a screen for the projection of the hopes, prejudices, cultural values, and delusions of the Old World (Rommens, 2006). Quite tellingly, scientific discovery here was indistinguishable from the mutilation and plundering of the indigenous populations.

The period from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries saw a movement from Spanish and Portuguese colonialism to British and French colonialism, from the Christian mission of conversion to the civilizing mission of the Enlightenment, from *orbis christianus universalis* to secular universalism (Mignolo, 2000b). What is of significance however is that this transition to a universal discourse of secular modernity occurred precisely when the universality of the Christian God had been brought into question by internal conflicts within the Church and conflicts with the other monotheistic religions- Islam and Judaism (Ibid: 723-725). The universal discourse of techno-scientific modernity based on the secular state was then an institutional replacement for the

universalizing mission of Christianity whose authoritative head in Rome had already fallen- still the monotheistic, transcendent and authoritarian God of Christianity remained the prime cultural symbol undergirding both these discourses. In the words of Mignolo (2000a: 286): "The Christian mission did not go away in the 18th century; it was outcast, displaced and reconverted into the secular civilizing mission."

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In as much as the "origins of the modern state, modern capitalism, the modern mind, the modern individual, and of course, modern science" is commonly traced back to early modern Europe (Datson, 1998: 149), the above discussions amount to a demonstration that the crucial break of modernity from Christianity is but a myth, albeit a powerful one at that. This is not to be interpreted in the sense that the rupture of secular modernity now has to be deferred to some new and definite point later in Western history[15], but rather that the purity and exclusiveness of such a rupture now stands blasphemed for the entire epoch we describe as the modern.

The mythic narrative of secular modernity has for long clinched the argument by construing theology as a static presence, and by heralding the Scientific Revolution as some radical secular championing over tradition. Secularism is also the ascribed character of the modern state, and the governance of public issues has long been assumed to be divorced of religious considerations. The above discussions however, forward an argument to the effect that Christian notions of the godhead are still discernible in modern discourses, re-figured as the ground of certainty, the possibility of

[15] We would however need to remedy the view that all of modernity is preformed in early modern Europe (See Datson, 1998). This view in itself is premised on the belief that modernity was an altogether momentous and radical break from all of tradition. Once we are relieved of the burdens of such a view, we may then consider in their specificity the many accretions through which the modern topography grew over the predominantly Christian landscape.

universal knowledge, and the condition of order, informing institutions such as modern science and the secular state[16].

A unilateral understanding of the secular modern as a replacement of the Christian tradition is then hopeless as a marker in serving to understand the historical transformations at the birth of modernity. It is much more fruitful to regard that it was the synergy or the complementarity (as against the conflict, which is undeniable) between Christian and formally secular institutions, between theology and science, that set the tone for the modern age.

In terms of the architectural metaphor we have employed in this chapter then, Christianity has always remained an important structural component in the architecture of modernity, and most importantly figures as the metaphysical base of many modern discourses[17]. Yet with each structural layer added to the modern edifice, with the growing distance of the superstructure from the base, and with the autonomy of style and ornament from the structure of the building, the support that the Christian metaphysical foundation lends to the entirety of the edifice becomes less evident. It is not surprising then that Christian fundamentalists often seek to portray modernity as having strayed off from the right course, which only a return to the values of Christianity can rectify.

The purpose of this work, however, is not to suggest the vitality of modern culture given its Christian roots, but, having stared the modern edifice in its presentable and masked dimensions, to destabilize the very synergy between Christianity and the secular modern that lends it a sense of monumentality, and show the entire structure to be arbitrary. Onwards we march...

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[16] There is yet another powerful form in which the Christian God refigures in modern discourse, in that 'man' himself is given *theo*logical status in modernity. Commonly, the thesis of the apotheosis of man has been understood in the sense that following the break with transcendence in an immanent secular culture, man is now the "replacement of God as the centre of the circle of existence" (Saran, 1998: xxi). Such a notion, premised as it is on a definite break of modernity from Christianity, needs to be rectified in the sense that man (the masculine) takes over or inherits the attributes of God, understood in a distinctively Christian sense. To put it straightforward, man is now a universal being capable of objective knowledge and control over nature, as had been (or is) the Christian God.

[17] Gyrus (1996) comments that: "The Christian cosmos' hold over the collective consciousness has gradually fragmented over the twentieth century; but it still lies buried, just below the surface, invisibly influencing social relations and supposedly secular morality".

CHAPTER TWO

A DEMONOLOGY OF MORALS

Our treatment of the transition between late medieval and early modern Europe so far has proceeded along the lines of a demonstration that the said period cannot be suitably explained in terms of a newly demarcated divide between religion and science, between Christianity and secularism. But of course the shift or break between the medieval and the modern is real, and the changes involved in this transition many. The remainder of this chapter would make evident some of these major transformations that modernity entailed, and counter-intuitive to many standard works that deal with the topic, I propose to take as a starting point of our analysis the synergy between theology and science, between Christian and secular institutions in the early modern age.[18]

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[I]

The terminological category of the 'demon' dates back to Greek antiquity, though the ancient Hellenic *daimon* originally referred to spirits that occupied an ambiguous inter-space between the gods and the humans- lesser gods who exercised direct influence over the affairs of humans, the nature of such influence ranging from that of a guiding spirit or source of inspiration to one that is troublesome and even destructive

[18]It should be remembered that a key claim of this study has been that it is the overlaps as against the discontinuities between the Catholic, Protestant and secular cultures in Europe that set the tone for the modern age.

(Mäyrä, 1999: 23-24; LaVey, 1969: 56). In the Christian tradition however, the demons have had an unambiguously negative character, given their reference variously to unclean spirits, the heathen gods, and the fallen angels commanded by Satan. Consequently the figure of the demon has been of pivotal significance in the Western tradition of Christianity since its inception, with Church Fathers like Justin Martyr and the early Christian monastics imagining their spiritual mission and asceticism in terms of a conflict with the demons or the gods of traditional pagan religion (Reed, 2004: 141-144; Brakke, 2006: 214).

Yet it was not before the fifteenth century that 'demonology' as a systematic study of the demonic came to be formalized, in the context of the Inquisition that had gained momentum by then (Guiley, 2009: xiv), and of the witch-hunts that spread across Europe in the subsequent decades. It was during this period that major tracts devoted solely to demonology were written, including Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger's *Malleus Maleficarum* of 1486, Jean Bodin's *De la Demonomanie des Sorciers* of 1580, Martin del Rio's *Disquisitionum Magicarum Libri Sex* of 1599, and Pierre de Lancre's *Le Table de l'Inconstance des Mauvais Anges et Demons* of 1612 (Sharpe, 2004: 443-444).

Until the 1400s in Europe, the practice of beneficent magic and the black arts, or *maleficium*, was routine and widespread among both the elite and the village folk. Malefic occult attacks were an integral part of the daily life of the commoners in late medieval and early modern society, and were resorted to in a number of crimes ranging from the mundane to the spectacular, including poisoning, theft or arson, the harming of farm animals, damaging of crops, souring of milk, and weather manipulation (Bever, 2008: 5-7). Also, the folklore of medieval peasants involved a demonic tradition with its antecedents in a pre-Christian and pagan past- including beliefs in monstrous and nocturnal female and male spirits such as the *strigae*, *lamiae*, and *bonae res* (Broedel, 2003), *succubi* and *incubi* (Guiley, 2009) - besides a widespread following of maternal fertility cults, such as that of Diana, particularly among women (Denike, 2003).

The significance of the above demonological texts thus emerges from the fact that they successfully assimilated these folk beliefs and popular practices of magic,

maleficium and the occult into a discourse of Devil worship and his demonic assault on Christendom. Witchcraft and sorcery was henceforth to be associated not with individual witch-doctors, wise old women, cunning folk, magical healers and diviners but in terms of evidence of the existence of an "underground sect organized and led by the Devil and dedicated to the destruction of the Christian commonwealth" (Bever, 2008: 434)[19]. The association of witchcraft, sorcery and magic with The Devil and diabolism was now official, though the same did not go unchallenged both within and outside the Church (See Sharpe, 2004).

Of the above, Kramer and Sprenger's *Malleus Maleficarum* was particularly influential, given its adoption by both Catholic and Protestant civil and ecclesiastical judges, and the fact that it was second only to the Bible in sales until 1678 (Guiley, 2009: 166), a little less than 200 years after its initial publication. To what extent it actually impacted the witchcraft trials in Europe is less evident (Sharpe, 2004: 444), but here we are interested only in the equation between witchcraft and demonism that the *Malleus* helped establish. As noted by Broedel: "... within fifty years of the text's publication, the learned definition of witchcraft had stabilized, and a category of witchcraft that closely resembled that in the *Malleus* was widely accepted" (2003: 7).

The crucial difference that the authors of the *Malleus* established in demonological concerns within theology consists in their move away from the earlier Augustinian notion of evil as an expression of human sin, wherein the presence of the Devil was known primarily by human behavior and not by misfortune or calamity (Ibid: 43). For Augustine the power of the Devil to cause physical harm was of trivial concern. Kramer and Sprenger instead moved closer to the popular conception of the demonic as a

[19]The charge of diabolism was of course a figment of the imagination of the late medieval Church. Ellerbe notes that: "The Church developed the concept of devil-worship as an astoundingly simplistic reversal of Christian rites and practices. Whereas God imposed divine law, the devil demanded adherence to a pact. Where Christians showed reverence to God by kneeling, witches paid homage to the devil by standing on their heads. The sacraments in the Catholic Church became excrements in the devil's church. Communion was parodied by the Black Mass. Christian prayers could be used to work evil by being recited backwards. The eucharist bread or host was imitated in the devil's service by a turnip. The baptismal "character" or stigmata of the mysteries was parodied by the devil's mark impressed upon the witch's body by the claw of the devil's left hand. Whereas saints had the gift of tears, witches were said to be incapable of shedding tears. Devil worship was a simple parody of Christianity. Indeed, the very concept of the devil was exclusive to monotheism and had no importance within the pagan, Wiccan tradition" (1995: 119).

presence in the mundane world responsible for all sorts of physical harm and personal misfortune, in their identification of the activity of the Devil. In assimilating the traditional spirits and magical practices of the village folk into a wider discourse of diabolism thus, works such as the *Malleus* only continued "the process of assimilation [that] had been going on ever since Christians first identified pagan spirits and deities with the devil" (48).

The immediate context of this in the case of the *Malleus* was the Inquisition, with Pope Innocent VIII already having pronounced the practice of witchcraft as heretical in 1484 (Guiley, 2009: 166). And in the decades and centuries that followed, the Protestant and Catholic Reformation and the factional rivalry they begot, only increased the zeal to demonstrate religious purity that the Inquisition initiated. Sharpe observes that the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation were "movements which demanded a higher level of *Christian* understanding, a higher level of *Christian* knowledge and *Christian* conduct, and which were, as is the nature of campaigns for ideological purity, likely to encourage the imagining of and hunting for deviants" (2004: 446; emphasis mine). In late medieval and early modern Europe such a patently Christian programme of moral cleansing targeted the folk beliefs and popular magical practices that had their roots in a pre-Christian pagan past[20].

The import of the above point would become more evident if we were to note that it was not just the practice of *maleficium* or the black arts that invited charges of witchcraft and diabolism, but also beneficent magic, ritual healing, divination, and so on. Thus, the *Malleus* admitted an "astonishingly wide array of practices and behaviors [as] tantamount to witchcraft: magic of almost any kind, rumors of animal transformation, stories of fairies or changelings, magical flight, the evil eye, all could be interpreted as direct evidence of witchcraft" (Broedel, 2003: 131). The Christian belief in a transcendent God, whose disinterestedness in the physical world had been re-confirmed

[20]Add to this the revival of the Christian doctrine of predestination with the influence of John Calvin, which divided the populace into unchangeable dualistic categories of the 'good-elect' and the 'wicked-damned' (Rotenberg, 1975: 54), and we can begin to understand why the witch-hunts sought not the humane treatment but the physical extermination of those accused of witchcraft.

during the Reformation[21], meant that any supernatural occurrence, malignant or beneficent, had to be explained in terms of the activity of the Devil, whose dominion now included not just hell but the entire physical world (Ellerbe, 1995: 2). The traditional spirits of folklore, despite their wide heterogeneity, were all collapsed into the unambiguously negative Christian category of demons placed under the command of the Devil[22].

This shift in signification I characterize as the assimilation of the *demonic* into the *diabolic*. By the category of the demonic I designate the mythical complex- populated by diverse supernatural beings including, of course demons, but also deities, spirits, and ghosts- that occupies an ambiguous inter-space between gods and humans, humans and beasts, good and evil, order and disorder, and so on. Thus demonic beings in most cultures are represented by monstrous combinations of human and animal forms (Mäyrä, 1999: 32); demonic elements can just as easily be a part of the figure of God, as they can be symbolic of the evil in human nature; demons are often thought of as responsible for unpleasant events such as storms or famines, and personal suffering such as illness, while strange occurrences evoked by such supernatural beings have also been interpreted as compassionate warnings of future danger (See Maggi, 2006); furthermore, the demonic evokes in the populace a range of emotions including dread, fascination and reverence. By the diabolic, on the other hand, I refer to the unambiguously hateful figure of evil personified, Satan and his attending spirits, which as such assumes significance only in the dualistic and apocalyptic framework of Christianity.

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[21]Take for instance the injunction of Luther that earthly rituals or good works had little influence on the salvation of men, which depended solely on the acts of grace of an omnipotent God.

[22]In his *Fortalitium Fidei* written about 1460, the Franciscan Alphonso de Spina identified demons as responsible for exciting the heretics and Jews against the Church. His elaborate description of the demons however revealed them to be: "unambiguously the beings of folklore. They are the *duen de casa*, who break crockery, disturb sleepers and go bump in the night; they are incubi and succubi, who apart from their more direct assaults perch on sleepers' chests and send them erotic dreams; they are the *praelia*, who comprise the phantom armies that appear at times to men; they are the nightmares who oppress men in their sleep; they are fates and familiar spirits; and finally they are the *bruxae*, demons who deceive old women into thinking that they can fly through the night with Diana and do impossible things. In short, Spina demonizes a host of traditional spirits, and grafts their characteristics uncomfortably onto a very traditional conception of the devil's nature and duties" (Broedel, 2003: 50).

To explain by way of example, the case of Diana is most illustrative of the significance of the assimilation of the demonic into the diabolic in the context of the witch-hunts. The mythical Diana was a many-sided goddess, with multiple associations and identifications. As a fertility goddess, she was honored and revered among women; as a goddess of the woods and hunting, she was pure and virginal, but also arrogant and vengeful; as the goddess of light representing the moon, she had a changing, unpredictable nature; and in her identification with Hecate, the Greek goddess of darkness, death, magic and witchcraft, she was also unforgiving and bloodthirsty (Myth Encyclopedia). Her widespread worship in the ancient world however meant that the pagan goddess was denounced by the Church down through the Middle Ages. In the inquisitorial rhetoric she was transformed into a detestable figure blamed for impotency, infertility, drought and disease; Diana was now directly aligned with the Devil and the nocturnal gatherings women held in her honor with devil- worship (Denike, 2003: 21). This diabolization of Diana was essential in the targeting of women as witches, and the use of torture and execution against them (Ibid).

It is my contention here that among the major transformations in early modern Europe that was to have a significant impact on the future course of modern society was the above assimilation of the deities and demons, the monstrous and the magical, that represented the creative, chaotic, ambiguous and unpredictable forces of the real world in the folk tradition, into the *diabolic* of an overtly dualistic Christian theology. If the witch-hunts in Europe were the birth pangs of a more enlightened modernity from the eighteenth century onwards, this involved the severing off of the umbilical chord of modernity from its folk and pagan roots. At the time of the birth of modernity then, European society was probably more Christian than it had ever been in its long history.

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[II]

But the persecutionary zeal that the Inquisition initiated had not in the least been directed solely against the common folk and their traditional beliefs and

practices. Giordano Bruno, a sixteenth century Italian philosopher, mathematician and astronomer, was arrested by the Roman Inquisition and tried as a heretic for his pantheistic beliefs, and finally burned at the stake in 1600. In an evocative scene in Guiliano Montaldo's 1973 film *Giordano Bruno*, against the raucous applause of the students at the University of Sorbonne he was addressing, Bruno states: "To a new vision of the universe, we must associate a new vision of man. We must associate a new vision of man. If the earth goes around the sun, as the other planets go around the sun; if other suns, solar systems, exist, all around the universe; if this is true- and it is true- then God is not up above us, outside the world, but everywhere, in any living or inert particle of matter. God is matter itself." In the very next scene, Bruno is produced before the Holy Roman Inquisition and accused of apostasy, of heresy, of blasphemous teachings against religion, and of conspiring against the Church and against the Pope[23].

Though in the narrative of secular modernity Bruno is today celebrated as a martyr for free thought and modern science- and indeed his cosmology did influence a wide range of modern thinkers- Bruno's views, as the above quote should provide a hint, were in fact disruptive of what I have called the synergy between theology and science in early modern Europe. An explication of this claim should help us underscore a more important point I am concerned with here, namely that while theology and science clearly appeared to hold differing views on the Devil and the demonic[24], the seemingly contrary position professed by science actually *derived* from that of Christian theology.

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[23]In another brilliant scene in the movie, while being tortured during the interrogation by the Inquisition, Bruno is shown to be recollecting his witnessing of the branding of a witch during his days as a Dominican friar- thus drawing a sharp parallel between the two.

[24]An instance of the same is evident in that the consolidation in the eighteenth century of modern medicine involved a confrontation with the Church's belief in demonic possession and practice of exorcism (on which I will have more to say a bit later). The point I intend to make, it should be noted, is in *spite* of these obvious differences. As was the case with witch-hunts well into the seventeenth century, the services of the practitioners of forensic medicine including anatomists and surgeons were regularly sought during trials to ascertain whether a charge of witchcraft for crimes such as death due to poisoning was genuine or not (See Robisheaux, 2001). Hence no simplistic separation of theology and science into opposing camps is feasible.

The single most powerful mythical complex that continues to resonate in the Western psyche today is that of the Fall; this biblical myth provides for the Christian view of the creation of the world and the universe, the privileged place of humanity over all other species in the created cosmos, and the origin of sin and suffering on the earth. The scope of the myth has been almost all-encompassing, its influence discernible in fields as diverse as theology, metaphysics, philosophy, science and ethics.

The myth of the Fall marks the physical world after the banishment of Adam and Eve from Eden or Paradise as sinful, as the domain proper of the Devil[25]. The transcendent and hence distant God of Christianity had now a limited role in the affairs of the world: He was the initial creator, the causeless cause of the natural world and all that it contains; and He was the divine judge of the deeds of humans, who would ultimately redeem humankind and restore his creation to the originary state of paradise that was Eden.

In the context of medieval theology, in the Augustinian system, this supra-naturalism (in the sense of a deity that transcends his creation) of the Christian God was in no way contrary to the natural order- all of nature mirrored the will of God and hence was itself a miracle. In the scholasticism of Thomas Aquinas however, who borrowed from an Aristotelian framework, nature was semi-autonomous and God's miracles only violated the lower order of causes that existed by his will alone, and that did not partake of the necessity of the natural order (Datson, 1998: 154,155). But the nominalist attack on medieval scholasticism that followed reaffirmed the divine omnipotence of God (See Chapter 1), and the voluntarism of God now meant that he could even violate the laws of nature he had constituted, if he so wished. In post-Reformation society, it was this view of God's miracles as a complete negation of the natural order that came to be accepted in both Catholic and Protestant circles.

[25] It is thus that Satan tempts Jesus in the desert by offering him the kingdoms of this world: "Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And said unto him, All these things I give thee, If thou wilt fall down and worship me" (Matthew, Ch4: 8, 9).

The above means that theologians in late medieval and early modern Europe had anticipated a thoroughgoing naturalism, a radical separation of the supernatural and natural orders[26], which was later to be definitive of the modern scientific outlook. In the post-Reformation context, the case of miracles saw pitched battles between Catholic and Protestant theologians and even within the Catholic Church itself. Calvin had already pronounced the Catholic demand of miraculous attestations of the Protestant faith as "unreasonable", and Protestants now vigorously attacked every Catholic miracle as "priestly fraud or demonic imposture". Consequently in the Council of Trent (1545-1563) the Catholic Church came to establish elaborate procedures of inquiry and proof for miracles (Ibid, 1998: 159). For any miraculous occurrence to be confirmed as such, it required demonstration of proof that the event could not in any way be accounted for by natural causes (Midelfort, 2005: 29).

There could be no magic or creativity inherent in nature. God's creation of nature marked it as orderly, regular and uniform. The omnipotence of God meant that nature was to be obedient, subservient to his will; his voluntarism could even violate the laws of nature he had constituted. The miracles that God had come to perform with increasing infrequency (or rather those that had come to be recognized as such by ecclesiastical authorities) after the Reformation (See Datson, 1998), were those that altogether negated the laws of nature- the miraculous and the magical was not an aspect of the natural order, but a suspension of the same. Consequently, any continued signs of magical and creative qualities had to be attributed to the activity of the Devil, under whose dominion, as we have mentioned, fell the earth after the Fall. Such a view departed significantly form the pre-Christian and pagan conception of nature along the lines of a deity, as a fecund goddess- pagan practices had thus involved the veneration of trees and springs, and pagan festivals were meant to mark the seasonal changes in nature or the cycles of the moon (Ellerbe, 1995: 139-150).

[26] Datson remarks that: "It should be emphasized that theologians were at least as ready as physicians and natural philosophers to "naturalize" speaking in tongues and or astonisihing cures as expressions of melancholy and distempers of the imagination. It was *first and foremost* the spokesmen for established religion who effectively drove the supernatural out of daily life" (1998: 161; emphasis mine).

The naturalism of modern science derived substantially from the Christian theological view presented above. Early modern science too worked with a conception of the universe as mechanistic, nature as orderly and hence predictable, and matter as inanimate. Drawing on the Christian dichotomy between spirit and matter, the Cartesians put forward a dualism between mind and matter, which effectively separated consciousness from the physical world (Ibid: 166) - nature was reduced to mere unthinking, uncreative, inanimate matter. Newton's demonstration in the seventeenth century of physical motion in terms of mechanistic principles only confirmed the deterministic nature of the universe (Bever, 2008: 419).

Earlier, from about the thirteenth to the eighteenth centuries, the category of the 'preternatural' (that which surpasses the ordinary or the normal) allowed that God, demons, human sorcerers or unaided nature itself could engineer marvels, freaks and monstrous births (Datson, 1998: 157). The preternatural was an aspect of reality, an extension of the natural, and not a contradiction or negation of it. This category of the preternatural, the monstrous, the demonic was all but rejected by early modern scientists at the turn of the eighteenth century (Ibid: 163). If the Inquisitors, civil and ecclesiastical judges, had to zealously persecute the witches and magicians to combat the evil designs of the Devil against the Christian commonwealth, modern science had to vigorously deny the existence of the diabolic and the demonic or assimilate the same into the now-impotent category of the natural to underscore the order, unambiguousness and uniformity of inanimate nature. It is interesting to note that after having incited religious fervor and fear about the Devil, demons and witches in order to chasten the Christian populace, with the subsequent marginalization of traditional beliefs and magical or malefic practices in Europe at the hands of the three-century long campaigns of the Inquisition and the witch-hunts, theologians now made "common cause" with natural philosophers and scientists in the "naturalization of the portentous preternatural" (Ibid). Despite their superficial differences then, both theology and science upheld a notion of nature as bereft of divine or magical presence. Thus Bruno's remark that "God is matter itself" was as heretical to the custodians of the Christian doctrine, as it was antithetical to the emergent sensibilities of modern science.

To reiterate what has been said above, the theological conception of nature as subservient to the will of God had assured early modern scientists of the mechanical and inanimate nature of the universe; instead, it was the preternatural and the demonic that figured as an obstacle to the mechanical view of reality[27]. The demonic represented the uncontrolled, ambiguous and dark forces in nature that threatened the clockwork universe of early modern science. That modern medicine till date has sought the elimination of disease and the avoidance of death or the prolongation of life by all means, again confirms the disdain of modern science for the darker aspects of nature and reality, and also indicates that science probably continues to draw on a Christian discourse that associates death and suffering with sin and Satan (a connection that, again, derives from the myth of the Fall), which then have to be avoided at all times.

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But if modern science had unassumingly come to reinforce a Christian worldview as against the pre-Christian or traditional pagan conception of the universe, in its methodology too science was dismissive of the folk, or even Renaissance Christian, way of comprehending reality. Early modern science can here be understood only as responding to the far-reaching changes that the Reformation set off in the sixteenth century, which culminated in what has been termed as the "triumph of Lent"[28] over popular culture in Europe (Weisner-Hanks, 2000: 10).

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[27]It must be clarified that though I use the term 'modern science' and attribute to the same a mechanistic conception of the universe, this model has long since lost favour among scientists today, its reign not lasting much longer than the end of the nineteenth century. As Jencks notes: "... with nonlinearity, catastrophe and emergence theories, nature goes through sudden phase transitions akin to quantum leaps. There are, it is true, continuities and gradual developments, but the basic history of the universe is one of creative, surprising leaps in organization. Traditional religions emphasize constancy, the Modernists with their mechanistic models emphasize predictability, but the cosmos is much more dynamic than a pre-designed world or a dead machine" (1997: 7).

[28]Lent refers to the approximately forty-day period observed by Christians in preparation for Easter. The period is meant to signify humility and repentance, with the faithful seeking reparation for their sins through a variety of observances, including abstinence, fasting, prayer and meditation, confession, self-examination, and charitable works (Gulevich, 2002: 346).

The assimilation of pre-Christian and pagan practices into Christianity had continued since the days of the early Church down through the medieval period, either by condemning them as devil worship or by incorporating elements of the same into Christian iconography and practices. The early Church had its holy days deliberately coincide with the annual pagan festivals that marked the change of the seasons, "both to win the allegiance of the populace as well as to harness the vitality of such festivals" (Ellerbe, 1995: 145). For instance, Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, and the Nativity of Mary all correlated with pagan festivals that marked the winter solstice, spring equinox, spring season, and fall equinox respectively (Ibid: 147). These pagan festivals had references not only to nature worship, but also to celebration (150), physical pleasure and opulence, both of which the Church had long associated with the Devil. In the context of the Reformation, and the renewed zeal among clerical reformers to chasten the Christian populace and purge the influence of pagan values over society, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries thus saw a clash between Carnival[29] and Lent, with the battle lines now being drawn between passion and reason, appetite and intellect, pleasure and piety, laughter and weeping, play and seriousness, excess and scarcity (Findlen, 1998: 246, 247)[30].

In the previous chapter we have already noted that Bacon's programme for the reform of natural philosophy was based on his understanding of the Protestant split from Rome, and the possibility that science offered for the redemption of humanity after

[29]Carnival refers to the week-long period of revelry celebrated by Christians in many parts of the world before the beginning of Lent, and in anticipation of the religious disciplines they would have to endure during the Lenten season. Carnival as practiced during the Middle Ages in Europe shared the festivities and practices of the ancient Mediterranean world such as masquerade, drinking, feasting and revelry, and was promptly condemned by the medieval Church as a survival of the pagan Roman festivals, that ought to be suppressed. During the Renaissance, Carnival represented the value people placed on "light-hearted foolishness" as a counter-weight to "the artificial social demands and seriousness required of people in everyday life". The figure of the fool or the clown is thus of importance in these festivities (Gulevich, 2002: 51-56).

[30]Tears, mourning, and weeping have long been of significance to the Christian faith which imagined humans as sinners fallen from God's grace. Kuchar comments that: "Christianity is nothing if not a vast technology of mourning. From David's psalms, to Jeremiah's lamentations, to Jesus' weeping, to Magdalene's tears, Christian scripture draws much of its fascination as a religious and literary document from its representations of grief. The fascination elicited by these and other scriptural depictions of sacred sorrow is testified to by the many devotional and artistic traditions they helped engender" (2008:1). During the Reformation, to this was added the notion of piety, which was to have significant consequences, as we note here.

the Fall. Bacon also held humility and a rigorous disciplining of the self essential for the new scientific method and enterprise (Iliffe, 2000: 442). The Reformation thus provided the context for an arbitrary association between piety, seriousness, and reason. Findlen points to the creation of a new moral code for intellectual life in the seventeenth century, which celebrated the ideal scholar as a "grave, rational, and disciplined individual" (1998: 254).

In contrast, Renaissance thought had thrived on the ludic interpretation of nature as a playful creation for the amusement of humanity. In the natural philosophy of Erasmus, science was not simply the study of nature, but a "divinely inspired guessing game in which natural philosophers attempted to infer what neither God nor nature would ever tell them" (Ibid: 253). Nature itself was not unlike a pagan deity, a laughing goddess "who humorously watched God's supreme creation, mankind, attempt to understand her creative activity in the world" (251). The values of Renaissance science had belonged to the world of Carnival, which until the sixteenth century had not necessarily been set up in opposition to the exercise of the intellect and the practice of Christian faith.

Both the popular expression of Carnival and Renaissance thought had celebrated folly and the knowledge possessed by the fool. Michel Foucault notes that in the context of the fifteenth century, "... madness fascinates because it is knowledge. It is knowledge, first, because all these absurd figures are in reality elements of a difficult, hermetic, esoteric learning... While the man of reason and wisdom perceives only fragmentary and all the more unnerving images of [the earth], the Fool bears it intact as an unbroken sphere" (2001: 18, 19). While the Church read such notions of bliss associated with forbidden knowledge as an indication of the reign of Satan[31], and given the apocalypticism of the days, as presaging the end of the world, in Renaissance thought the ludic was more appropriately indicative of the inherent ambiguity of the world: "The

[31]This is evident from the popularity the Faust legend enjoyed in Germany and later in England during the sixteenth century, which narrates the story of a successful but unsatisfied scholar who makes a deal with the Devil for unlimited knowledge and worldly pleasures, in exchange for his soul. In most artistic renderings of the legend Faust has been reduced to a figure of ridicule damned for his earthly pursuits. It was only Goethe's masterful reworking of the Faust legend, written much later in the eighteenth century, which broke free from the trappings of Christian morality in its characterization of the pursuit of knowledge.

absolute privilege of Folly is to reign over whatever is bad in man. But does she not also reign indirectly over the good he can do: over ambition, that makes wise politicians; over avarice, that makes wealth grow; over indiscreet curiosity, that inspires philosophers and men of learning?" (Foucault, 2001: 21).

In the ultimate triumph of Lent over Carnival, in the suppression of the ludic in modern science, thus, was banished all ambiguity, folly and mystery from nature[32], which has to be read in line with the marginalization of the demonic in Western culture outlined above. For thinkers of the Italian Renaissance like Giovan Francesco Pico della Mirandola, Strozzi Cigogna, Pompeo della Barba, and Ludovico Sinistrari, demonic spirits were not quite the sinister beings Christianity had portrayed them to be- demons often resorted to distortions of the natural world in order to warn humans of impending danger (See Maggi, 2006). Outside the imagination of the Church then, the category of the demonic had long occupied a 'liminal' (Mäyrä, 1999: 26) space between order and disorder, fortune and misfortune, the divine and the earthly. Thus, the demonic was as disruptive of the dualistic framework of Christianity that thrived on the infinite distance between God and Satan, between the Creator and the created - requiring it to be assimilated into the wholly negative category of the diabolic- as it was of the mechanistic conception of the forces in the natural world upheld by early modern science- requiring preternatural occurrences to be explained away in terms of naturalist reductionism.

Nature in early modern Europe was now the purposeful and obedient creation of a benevolent God, and not the magical, creative and chaotic force it once had been. The new method of science, which was to rely so much on the naming, division, and classification of the natural whole into its mechanical parts, had to but reject the dark and ambiguous forces of nature that resisted classification. Not surprisingly then, modern scientific knowledge about such nature, its methodological orientation towards the world, was defined in terms of 'certainty'. Such an orientation also informed the wider culture of modernity, and its institutional and semantic architecture, as we have noted in the

[32]Findlen cites Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle, editor in 1720 of the *Histories of the Royal Academy of Sciences*, as follows: "Ordinarily one considers monsters as jokes of nature but the *philosophes* are very persuaded that nature never jokes, that she always follows inviolably the same rules, and that all her works are, so to speak, equally serious" (1998: 266).

previous chapter. A genealogy of the architectural foundations of modernity in its Christian past and present, would thus reveal modern culture to be built on the repression of the demonic.

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[III]

The eighteenth century, by and large, saw an end to the witch-hunts and a "triumph of disbelief" (Bever, 2008) in the Devil, demonism and witchcraft, under the influence of the European Enlightenment. That the Enlightenment has been characterized as a break from the religious superstition and ignorance of the Middle Ages owes a great deal to the above fact (Midelfort, 2005: 7). But as we have argued above, a negation of the demonic is not necessarily a position that contradicts the Christian doctrine of the said period.

A disbelief in the Devil among the elite circles during the Enlightenment was not matched by a corresponding disbelief in God. Many thinkers of the Enlightenment including Voltaire and Locke held that belief in a judging God who could inspire fear among humans was essential to the maintenance of social order and morality (Ellerbe, 1995: 173). Order, for Voltaire was not simply a human invention, but an aspect of God's design or divine purpose, which necessitated an ethic of discipline and rationality amongst humans (Taylor, 2007: 167). Likewise, Immanuel Kant held that we are rationally required to believe in God, the soul, and immortality in order to make sense of the fact of moral obligation (Hare, 2006). For Kant, God is related to humans in essentially moral terms: "Now the universal true religious belief confirmable to this requirement of practical reason is belief in God (1) as the omnipotent Creator of heaven and earth, i.e., morally as *holy* legislator, (2) as Preserver of the human race, its *benevolent* Ruler and moral Guardian, (3) as administrator of His own holy laws, i.e. as

righteous judge" (Kant in *Religion Within the Limits of Reason* Alone; cited in Fletcher, 2009; emphasis original).

Indeed, Christian and juridical interests had ran together in important ways since centuries before, and the Enlightenment only extended this arrangement (though God had now ceased being explicitly associated with Christianity) in the context of an emergent bourgeois capitalist society.

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The witch-hunts were not the only form of repression Europe had witnessed at the birth of modernity. The vagabonds, beggars, bandits, gypsies, the insane, and the unemployed migrants that populated the burgeoning new cities in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, had all been persecuted and confined in enormous houses of correction built for that purpose, a fact which Foucault has termed the "Great Confinement" (2001: 35-60). That such widely diverse categories as the unemployed, prisoners, the poor and the insane were all assigned alike to such houses of confinement as the *Hopital General*, owed to the emergence of a new work ethic and a new vision of the city in an age of nascent capitalism, which associated order with reason and productivity. The above mentioned social categories had now come to be marked under the larger category of being 'idle' and 'unproductive', which in the said age was understood as the "source of all disorders" (Ibid: 53). Foucault notes that the obligation to work was ably supported by the Catholic and Protestant thinkers of the time: labour was the ethic that properly suited men in the order of the fallen world, and sloth or idleness amounted to nothing less than a second rebellion against God (51-53).

As noted by the historian of architecture Manfredo Tafuri, well into the eighteenth century, the city was still imagined as inherently ambiguous and disorderly, quite like a forest, which architecture would have to struggle against and dominate (1976: 41). The houses of confinement in Europe were the architectural structures meant to

enforce this order, backed both by civil law and the new moral vision, and thus the absolutist state and the Church worked together in this project of social exclusion. Indeed, as we have noted earlier, the Church had already taken an active role in disciplining the European populace both before, and in a much more sharpened manner, after, the Reformation. Historians have noted that religious authorities in early modern Europe- Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, or Calvinist- all "engaged in a process of social disciplining, by which they mean working with secular political authorities in an attempt to get people to live a proper, godly life" (Weisner-Hanks, 2000: 10). Likewise, in his *Discipline and Punish* (1995), Foucault too has noted that it was not just the idle and the unproductive, but all modern subjects who needed to be disciplined into "docile bodies", in order to meets the demands of modern economic, bureaucratic and military institutions.

The programme of social exclusion that the houses of confinement enabled also marked out the physical and visual representation of the newly formed association of order with rationality and productivity, over and above the already extant Christian association between order and the good[33]; this contrast was most sharp in the case of madness, for if the Renaissance had accorded a place of privilege to the knowledge and playfulness of the fool and the insane, in bourgeois enlightened society such unreason was equated with deviance and disorder.

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The decline in the actual practice of witchcraft and magic and the triumph of disbelief in the Devil and demonism has to be understood in line with these broader set of changes. As had been the case with the Great Confinement, in eighteenth century enlightened society, it was the industrial city and its culture around which the labels of

[33] According to Christian belief, God created the cosmos out of chaos and disorder (Jencks, 1997: 41), and order is thus associated with the goodness of God's creation: "God saw all that he had made, and it was *very good*. And there was evening, and there was morning- the sixth day" (Genesis 1: 31; emphasis mine).

superstition, fraud, and unreason came to be attributed to the practice of witchcraft and magic.

The cosmopolitan culture of the bourgeois elite had increasingly come to be defined along the newly sharpened contrast between the city and the village. The literate and fashionable elite in France and Germany thus adopted condescending views of witchcraft and magic, associating the same with the ignorance and superstitions of the peasants- views which soon diffused into popular culture with the gradual advance of education (Bever, 2008: 419, 420). Such learned opinion on superstition was informed by the new mechanistic scientific paradigm that Newton had championed (419), and that the early modern theological view of God's transcendence and omnipotence had ably supported. Notions of demonic influence, flying spirits, and magical causation could now be understood only as fantastical and irrational. Also, the use of magical practices for purposes such as treasure-hunting (423) clearly contradicted the nascent capitalist ethic of honesty, discipline and hard work, and thus lent an added meaning to the association of magic and witchcraft with fraud in the context of a monetized economy.

Furthermore, Bever notes that: "...magic is incompatible with some of the fundamental needs of modern society: the need for people in densely populated settlements to act predictably, according to compartmentalized, explicitly stated bureaucratic rules and relationships; the premium in print culture for knowledge that is expressed, processed, and recorded in explicit, logical, linguistic terms; and the incentives in a capitalist economy for individuals to act as autonomous rational actors in the marketplace. Together, these developing structures fostered the redefinition of the self to emphasize an internally cohesive, independent, self-directed identity, an atomic individual that had no place for autonomous intelligences within or intrinsic connections with the world outside" (431).

It is the last of the above points that I wish to emphasize here- the constitution of a unitary self capable of rational control over one's thoughts and actions, autonomous from influences that issue from without, as definitive of the modern subject. Developments that followed the Renaissance, both religious and secular, had demanded a new notion of the self endowed with privatized freedom in matters, for example, of

Church dogma and doctrine, political decision-making, and so on. As the work of Foucault has made us aware, the constitution of this rational and autonomous modern subject was achieved through a thorough disciplining of the self- it was the disciplinary power embodied by modern institutions, their 'carceral' nature, that enabled the internalization of discipline in modern subjects and helped create the orderly, mechanical and docile bodies required by the modern factories, military regiments, and so on (See Foucault, 1995)[34]. Order in the human and social world was the necessary counterpart to a mechanistic conception of the natural world. And just as the demonic in nature had to be negated in order to underscore the predictability of the universe for a deterministic science, demonic influence over and magical powers of the 'individual' had to be exorcised or rejected as mere delusion/illusion to allow for the pious, orderly and mechanical bodies that early modern institutions, secular and religious, had demanded. The constitution of the rational self of the modern subject through disciplining too was thus premised on a repression of the demonic.

The eventual decline of witchcraft and magic in the eighteenth century has thus to be understood in terms of the sustained attempts over three centuries by civil and ecclesiastical authorities to repress such practices in order to ensure religious piety and social order; further it has to be understood that modern enlightened, bourgeois capitalist society only provided for a new economic, political and intellectual situation that allowed for an extension of the association already established in early modern society between the pious and rational individual and social order, and in this sense signified a continuation of, not a break from the past. The following quote from Bever (2008: 440) is telling in this regard:

> "...the modern concept of reality was not formed in a vacuum, or through some peaceful process in which truth just naturally unfolded. Instead, the process was bitterly contested, involving a protracted, three century campaign of repression in which magical beliefs, practices, and practitioners were misrepresented and vilified, first as nefarious agents of the Devil and later as nothing but frauds and dupes. In the first phase, the full power of the state was brought to bear against suspected sorcery and evidence of contact with the Devil, and any involvement with magic was

[34] Note the paradox of the modern self, which is described as 'sovereign' in the same breath as being marked a 'subject'.

> grounds for suspicion before and evidence during a trial that could lead to prolonged incarceration, agonizing torture, and a fiery death. Furthermore, even without charges of witchcraft, magical activities, however benign, could lead to arrest, incarceration, fines, and banishment from home and family, and this threat continued to hang over practitioners of magic long after the witch fires had died down. Furthermore, there were a variety of forms of repression beyond the force of the law, from the spiritual sanctions of the church through the moral strictures taught in schools and the myriad forms of supervision and punishment practiced by local communities to the individual psychophysiological processes by which the sociocultural mandate to suppress perceptions and block cogitations connected to magic ultimately took effect. As a consequence, popular beliefs were undermined, even if not obliterated; popular practices were suppressed, even if not eradicated; peoples' behavior was modified, even if not purified; and a new definition of self was put in place..."

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But if witchcraft and magic ceased to be a worry for religious and secular authorities after the eighteenth century, the case of demonic possession was never really laid to rest in the Church, and it is thus that exorcism continues to be practiced in Catholic and certain Protestant churches till date (Midelfort, 2005: 7).

The mythical narrative of modern medicine presents the development of psychiatry as rescuing the treatment of mental illness from superstitious notions such as demonic possession that informed Christian demonology- the idea of a conflict between psychiatry and demonology has been foundational in the history of medicine (Hayward, 2004: 37). During the days of the witchcraft trials the categories of the insane and the demon-possessed had shared fluid boundaries (See Hodgkin, 2001); it was with the later conflict between modern medicine and demonology that they came to be construed as mutually incompatible categories. The Enlightenment had banished the Devil out of reality, and intellectuals of the period such as Voltaire and Rousseau had laid the ground for a notion of moral as against natural evil , according to which only events that issued from the will and actions of humans merited the distinction of evil (Midelfort, 2005: 16). Yet the significance accorded to the experience of demonic possession in several spiritualist and revivalist religious movements in Europe during the nineteenth and

twentieth centuries meant that many Christian denominations continued to work with the notion of diabolic agency as an active presence in the world.

However, we would have to look beyond the disbelief in the Devil in the secular discourse since the days of the Enlightenment, if we are to discern fundamental homologies between and the permeation of the Christian worldview into the secular thought of modern society. The secular discourse of modern medicine and psychiatry is more appropriately located as a derivation from Christian demonology in significant aspects, as both discourses have historically sought the repression of the demonic in the self and popular culture. In the Christian understanding demonic possession represents the agency of the evil Satan (Hayward, 2004: 44), and the self proper is in the image of God (Spiegelman, 2006: 1) - it is hence that the demonic is construed as a force to be exorcised from the body and the self. Likewise, modern psychiatry, for the major part, has sought to explain mental illness in terms of a pathology of the psyche, that has to be treated or cured. In its basic assumptions about disorder and evil then, modern medicine is deeply indebted to the Christian notions regarding the same (Hayward, 2004: 58).

Now to work out the implications of this fundamental homology between the Christian and secular discourses, as it pertains to the repression of the demonic...

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[IV]

Our effort in the previous chapter had partly been to demonstrate that the archetype of God as the transcendent, omnipotent and authoritarian figure Christianity had marked it, had provided the ground on which modern institutions including the state and science once imposingly stood. However, the Christian God or indeed Christianity as a belief system is incomplete and meaningless without His adversary, Satan. It is in

tracing the dialectics of the co-evolution of the archetypal figures of God and Satan, I argue, that is best revealed the foundational sediment of Christianity in modern moral discourses and practices.

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Among the most significant differences between Christianity and its Judaic past as regards the image of God and the figure of Satan are those readily visible in the Old and New testaments. In the Old Testament or the Hebrew bible God is a combination or coincidence of opposites: he is both just and unjust, kind and wrathful, equally capable of creation and destruction (Mäyrä, 1999: 36; Edinger, 1992: 12). By human standards, he is amoral. The problem of evil this sets up for humans is explored in the Book of Job of the Old Testament, where God allows Satan to test his pious and faithful servant Job by inflicting calamities on both his possessions and person. Carl Jung has analyzed the role of God therein as follows: "From the ancient records we know that the divine drama was enacted between God and his people, who were betrothed to him, the masculine dynamis, like a woman, and over whose faithfulness he watched over jealously. A particular instance of this is Job, whose faithfulness is subjected to a savage test. As I have said, the really astonishing thing is how easily Yahweh gives into the insinuations of Satan. If it were true that he trusted Job perfectly, it would be only logical for Yahweh to defend him, unmask the malicious slanderer, and make him pay for his defamation of God's faithful servant. But Yahweh never thinks of it, not even after Job's innocence has been proved. We hear nothing of a rebuke or disapproval of Satan. Therefore, one cannot doubt Yahweh's connivance" (1984: 44).

Job passes the test, for though he believes his suffering to be unjustified, never does he rebuke God or doubt the unity of God- he is as certain of the good, as of the evil in God (Spiegelman, 2006: 2). The overwhelming message that comes through the Book of Job then is the affirmation of the "destructive potential as an important element in God's greatness" (Mäyrä, 1999: 36). Satan, in the above drama, appears only

to be an "instrument of God" (Ibid: 37); an angel assigned the role of an accuser searching out human sinners, or the task of obstructing and opposing human goals. Furthermore, Pagels notes that references to Satan in the Old Testament do not so much indicate a particular *character*, but an adversarial *role* (1996: 39). And these roles are not necessarily malevolent or evil: "... the *satan* may simply have been sent by the Lord to protect a person from worse harm" (Ibid: 40; emphasis original). Satan in the Old Testament thus coincides with our characterization of the demonic- a supernatural being who carries out acts of obstruction or destruction that cannot be unambiguously understood as either good or evil- and inasmuch as Satan acts at the behest of Yahweh, God himself accommodates the demonic in his totality.

In the New Testament however, God in his humanly incarnation as Jesus, and Satan, are both set up in oppositional terms[35], and play out a cosmic battle between good and evil at the earthly level. Jesus is now the embodiment of an exclusively good God[36] as his titles in the New Testament announce- Son of God, Christ the Lord, Good Shepherd, Light unto the world, Lord and Savior, Righteous Judge, Alpha and Omega, the Way, the Truth, and the Life- and the events in his life, including his death and resurrection, are set up in the gospels as a struggle against the forces of evil commanded by Satan (See Pagels, 1996). Satan, in turn, has been refigured as the personification of evil, the prince of darkness, the enemy of God, the antichrist. Jesus in the New Testament is portrayed actively battling the temptations of Satan in the desert, driving out demons from those afflicted, forgiving the sins of the repentant- and furthermore, in the gospel of Luke, it is the devil himself who takes on the "form of Judas Iscariot to destroy Jesus, initiating the betrayal that led to his arrest and execution" (Ibid: 12). Jung (1984) has therefore characterized Jesus and Satan, Christ and Antichrist, as the two sons of an earlier godly figure that combined the good and the evil seamlessly in his personality[37].

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[35] This unbridgeable duality between God and Satan is spatially represented in the assignment of separate domains to the two- God rules from the Heavens, whilst Satan reigns in Hell.

[36] Though in Jesus God is incarnated as a human, he does not partake of the sinfulness of humankind, as he is virginally begotten by the Holy Spirit and hence is not an empirical human being (Jung, 1984: 84, 112).

[37] It is not just the *historical* reconstruction of the Christian religion down the Old and the New Testaments that reveals the dualism between Jesus and Satan to have progressively delineated from a

The figure of the Christian devil as the enemy of God derives from multiple influences- from Babylonian literature is taken the idea of the arch-villain or the opponent of the hero, from Zoroastrianism comes the idea of the perennial opposition between the god of light and the god of darkness (Wray & Mobley, 2005: 163, 165) - but it is the inter-testamental Jewish apocalyptic writings that supplies the Christian devil his telos. The Jewish apocalyptic writings, termed the *pseudepigrapha*, were written in the context of the humiliating occupation of the Jews at the hands of the Syrians and the Romans, when the morally ambivalent character of Yahweh was found too frustrating, giving way to more dualistic impulses (Mäyrä, 1999: 37, 38). As Wray & Mobley note: "This type of storytelling sought to reveal the reason for the frustrated hopes of a people who could not reconcile their misfortunes with their theology. If the descendants of Abraham and Sarah were partners to a covenant with the Architect of the Universe, then why had their cultural and political properties been condemned by a parade of Near Eastern tyrants? The response of the Jewish apocalypticists was to construct a new theory that explained this conundrum... The theory revealed a cosmic conspiracy at work, led by a supernatural criminal mastermind (Satan) who controlled a vast, nefarious network of demonic forces dedicated to frustrating the divine purpose at every turn" (2005: 97-98). At the same time, the apocalyptic tome also included stories that inspired hope in the discouraged Jews, particularly the prediction of the end of times, when God and his angels would triumph over the demons of Satan and the righteous would be rewarded (Ibid: 98).

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state where good and evil had previously been undifferentiated in the God-image. The *mythical* story of Christ too suggests the filiations between Jesus and Satan, their unity in an initial figure. In their presentation of Christianity as a Jewish adaptation of the pagan mystery religions, Freke and Gandy note that key events in the narrative of the story of Christ (including the virgin birth on the 25th of December, the turning of water into wine, the rising from the dead, and the symbolism of bread and wine with the body and blood of the god) are those shared with the pagan dying and resurrecting godman known variously as Osiris in Egypt, Dionysus in Greece, Attis in Asia Minor, Adonis in Syria, Bacchus in Italy, and Mithras in Persia (2000: 6,7). Gyrus (1996) notes that the dying and rising Dionysus is in fact a metaphor for the death and regeneration of plant-life in the course of the cycles of nature. Further, Dionysus has animalistic features that equally identify him with Satan- Dionysius was a horned god crowned with serpents, and represented variously as a bull, stag, ram, or goat. It is widely acknowledged that it is the representations of the Roman goat-god Pan, who shared with Dionysus the attributes of the nature and the wild, from which medieval Christianity derived its iconography of Satan. A mythical reconstruction of the story of Christ thus reveals the split between Jesus and Satan to be not just that between good and evil, but also that between spirit and matter, super-nature and nature, and the Christian association of the body, sexuality, and worldly pursuits with the Devil only bears this out.

The followers of Jesus perfected the apocalyptic narrative into a cosmic battle between their own good Lord Jesus and the evil Satan. Pagels (1996: 7, 8) has argued that the gospels adopted such apocalyptic visions to confirm the early Christians, then a suspect minority, of their own identification with God, and diabolize their religious opponents, namely the Jews and later the pagans, as followers of Satan. During the medieval period, to this list was added the Muslims, the heretics, and, as we have seen, the folk practitioners of *maleficium*, magic, and the worship of Diana[38]. The logic therein has been to impose the design of a cosmic battle onto the rivalries Christianity faced on earth; for the apocalyptic narrative to unfold its telos, for Christ to establish the order of God in the world of chaotic sin, it is required that the battle lines are clearly drawn between the forces of good and evil. But the crucial point of such apocalypticism is not the dualism, but the fact that the victory of Christ over Satan has been preordained, fated, destined (Mäyrä, 1999: 40; Pagels, 1996: 180). As Runions puts it: "The antichrist is both essential to the functioning of the Christian symbolic, and excluded from it" (2009: 82). The demonic origins of the satanic figure are sidelined in his apocalyptic role in Christian teleology[39], only to make way for his final defeat at the hands of an exclusively good God. In the Christian universe, *order* and *good*ness, equated with *truth*, have to ultimately triumph.

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It is this fundamental asymmetry between good and evil, order and disorder, which has been the founding legacy of Christianity in the ethical and moral discourses of modern society. Outside the Christian ethic, if good and evil were hitherto set up as ambivalent categories mutually reinforcing the other, the good often leading to the bad and vice versa, in both the Christian and modern secular imaginaries, they are contraries set up exclusive of each other, and locked in dualistic conflict, where the

[38] It must be clarified that the diabolization of the opponents of Christianity has also required the use of racial and sexual tropes; for example, women were considered more susceptible to diabolic influence given their characterization as the 'weaker sex' (See Denike, 2003).

[39] The overwhelming emphasis on the diabolic, however, does not mean that demonic traces are totally absent from Christian symbolism and myth. The example of grotesquely shaped gargoyles that adorn medieval churches and meant to ward off evil is a case in point.

advance of one requires the defeat of the other. It is thus that even mature works of the Enlightenment in their moments of self-critique, such as Kant's doctrine of 'radical evil', are premised on the view that nothing positive can come out of evil. Kant's work was idiosyncratic of the age of Enlightenment, in that he identified radical evil not with the irrational and bestial forces, but as the result of rationally and autonomously willed actions of humans (Lawrence, 2002: 321). Nonetheless, Kant conceived of radical evil as *destructive* of the progress enlightened humanity has achieved- as with the Christian conception, evil in the Kantian system is not a *creative* force in itself[40].

Likewise, the cultural legacy of apocalypticism has continued to remain indelible as a birthmark of modernity. As Pagels puts it: "This apocalyptic vision has taught even secular-minded people to interpret the history of Western culture as a moral history in which the forces of good contend against the forces of evil in the world" (1996: 181). It is thus that ideologies as diverse as Marx's materialist conception of history and America's post- 9/11 'War on Terror' have depended on the figure of the absolute other as evil in their programs of class revolution and imperialism respectively.

Also, according to Christian belief, the human self is created in the image of God (*imago dei*) and hence demonic presence in or demonic influence over the self has been deemed evil, the demons thereby needing to be exorcised back into their rightful domain in the underground or hell with Satan. The secular discourse of the self too has productively interacted with the above Christian worldview. The modern notion of a unitary self in rational control of its actions and decisions has meant that the dark, uncontrolled, unpredictable aspects of the demonic in the self have had to be repressed into the unconscious, which represents the underground of the modern rational self. In his *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, Jung has noted that: "For every piece of conscious life that loses its importance and value- so runs the law- there arises a compensation in the unconscious" (2001: 214). "Sexually perverse and criminal fantasies", given their one-sided association with evil in the Christian and secular moral imaginaries, thus populate the unconscious of the modern self such that "the inner man wants something that the visible man does not want, and we are at war with ourselves" (Ibid: 207). The notion of

[40] On the flip side, given the mutual exclusiveness of good and evil, the destruction and evil wrought by different visions of the social good, whether neo-liberal, communist, or scientific-industrial, have frequently escaped critical scrutiny (See Alexander, 2001).

the underground in the pagan conception had chthonic (i.e., pertaining to the earthly or the subterranean) references, symbolizing both death and regeneration of life. However, the legacy of Judeo-Christian dualism and apocalypticism has been such that the modern western self today seeks an opponent figure for his/her advance/redemption, instead of embracing the demonic in the underground of the unconscious, and regenerating the within and the without.

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CHAPTER THREE

AN IDEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF WESTERN SOCIOLOGY

Among the more recent and growingly fashionable trends in the sociology of religion has been the announcement of the 'postmodern return of the sacred' and the subsequent call for a 'post-secular sociology' (Keenan, 2002) - a cause that has been enthusiastically embraced by Christian critics in western sociological circles. Postmodern skepticism about the legitimacy of science as a modernist secular project raises the question of the persistence of myth, metaphor and metaphysics, and has thus helped relocate a generalized category of the theological on the other side of the logocentirc order of modernity (Harrington, 2006: 38). Alongside, there has dawned a realization that the marginalization of traditional religion cannot be equated with the decline of religiosity in modernity, given the rise of evangelicalism and fundamentalism, the adherence to civil religion and a continued faith in reason, and the popularity of New Age spiritualisms in the present epoch. With the secularization thesis now at its weakest, the signs seem ominous for a vengeful assault by Christian sociologists driven by the sense of long having been a victim of hegemonic secularism, and aiming for nothing less than a rehabilitation of the previously skewed relationship between sociology and theology (See for instance Milbank, 2006; Flanagan, 1996). In what follows, among other things, I present a rebuttal to such an agenda. I suggest that the current interest in reconciling sociology with its theological roots is largely unmindful or deviously dismissive of the meeting points between Christianity and secularism that have nurtured modern culture all along, in the manner we have suggested hitherto.

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It is indeed a matter of intrigue that the category of the 'social' has remained vaguely defined and mystified in its use by sociologists till date. Down the decades and centuries the term has been variously used to describe society, social order, social structure, or simply the social dimension of diverse fields such as economics, politics, psychology, science, law, and so on. As noted by Bruno Latour, the 'social' has thus served to designate a stable, already given, general or residual category that "could then be used to shed some light on specifically social phenomena- the social could explain the social- and to provide a certain type of explanation for what the other domains could not account for- an appeal to 'social factors' could explain the 'social aspects' of non-social phenomena" (2005: 3).

In enlightened liberal thought the collective orders of the economic or the political had to be deduced from the interrelations of atomized individuals (Milbank, 2006: 51)- the Social Contract theories of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau was one version of this line of thought. In contrast, nineteenth century French social thinkers like Claude Henri de Saint-Simon, Auguste Comte, and later Emil Durkheim, who laid the foundations of disciplinary sociology, espoused a view of society as an organismic whole that unlike the economic or the political did not have to be deduced from individuals- instead, the individual was always already situated within society, and derived his goals and values from the social order. John Milbank has traced the roots of this conservative idea to the secular theology of the French Catholic thinkers de Bonald and de Maistre, for whom society was "an aspect of the original divine creation" sustained by the sovereignty and hierarchical organization of the social (52-60).

And it was not just certain methodological and metaphysical assumptions about the social, as the above, that sociology owed to theology. Theological frameworks

have long informed the normative agendas of social theory. It has been generally recognized since the days of Walter Benjamin (though not without contestation) that Marxism involves a secularization of messianism (Goldstein, 2001: 246). In his influential work, *Meaning in History*, Karl Lowith (1949) argued that western historical thought as such is rooted in Christian eschatological faith according to which the experience of time is not interpreted in terms of the eternal cycles of nature but as a meaningful progression toward the end of the world and the last judgment as the ultimate consummation of God's goal for creation. In this work Lowith demonstrates that Marx's 1848 *Communist Manifesto* is simultaneously "scientifically relevant in its particular contents, eschatological in its framework, and prophetic in its attitude" (38): In Marx's interpretation of history as an economic or materialist process, all history is the history of class-struggles or antagonisms between forces of production and social relations of production. In capitalist society industrial and scientific powers have surpassed that which previous societies could not even fancy, and yet 'man' is enslaved to hunger and overwork. In Marx's scheme this antagonism is resolved not by reining in modern technical capacities, but by the creation of a new kind of man (36). The *chosen people* for Marx is the class alienated from itself and excluded from existing society, "the most wretched creature in capitalist society" (37), the proletariat. Only the proletariat is invested with *redemptive* significance for the whole human world, because it is totally alienated from human existence. Just as radical as the Christian separation of meaningful history into a pagan B.C. and a Christian A.D., Marx now divides human history into a pre-history and a future which "leads through the dictatorship of the proletariat from the realm of necessity to that of freedom from all prehistoric antagonism" (35). Eventually class revolution and the consummation of the world historical process are to culminate in a classless society, a realm of freedom, "a *Kingdom of God*, without God and on earth, which is the ultimate goal and ideal of Marx's historical messianism" (41, emphasis mine)[41].

[41] According to Polak, the eschatological or apocalyptic character of Marxian theory is "easily recognizable in the doctrine of necessary suffering. The dispossessed and downtrodden workers are the chosen ones, predestined to be elevated. No one must ask for a softening of the hard lot the present imposes, for only when the abysss between the classes leads to climactic tension can the great upheaval take place" (1973: 122).

Even when not directly guided by a theological scheme, sociologists have tended to assume quasi-theological positions when commenting on the ills and fate of modern culture. As Flanagan suggests, "Sociology cannot accept that it is born to nihilism. This is an unreflected tradition of the trade. Its opposite, a theological position, has gone by convention and default" (1996: x). Likewise, Pickering (2004: 61-84) identifies an overlapping of concerns in the sociological and theological fields as it pertains to theodicy or the meaningful explanation of the existence of evil in the human world. Theological themes thus abound in the writings of social theorists in the first-half of the twentieth century, including the thought of classical thinkers like Max Weber, Pitrim Sorokin and Karl Mannheim, and later in that of Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and so on; in the latter half of the twentieth century though, Harrington notes, such themes had fallen out of vogue in the social sciences (2006: 37). In the recent decades however, theological concerns have resurfaced in sociological theorizing, with issues of risk, anxiety and uncertainty characterizing the late-or-post-modern scene, as alluded to in the first chapter. Flanagan discerns such a development in the renewed interest of sociologists in the self and ethics: "To cope with these issues in postmodernity, sociology is increasingly falling back on metaphors that have a theological origin or root in its dealings with culture" (1996: 4).

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The above points notwithstanding, the disciplinary history of modern sociology has largely been self-understood and self-presented in terms of the secularization thesis. Keenan has opined that the secularist ideology has functioned within the discipline as a hegemonizing impulse meant to "manage, control and police the sociological perspective" (2002: 283). Though secularization theory really came to be established as a dominant ideology only in the post-war period[42], and was most at home

[42] It is important to note that the secularization thesis was also well received among theological circles of the time, which eventually gave rise to the 'death of God' theological movement during the 1960s.

with the reigning modernization theory of the days, the concept of secularization had emerged "at roughly the same time as the field of sociology" (Schultz: 171) and has operated at different levels of meaning in the Weberian, Durkheimian, and Marxian traditions. However, the most basic interpretation of secularization as the progressive decline of the influence of religion in all aspects of social life in the face of modern scientific rationality is commonly traced back to the work of Max Weber (Swastos, Jr. & Christiano, 1999).

It is in the writings of Weber that modernity is properly characterized as a post-Christian epoch[43], as a definite shift from a communitarian to a utilitarian individualist society (Seidman, 1985: 110,111). In the Weberian scheme, secularization referred to a double-sided process involving both 'rationalization' or intellectualization, a shift from a socio-cultural order normatively integrated by a religio-cosmological worldview to a social order founded upon legal-rational rules, bureaucratic procedures and rational capitalism, and 'disenchantment', which signified a world bereft of magical and mysterious forces where the mysterious itself comes to be devalued as irrational. The end result of all this is that religion is rendered powerless as a meaning system in the modern world; it comes to be functionally differentiated from other institutions in society, and reduced to a concern of the private individual (Swastos, Jr. & Christiano, 1999: 212; Seidman, 1983: 268, 269).

The key to understanding Weber's notion of secularization is his placement of scientific rationality in opposition to religion: science divorces the world of values from the world of facts, and hence the appropriate code for the professional

[43] This is in spite of the fact that Weber traces the cultural roots of modern capitalism to the development of ascetic-Protestantism from the sixteenth century onwards. Modernity for Weber is post-Christian in the sense that Christian beliefs and symbolism have been excluded from dominant public institutions to the margins of society. The spirit of rational calculation that modernity entails can only be at the expense of the *transcendent* authority of religion, as explanations for events, Weber believed, would now be sought at the *immanent* level of this-worldly experience, with religion itself being relegated to the realm of the irrational. In contrast, as Seidman has argued, for Durkheim, new forms of religious life, particularly the modern religion of humanity, is a secular transmutation of Christianity. The deification of humanity takes the form of the immanentization of the divine, and yet the former retains the sense of *transcendence* earlier attributed to the divine (See Seidman, 1985).

sociologist, according to Weber, is one of value-neutrality[44]. As Seidman notes, Weber here draws on the positioning of science within the secular world view by the eighteenth century *philosophes*, in the context of a critique of religion, particularly Christianity (1983: 270). It is in this sense that the secularization thesis, which has nourished itself most productively from the Weberian tradition, been pivotal for sociology keeping alive an imagined memory of its Enlightenment origins and consolidating itself as a science.

The rhetoric of the European Enlightenment, as we have seen in the first chapter, was a function of the socio-political climate of an age driven weary by religious wars and simultaneously enthused by revolutionary ideals. Religion, caricatured in terms of superstition, dogma and authority, was thus rendered a static presence, a vestige of the past, and hence plotted on the wrong side of the progress and human freedom the application of reason, best embodied by modern science, was to bring about. This faith in the products of science and technology to solve the problems of the world was again revisited in post-war Europe, when sociology was tasked with rebuilding a war-worn society, and when the discipline finally received acceptance in the scientific university (Lemert, 1985: 79, 80). It is not a coincidence then that the post-war period saw both the dominance of the secularization thesis and maximum acceptance for sociology within the university. Sociology's status as a science has depended for no meager part on its positioning on the secular side of the sacred-secular divide in modern Western societies and its claims to the legacy of Enlightenment ideals and optimism.

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The point to be grasped is not that the theological influences on and secular self-presentation of sociology have always worked at cross-purposes. Instead, in what follows, I attempt an ideological critique of western sociology by broadening its

[44] Note here, once again, the divergence of the Weberian understanding of secularization from the Durkheimian and Comtean schemes. The latter two had explicitly conceived of their sociology as a moral synthesis of science and religion.

scope to include the overlapping theological and secular threads identified in the above discussions, that have allowed a wide range of theories (consciously secular, consciously secular and theological, unconsciously theological, and so on) to be weaved into its academic corpus.

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[II]

That the disciplinary origins of sociology are commonly traced to the European Enlightenment has meant that sociologists are by default least concerned of the medieval or even early modern past. Indeed, one major trope of the Enlightenment was the liberation or emancipation of the individual from the tyranny of the Middle Ages, a line of thinking that is most recently revisited by Habermas' defense of modernity as an unfinished emanicpatory project. That which marked out the modern age from its medieval *past* was also the Enlightenment narrative of 'progress' and the possibility of perfection (Alexander, 1990: 15), which meant that the problems of modern society were thought of as distinctly unique to the age, and could nonetheless be remedied through a re-visioning of the *future* and a transformation of the *present*.

Utopian visions thus abound in eighteenth century Europe. Of course utopian thinking is no novelty in the history of ideas, yet that which was distinctive of the images of the future generated during the Enlightenment has been outlined by Fred Polak as follows: "The utopia of the Enlightenment bridges the gap between the old and the new in two ways. First, it provides a fairly detailed critique of the contemporary scene, attacking conservatism and corruption; second, it offers a careful plan for a new social order. The Age of Enlightenment and its utopias produced a new outlook on the present and a new vision of the future. By unmasking learned ignorance, the Enlightenment cleared the way for the exercise of human reason in areas beyond the scope of previous scholastic knowledge" (1973: 100). The line of utopian thought that directly influenced

the development of sociology was the utopian socialism of Saint-Simon and Comte, which linked the Industrial Revolution with Enlightenment utopianism (Polak, 1973: 113). And while Marx deliberately sought to distance himself from such utopianism, his work too represented a re-visioning of the industrial revolution that equally shared the Enlightenment optimism about progress and rational planning of the future (Westwood, 2000: 188, 189).

Saint-Simon was among the first to identify industrialism as a new emerging system devoted to, what he believed, was the production of useful goods and services, which would provide the basis for overcoming the problems of the declining feudal order marked by war and religious strife. The direction of this new order was a task he felt best left to a world council of scientists, industrialists, and financiers, and it was thus that Saint-Simon and his followers worked at coordinating the activities of society through centrally planned enterprises like canals, railways, and steamship lines (Collins & Makowsky, 1993: 22-24). Comte was one such disciple of Saint-Simon who worked with the latter for seven years on the nature and future of industrial society, before parting ways and developing this work into an entirely new science of society-sociology. For Comte, social development had passed through successive theological and metaphysical stages, and would soon be replaced by a final stage of positivism. The positivist science of sociology he thus tasked with the discovery of the laws that govern social order and social progress, the utopian or practical goal of the discovery of these laws thereby being to remedy the malaise caused by the French Revolution (Ibid: 25-27). As Polak notes, Comte "attached to utopism the idea of a scientific structure of rational prognosis of the future" (1973: 114).

Likewise, the Marxian theoretical corpus that followed included utopian, evolutionary, revolutionary and apocalyptic elements, yet these were all simultaneously subsumed under the title of 'scientific socialism'. The tag of scientificity was meant to suggest that Marx's theory was not simply an idealist projection or theological speculation or merely a manifesto for a political struggle for power. Instead the prediction of class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat inhered in the laws of the natural order, in "the essential structure and dynamics of history" (Seidman, 1991: 137). As

Marx put it in *The German Ideology* "Communism for us is not a state of affairs which is to be established, an ideal to which reality (will) have to adjust itself. We call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the premises now in existence" (1970: 56, 57). Equally Marx had underscored the need for the rational organization of the actions of an international working class.

As may be discerned, a combination of vision and scientific reason is marked in the social theory of the above thinkers.

Such a pairing of vision and reason, scientific critique of existing social arrangements and attempts at theorizing a 'good' or better society, has most directly influenced the line of critical theory in sociology and the social sciences. As Cooke notes: "In calling for social and cognitive transformation, critical social theories are guided by an idea of the good society in which the identified obstacles to human flourishing would once and for all have been overcome. This idea may be articulated more or less explicitly; indeed, frequently, it is represented negatively and must be extrapolated from the critical social theorist's description of what is wrong with social arrangements in the society in question. Nonetheless, without some, more or less determinate, guiding idea of the good society, critical social thinking would be inconceivable" (2006: 3).

Yet the notion of a society where the individual could responsibly maximize his/her autonomy, the commitment to personal autonomy and greater societal rationality this entails, and more generally the assumption that scientific reason is liberatory or progressive (Smart, 1991: 134, 135), has also informed general sociological theory and practice for the greater period of its history. Indeed, Charles Lemert has argued that the different perspectives in sociology are but "marginally diversified attempts to organize sociological talk" around what he terms 'homocentrism' (1979: 14). By this he refers to that discursive terrain which developed in nineteenth century liberal bourgeois society regarding 'Man' as the finite and free subject of knowledge, value and life, able to create a meaningful human world and thus dominate his own history (Ibid: 16-19). The central questions such a sociology attempted to answer have always been: "... how do individuals remain free in community? How does community remain orderly

so that individuals are free?" (Lemert, 1985: 84). Ethical concerns with Man as the centre of the moral universe have thus been at the heart of sociology, and consequently the justification modern sociology has conventionally supplied for its disciplinary existence has been the amelioration or resolution of the problems this modern subject faced in actual societies (Smart, 1991: 135)[45].

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Among the first to identify a discourse about evil in the above mode of sociological thinking was Ernest Becker. In his *Structure of Evil* Becker recognized that the rise of the social sciences involved a denial of theodicy and its replacement with the claim that evil could be dealt with at a purely human level (the latter he termed an 'anthropodicy'). With the power of nature in the control of 'man', God no longer inspired awe, and good and evil became mere affairs of technical calculation; hence the shift from a God-centered to a human-centered interpretation of evil. It is thus that social reform and the active implementation of human progress became the initial objective of the social sciences[46], for anthropodicy assumes that evil is not such as to thwart the plan of social change in the direction of a desired world (Sontag, 1981: 267-269).

Of course, sociology has always consciously avoided the vocabulary of evil deemed too judgmental for its scientific and secular credentials. Nonetheless, in their practical concern for the study of social problems such as poverty, inequality, repression,

[45] Note that the commitment of sociology to the freedom of the modern subject has not proceeded along the lines of a compromise of its foundationalist dictum that it is the social group which is the fundamental unit of sociological analysis. Sociology has been concerned not so much with the 'individual' but the conditions of 'man' in modern societies. This point will become clearer when we discuss Durkheim later in this chapter.

[46] To be sure, disillusionment with science as the celebrated way to happiness- as with the specters of an 'iron cage' Weber raised with respect to the progressive rationalization of social institutions- was another distinct line of sociological theorizing that has nonetheless travelled, for the major part, parallel to the more optimistic program of the social sciences. Thus Weber continued to insist on secular rationality as the only possible hope for humankind (Alexander, 1990: 30). Indeed, despair and hope are common to both these modes of sociological thought; it is the particular combination of these elements and their priorities of emphasis that often separate one from the other.

racism, sexism, crime, familial breakdown, and so on, in the reformist, progressive, and emancipatory zeal embraced by many sociological thinkers, is evident an unstated account of social evil(s). The denial of theodicy in sociology has meant that these evils or undesirable conditions of existence are explained not by recourse to divine will or fate, but at a thoroughly human/social level. Broadly speaking, the sociological elaboration of social evil has proceeded along two lines: 1) an explanation in terms of instinctually driven or rationally willed actions of individuals or groups that deviate from the collective values and norms of society; 2) a systemic explanation, in terms of pathological forms of social organization.

The former of the above is subsumed within the fields of the sociology of deviance and the sociology of crime; evil here is explored in terms of departures from normative standards (cultural or legal) of socially accepted behavior. The latter, on the other hand, has been the substance of macro-sociological theory; evil here is explained at the systemic, institutional, or structural level; anomie (Durkheim), alienation (Marx), or the colonization of the lifeworld (Habermas), for example, have thus been understood in terms of unjust, exploitative, or abnormal forms of social organization. And while the reality or normality or functional indispensability of crime and deviance has always been acknowledged[47], it is structural evil that has never been granted full-ontological status in sociological theory[48]. An explanation of structural evil in terms of problems of functional patterning has long been interpreted in terms of the hope that a more rationalized form of social organization would solve such problems in a future 'good society'. The explanation of evil at a human/social level, as the above entails, has always held forth the possibility of potentially controlling or transcending such conditions through social change. Structural or systemic evil has thus signified a departure from the natural[49] state of society, an abnormal or pathological condition, a secondary or residual category.

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[47] A classic statement to this effect is found in Durkheim who regarded crime as a *normal* social fact.

[48] The purpose of the discussion here is not to spell out the problems associated with such a position, but to suggest by demonstration what I hold to be a deeper problem in sociological theory that the same implies. For a detailed reading of the systemic view of evil, and for an alternate cultural or semiotic take on social evil, see Alexander (2001).

[49] I use the term 'natural' here and in another instance below, in its modern connotation as something given, inherent, and unchanging in the referent to which this adjective is ascribed. Such a view then

Such denial of full-ontological status to structural evil has meant that sociologists have, unwittingly or not, upheld a faith in human rationality and/or the solidarity of the social order[50]. The positive value of rational and autonomous agency has been held to be such as may be purposively directed in "enlightened efforts to institutionalize the good" (Alexander, 2001: 155). It is the above line of theorising and disciplinary practice that I designate here as sociology in its 'enlightenment mode'; sociology here embodies the signification of 'enlightenment' in both its senses: rational knowledge, and emancipation.

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We have already noted that the trope of the Enlightenment as emancipatory involved (among other things) a contrast with the tyranny of the Middle Ages. Robert Mills has noted that the Middle Ages, the *ancien régime*, have commonly been caricatured as a barbaric epoch, with a "culture ravaged by violence, death, pain and disease" (2005: 8). Modern society, in comparison, was considered less brutal, more *humane*, orderly and civilized. Such a construction of the medieval as "monstrously other" (Ibid: 11) was essential for maintaining pristine and coherent a sociological vision of rationally ordered societies, a fact that is revealed most sharply in the work of Georges Sorel.

Sorel began his hugely important *Reflections on Violence* with the observation that: "For a long time I have been struck by the fact that the *normal development* of strikes has included a significant number of acts of violence; but certain learned sociologists seek to disguise a phenomenon that everyone who cares to use his

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presupposes the orderly and unchanging character of nature- a distinctly modern construction, as we have noted and critiqued in Chapter Two.

[50] It should be noted that these are in fact two separate, though not mutually exclusive, emphases. In this section, I focus only on those attempts at theorizing the good society that have relied on notions of human rationality or societal rationalization. An equally legitimate thread in sociological theory has held both social change and social solidarity to have more affective than rational sources. This second case will be considered in a later section.

eyes must have noticed" (2004: 39; emphasis original). And again, "Violence does not diminish in the proportion that it should diminish according to the principles of advanced sociology" (183). Sociologists studying socialism in the early twentieth century conveniently ignored instances of violence- socialism itself was seen merely as a more or less economically and rationally expedient form of social organization than bourgeois capitalism; for Sorel, on the other hand, the revolutionary social transformation socialists sought to bring about cannot be understood without considering the functions of such violence in actual social conditions.

Sorel then takes to task the conception of social peace promoted by middle class philosophers, sociologists and educationists: "In the eyes of the contemporary bourgeoisie everything is admirable which dispels the idea of violence. Our bourgeoisie desire to die in peace- after them the deluge" (93). For Sorel, it is only proletarian violence in the form of acts of class war that can bring about the revolutionary transformation to socialism. He reveals the prejudice against violence among the middle class to have stemmed from their memories of the horrors of the Inquisition and the Old Regime; violence for them signifies a return to barbarism.

Sorel's treatment of the prejudices against violence thus reveals violence or brutality as a *monstrous* other in relation to the rational and peaceful self of the modern *human* subject. Recognizing this is crucial to understanding the fact that extreme and gratuitous acts of violence figure in the modern human and social sciences as an 'abnormality'- indeed, the sanity of the perpetrator of such acts is called into question in these cases. For the orthodox Christian the perpetrator of gratuitous violence is influenced by the Devil, and for the secular academician such an individual is to be properly judged as mentally infirm- nonetheless, in both cases is breached the purity of the category of 'man' or the modern self[51].

Another revealing aspect of Sorel's work is that he deems the rational analyses of exploitation that sociologists offer to be of little consequence in the class struggle to be engaged in by the proletariat: "... sociological considerations have very

[51] As we have noted in the previous chapter, both the discourses of diabolic evil or 'violence as secular evil' (Diamond, 2003) partake of worldviews that are more historically continuous than conflictive.

little effect upon people born outside the ranks of the bourgeoisie" (57). Instead, Sorel maintains that the soul of the revolutionaries must receive a deep and lasting impression through the use of a body of images which intuitively evoke images of class war even before rational analyses can be made. Only *myth*, which does not operate at the level of scientific reason, is adequate to such a task.

If we are to integrate the above with our discussions in the second chapter, it should not be difficult to discern the legacy that disciplinary sociology has followed down the decades. From the fifteenth century onwards, if a distinctively Christian agenda to reform and discipline the populace, later taken over by the secular state in the interests of the emerging economy, was essential in the constitution of the modern rational autonomous self, after the eighteenth century European Enlightenment, it is sociologists who, in their attempts to theorize and institutionalize the good, have universalized this late medieval/early modern construction of 'man' to the whole of humanity- a notion of 'man', which as Sorel suggests, had not percolated down to the classes below the liberal bourgeoisie in the same culturally resonant manner that it had for the latter. The brutal, violent *demonic* (See Chapter 2) character of actual individuals and groups has thus had to be turned into a monstrous other, something abnormal, para-human, and animal-like, in order to keep alive the fiction of the rational autonomous human individual so vital for the schemes of macro-sociological theory. It is only in the light of this fact that we can begin to make sense of the striking absence of sociological scholarship, until very recently, on subjects like war, genocide, and the Holocaust. While working with a scheme that implicitly construes violence as secular evil, sociologists for the greater part have had to ignore instances of actual violence and 'incomprehensible' brutality in order to keep alive that founding assumption of anthropodicy- the manageability of evil at a human level.

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Democracy as structural or institutional good that allows for the flourishing of human freedom has remained a trenchant idea in sociology and the wider Western imagination. This represents a second level at which structural evil has been elaborated in sociological theory: evil here is not simply rendered impotent so as to be humanly manageable, but moreover, explained away as external to modern democratic institutions[52].

Among contemporary sociologists, Jurgen Habermas has been the staunchest defender of the Enlightenment faith in reason, and who has sought to continue, through his 'reconstructive' social theory (1996), the disciplinary practice of sociology in its enlightenment mode- albeit in a modified fashion, by combining objectivist and normative approaches. Habermas' entire theoretical corpus, from the earliest to his most mature works, can be read as an elaboration of what he considers the appropriate democratic ideals for complex modern societies.

In his early work, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989), Habermas traced the evolution of the inclusive democratic space of the public sphere from the 18th to the 20th centuries, and critiqued the expansive increase in bureaucratization, the increasingly technical and instrumental nature of political decision-making, and the economics of advanced capitalism- in order to manage which the administrative state had to interfere in the private lives of citizens, and which had reduced ideas into mere commodities. All of these, he held responsible for the failure of the ideal of public reason that the eighteenth century enlightened public sphere had represented. It is this ideal of a critical and egalitarian public whose members address one another as equals that constitutes the 'utopian' core of Habermas' work (Bohman, 2005).

In his *Theory of Communicative Action* (1984, Vol. II), Habermas formalized the democratic space occupied by the public sphere outside the markets and bureaucracies into the 'lifeworld'- a domain of action characterized by shared cultural systems of meaning, personality structures, and institutional orders that allowed social actors to co-operate on the basis of mutual understanding. To the markets and

[52]This distinction I make here is artificial, and is meant only for purpose of demonstration of certain finer points.

bureaucracies, the 'systems', he attributed 'strategic action' oriented toward the selfish interests of actors, and to the lifeworld he assigned 'communicative action' that facilitated consensus and solidarity among participants. It is communicative action that links the lifeworld to democratic will-formation. In Habermas' scheme then, democracy[53] is necessarily defined as a bulwark against the instrumental rationalization and power represented by the systems (Flyvbjerg, 2002: 2).

It is a fundamental argument of Habermas that modernity has expanded the scope not only for the technical or rational-instrumental mastery over nature, but also for the communicative use of reason for social integration and democracy[54]. Habermas' notion of democracy then is premised on inter-subjective communication, or, more precisely, discursive participation. Discourse, in Habermas' sense, does not refer to all communication, but to speech freed from power, wherein speakers assess validity claims based on rational grounds, where the only force that operates is that of the "better argument" (Habermas, 1984 [Vol. I]: 26). Habermas' 'discourse ethics', which supply the procedure of achieving such rational consensus without force, include the following requirements: 1) no party affected by what is being discussed should be excluded from the discourse (generality), 2) all participants should have equal opportunity to present and criticize validity claims (autonomy), 3) participants must be willing and able to empathize with other participants' validity claims (role taking), 4) existing power differences between participants must be neutralized so that these have no effect in the achievement of consensus (power neutrality), and 5) participants must openly express their goals and intentions as well as desist from strategic action (transparence) (Flyvbjerg, 1998: 213). The above also summarizes the 'ideal speech situation' for Habermas, which

[53] It should be noted that Habermas conceives of democracy not in terms of majority rule or institutional mechanisms such as voting or separation of powers, but as any institutional order that allows for genuine participation of citizens in political will-formation, the communicative power of which is then translated into administrative power via the procedurally regulated spheres of parliaments and the judiciary (Warren, 1993: 211; Kulynych, 1997: 320; Bohman, 2005).

[54] Such a view stems from Habermas' conviction that the Enlightenment freed modern individuals from the "spellbinding authority" (1996: 24) of religious or sacred belief complexes, which had previously provided for the shared cultural assumptions informing the consensus or solidarity in the lifeworld. The functional differentiation and pluralization of the lifeworld that has attended the social evolution of modern societies has meant that "the burden of social integration now shifts more and more onto the communicative achievements of actors..." (Ibid: 26).

though never conventionally actualized, may be approximated in different measures in concrete democratic contexts.

Further, true to his Enlightenment credentials, the Habermasian scheme allows that discursive democracies can potentially harmonize collective and individual rationality. The discursive processes of challenge and justification that can produce consensus can also simultaneously increase the autonomy of participants as they come to better understand their own needs, desires, and interests; self-realization and self-transformation are possibilities in the ideal communication community; communication and individuation go hand-in-hand. Political participation by means of democratic discourse also develops the autonomy of the participants. Thus, the autonomy of the self continues to remain a normative ideal for Habermas in an otherwise inter-subjectively grounded theory (Warren, 1993: 213-214) - in Habermas' democratic ideal, faith in human rationality and in social solidarity are perfectly matched.

Yet a contrast of Habermas' discourse ethics with the Foucauldian notion of discourse throws the former's claim about inter-subjective communication as a *non-coercive* medium of social integration into disarray. Foucault's treatment of discourses as power/knowledge regimes or regimes of truth means that the 'non-coercive' *force* of the better argument is not the only power that operates in discourse. Even after the economic and political asymmetries of power between participants are overcome, for Foucault, discourse remains constrained. With Habermas' ideal speech situation, wherein unconstrained communication creates unconstrained consensus and discursive truth, Foucault associates the 'will to truth'. The ideal speech situation expresses power, as participants must speak the truth and speech aims at truth alone. For Foucault, the will to truth manifest in ideal speech is internal to *discipline*, which normalizes individuals, and only in this disciplining sense can discourse be said to create consensus (Love, 1989: 282).

The Foucauldian line also negates the positive value Habermas attaches to subjectivity and individuation in his scheme. Foucault holds it to be extremely difficult to disconnect subjectivity from power, as subjectivity is already *subjugation*. The Enlightenment which discovered individual liberties, also invented the disciplines, and

disciplinary power has subjugated the modern subject. By subjecting individuals to constant surveillance, it has forced them to scrutinize themselves constantly, thus linking subjectivity and objectification inseparably (Ibid: 276).

The above line of critique is in fact reminiscent of the masterful attempt from within the tradition of critical theory itself to explain the regress of Enlightenment into *domination* in the twentieth century, as represented by the rise of Nazism, fascism, and mass culture. In the sociological classic *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer presented a biting analysis of the paradox Enlightenment had brought with its "self-destruction" (2002: xiv) - its central themes of liberation and civilization had now turned into their opposites, domination and barbarism. As they note: "The increase in economic productivity which creates the conditions for a more just world also affords the technical apparatus and the social groups controlling it a disproportionate advantage over the rest of the population. The individual is entirely nullified in the face of the economic powers. These powers are taking society's domination over nature to unimagined heights" (xvii). The explanation they supply for the same is equally paradoxical: "Myth is already Enlightenment, and Enlightenment reverts to mythology" (xviii). The systems of free thought the Enlightenment generated have emphasized predictability and repeatability, thus reducing nature into a closed system governed by unchanging laws, allowing for its mastery. Likewise, all values and ultimate purposes in life are banished, thought is reduced to an instrumental mechanical activity, and thus human experience itself has become impoverished. In all this, Enlightenment operates much like myth, with its emphasis on the repetition, inevitability, and fatalism of the natural and human orders.

Habermas, of course, has resolutely denied the validity of this critique (See Habermas, 1982). Indeed, his insistence on communicative reason as against the instrumental rationality of markets and bureaucracies, is an attempt to blunt the force of Adorno and Horkheimer's arguments, and save the emancipatory potential of the Enlightenment- the communicative use of reason in democratic will-formation, he insists, is a bulwark against the colonization of the lifeworld by the administrative state and the markets. Yet as Jeffrey Alexander has noted, Habermas is able to do so only by erecting a

rigid dualism between the institutional conditions of the good and of the bad: "Underlying much of Habermas' empirical theory one can find a philosophical anthropology that reproduces the simplistic splitting of good and evil... These anthropological dichotomies... are linked... with the sociological contrast between system and lifeworld, the former producing instrumental efficiency, domination and materialism, the latter producing ideals and, therefore, making possible equality, community, and morality" (2001: 158).

A similar tendency may also be discerned in Habermas' conception of the ideal speech situation. For Habermas, the ideal speech situation is necessarily implied, even when the inter-subjectivity of mutual understanding is deformed; this is because Habermas maintains that the ideal speech situation is a necessary condition for the comprehension of any utterance (Poster, 1981: 465). Thus the ideal speech situation figures in the Habermasian scheme as the natural state of inter-subjective communication in society, approximated in various degrees in actual practical discourses, and distortions and deviations from this ideal situation signify social oppression and class domination. Communication itself figures as immune to internal damage in the Habermasian scheme; discursive democratic procedures are subject to corruption only from without. This elaboration of good and evil as absolute, naturally given, and objectively identifiable categories locked in mutual conflict stems from Habermas' institutional or structural view of good and evil. Any pairing of democracy with evil is unthinkable in the Habermasian scheme. On the other hand, a view of good and evil as symbolic categories, allows us to do just this- the cultural and political semiotics of '*democracy* as social good' we may then recognize, has precisely been used by imperial powers such as the US to globalize *domination* and exploitation.

And finally, while Habermas works within the framework of the secularization thesis that presupposes a definite break between Enlightenment and Christian religion, the sources of Habermas' dualism between good and evil are ultimately Christian. It is in Christian symbolism that the *diabolic* is perfected as an

absolute externality or *Other*; to the critical theory of Habermas, and indeed much of sociology, is lost the category of the *demonic* as an *intimate* other[55].

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To be sure, Marx himself had a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between good and evil than has Habermas. In the Marxian scheme, exploitation and emancipation are set up dialectically. As the Marxist scholars Cohen and Roemer have recognized, exploitation is inevitable in the development of productive forces, and beneficial to the future welfare and realization of man (Andersen, 1990: 329, 336). The dualism between good and evil is thus breached by the dialectics they play out. Evil is both inevitable and necessary for the eventual realization of the good.

This follows from Marx's theological debt to Judeo-Christian apocalypticism and the notion of necessary suffering for the final redemption of humanity it entails (See Footnote 41). This fundamental debt also means that the Marxian system privileges good over evil; it is exploitation or evil that dialectically gives way for the realization of man or the good; it is the victory of good over evil that is destined in Marx's prediction of class revolution. In Adorno and Horkheimer, on the other hand, the dialectic of enlightenment yields precisely the other way around: it is enlightenment that leads to domination, the good that degenerates into evil. To sum up in a more lyrical mode: *Enlightenment was always already myth, and always potentially domination; the good is always already demonic, and always potentially evil.*

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[55] In the words of Mäyrä (1999: 31): "[Demons] give voice and mythical guise to such problematic and rejected sides of subjectivity that cannot be directly incorporated as a part of social Self. Therefore they are ambivalent- they are simultaneously hideous opponents and enemies of humanity, and something very intimate and close to the tormented individual, too."

Yet, at the level of the scientist, Marx erects a sharper dualism- that between truth and falsehood. Working within a positivist framework, Marx understands science to be both objective and emancipatory. From the total and objective view of society, the social scientist is able to discover the *truth* of class antagonism; whereas, to the social actors themselves, Marx attributes potential *false* consciousness. The combination of the objective and the emancipatory in Marx is thus actually that between truth and the good, and the sociologist him/herself is aligned unambiguously with the good.

Habermas' theory is much more circumspect, in that, as noted earlier, it distinguishes between the objectivist and normative approaches it seeks to combine. For Habermas, the sociologist can have only hermeneutic access to the lifeworld, and cannot prescribe the content of the norms to be agreed upon by social actors engaged in inter-subjective communication. Nonetheless, the sociologist can objectively evaluate the structural conditions of inequality and of the operation of power. The sociologist can thus perform the important role of clarifying the social contexts under which moral consensus is aimed at (Andersen, 1990: 335), and contribute critical reflections that are *enlightening* to the lifeworld.

In both the above cases then, is kept alive that arbitrary association between truth (objectivity), order (end of class struggle/ solidarity), and the good (socialism/ radical democracy)[56], that, as we have seen in the previous chapter, was already consolidated from the late medieval period onwards, in the context of an overarching Christian imaginary, and which had resulted in the repression and

[56] This point is meant to make evident my discomfiture with not just the enlightenment mode but also the reflexivity paradigm in sociology. Insofar as reflexivity as a methodological postulate involves a critical scrutiny of the subjective bases of the research process with the intention of ameliorating the excesses of an objectivist social science, it involves an attempt to discipline the self of the researcher. If sociology in its enlightenment mode sought clarity about the world, reflexivity seeks clarity of the self. It too aligns truth or knowledge with order or discipline. Thus both enlightenment and reflexivity are ocularcentric and based on a Christian symbolism: they both privilege light over darkness, good over evil, and order over disorder. What needs to be recognized, instead, is that all acts of knowledge production, reflexive or unreflexive, are potentially as problematic as they are enabling, and contribute to the very order and disorder they set out to study.

persecution of scores of witches, practitioners of magic, the insane, vagabonds, the poor, and so on.

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[III]

Nevertheless, the disciplinary practice of sociology has certainly not been limited to its enlightenment mode of functioning. Though reduced to a positivist and a structural-functionalist in the introductory textbooks and popular imagination of many contemporary sociologists, the sociology and social-anthropology of Emile Durkheim is in fact richly complex and variegated, and evades many of the features and failures of the enlightenment mode of sociology we have identified above.

For Durkheim, morality is not associated with reason in the one-dimensional manner it has been in the enlightenment mode of sociology; instead, morality has also an affective basis that requires "compassion, fervour, and a sense of the sanctity of moral obligations to induce a sense of commitment and duty" (Turner in Durkheim, 1992: xxvi). Such 'effervescence' which marked the social as a moral and religious force, he recognized, could propel people into acts of "superhuman heroism" as well as "bloody barbarism" (Durkheim, 1976: 212)[57]. As Jenks puts it: "... Durkheim's 'social' was hard, factual, contested and ripe with the propensities to both change and explode" (2003: 16). Thus Durkheim was perceptive of both the fragility of social order, and the ambivalence of social forces. Further, transgression was as important to Durkheim's conception of society as social solidarity; it was in the resistance evoked by acts of transgression that the facticity of the social order is revealed (Ramp, 2008: 211).

[57]While Durkheim allows that the effervescence stimulated by the social sacred may lead to acts of scapegoating violence, he does not consider the origins of the sacred itself to be violent, a position that distinguishes him from that of Rene Girard. For more on the implications of this position, see Graham, E. T. (2007).

In his understanding of humans too Durkheim eschewed one-dimensionality for the notion of 'homo-duplex'. For Durkheim, individuals are internally divided between their egoistic passions and sensual appetites on the one hand, and their capacity for sociability, morality and abstract thought on the other (Shilling & Mellor, 1998:196).

And finally, Durkheim was perceptive of the continuity between religion and science, the social roots of modern scientific categories in religious classification, and was conscious of the theological quality of his sociology. As Ramp has noted: "In Durkheim, one finds a conscious attempt at a scientific anthropology of religion; one which also purports to surpass religion- but one which turns on itself to reveal the collective, affective, even 'religious' dimensions of the scientific enterprise itself" (2008: 209). Indeed, Bellah has labeled Durkheim the 'high priest and theologian of the civil religion of the Third Republic' (Wallace, 1977: 288).

The above points sharply mark out Durkheim's work as departing from what we have characterized as sociology in its enlightenment mode[58]. However, this only makes a critical engagement with the work of Durkheim all the more important; so as to demonstrate the multiple and even subtle ways in which Christian symbolism informs the practices of the social sciences.

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Though Durkheim is widely caricatured today as a theorist of social integration and order, his writings reveal a deep awareness of the early twentieth century

[58] This is not to suggest that Durkheim's sociology is at absolute variance with the Enlightenment. In fact, Durkheim's marking out of a separate space for modernity from the pre-history of human society, as exemplified by the distinction between mechanical and organic forms of solidarity, is as mythical in its scope as the Enlightenment myth of a definite break from religion in modern society. His hopes that science would carry on the functions of erstwhile religion, and belief that the mythical aspect of religion is unnecessary in modern society (Swastos, Jr., 1983: 324), were equally informed by the self-assertion of Enlightenment in reason.

as a period of turbulence and transition. The particularities of his age were understood by Durkheim in terms of an ongoing and incomplete movement from the mechanical solidarity characteristic of pre-modern societies to the organic solidarity that should ideally order modern society. In the simple and religious 'primitive' societies order is intrinsically maintained in that normative standards are clear and collectively shared. Individuals are united into a social bond based on their resemblances, the individual and collective representations therefore coincide, and the resultant strength of the collective conscience is thus projected externally into the transcendental figure of God. This also means that crimes or transgressions by individuals offend not the victims of such acts, but the collective superiority of society itself- crimes in pre-modern societies are therefore punished in a repressive and expiatory fashion. By contrast, in modern societies, not only the division of labour and the attendant differentiation of society into distinct spheres of activity, but also the development of symbolic thought, had increasingly diffused the strength and vitality of the collective conscience. The contents of individual consciousness differ from one person to another, and society is no longer integrated under the moral authority of a transcendental figure (Jenks, 2003: 20-21). As Durkheim put it: "... the old gods are growing old or already dead, and others are not yet born" (1976: 428). Consequently, modern society for Durkheim was characterized by a pervasive and pathological condition he termed 'anomie'.

Anomie has been understood in the sociological scholarship that followed Durkheim in terms of a state of 'normlessness', the misinterpretations of Parsons and Merton being primarily responsible for this (Meštrović, 1985: 120)- anomie in the original sense of its usage in Durkheim is a richly theological concept. In his important work *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals*, Durkheim argued that the problem confronting modern Europe was the growing separation of the economy from the rest of society and the absence of any effective regulation of the marketplace: "The crisis facing Europe is the anarchy of the marketplace and the underdevelopment of moral regulation... this lack of moral regulation means that individuals are exposed to the negative or anomic consequences of the business cycle and their own unlimited desires and expectations" (Turner in Durkheim, 1992: xxxii). That which was anomic about such a condition, for Durkheim, was an incorrect arrangement of individual and collective

representations, an inversion of the sacred and the profane. Durkheim had come to believe that in secular modern society it was only an abstract concept of the 'human' which had the appropriate value of the sacred, as opposed to the concrete 'individual' who was still profane. The division of labour in the present capitalist system, on the other hand, is anomic in that it venerates the selfish egoism of the individual, and not the abstract and impersonal sacred construct of humanity. Anomie thus had the status of a secular equivalent of sin in Durkheim's scheme (See Meštrović, 1985).

It was thus that Durkheim held that the normative regulation of modern society, and the restoration of the proper relationship between the sacred and the profane, required the evolution of a universal religion of the 'cult of humanity'. Individualism in this form he distinguished from egoism, the former resulting from sympathy for all that is human, an altruistic impulse, a social and moral force. In nationalism and patriotism he identified the sources of fervor and effervescence that characterized the religions of the past. French nationalism, as he had come to understand it, prioritized human interests over national interests. Thus nationalism and nationalist patriotism was to be a stepping stone to internationalism and world patriotism, and finally, a universal religion of humanity (Wallace, 1977: 287, 288).

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It is my contention here that both Durkheim's understanding of the role of religion in society and his prescription or prophecy of a universal religion of humanity stem from a narrow conception of religion that is prototypically and distinctively Christian. We have noted early in this chapter that Durkheim understood the modern cult of humanity to be a secularized transmutation of Christian religion (See Footnote 43). It was only with the emergence of Christianity in the process of religious evolution that the intensity of collective sentiments attached to the human person took on a sacred character. In his words: "The originality of Christianity consisted precisely in a remarkable development of the individualistic spirit. Whereas the religion of the ancient city-states was quite entirely made of external practices, Christianity demonstrates in its

inner faith, in the personal conviction of the individual, the essential condition of piety... The very center of moral life was thus transported from the external to the internal, and the individual was thus elevated to be sovereign judge of his own conduct" (Durkheim in *Individualism and the Intellectuals*; cited in Seidman, 1985).

Likewise, we have noted that Durkheim's notion of anomie as the secular equivalent of sin required an inversion of the sacred and the profane. The sacred for him comprised of the impersonal, altruism, collective ideals and intellectual values, whereas the profane included the personal, the bodily, the egoistic, and the material (Meštrović, 1985: 127). It is thus that even with the case of the cult of humanity, it was not the *physical* human, but the *ideal* or value of humanity that is sacred. It was this distinction between the spiritual and the material that also informed Durkheim's notion of homo-duplex: it was the limitless desires and passions of the body that constituted that half of the individual which was opposed to society's conceptions (Meštrović, 1989: 269). Durkheim here was building on the extant Christian separation of spirit from matter, which had equated the latter with sin and Satan. In fact, Durkheim was well aware that the roots of his homo-duplex were not in Judaism or the Greek religions (Meštrović, 1985: 129), but in Christianity: "... with Christianity the world loses its confused primitive unity and becomes divided into two parts, two halves, to which very different values are ascribed" (Durkheim, *The Evolution of Educational Thought*; cited in Meštrović, 1985). These two halves are the sacred and the profane, the impersonal and the personal, the social and the asocial, and Durkheim mediated these dichotomies through a definite hierarchy just as had Christianity.

That Durkheim owes his conception of the identification of religion with society, and society with moral order, to Christian religion, is nowhere more sharply evident than in his dealing with magic. Magic, like religion in Durkheim's scheme, too relates to sacred and forbidden objects, things set apart (Cunningham, 1999: 44), yet it frequently involved the profaning of sacred objects. Moreover, Durkheim held that magic only served the selfish interests of concrete individuals constituted as profane in his scheme. Further, magic could not be a moral and integrating force in society, since it involved no notion of sin (Ibid). Magic was thus excluded from Durkheim's notion of

religion, and indeed, defined in opposition to the morally integrating force that was religion. It may be discerned that Durkheim here drew on a particularly late medieval and early modern Christian understanding of religion. As noted in the previous chapter, from the fifteenth centuries onwards, Christian authorities in Europe had come to associate the practice of magic and the black arts with devil-worship, and which later in the context of the Reformation and the renewed zeal to reform the faithful, assumed the distinct form of a programme meant to 'discipline' the populace by purging off what were considered non-Christian or pagan practices and beliefs. It is not surprising then that Durkheim adhered to a moral-ethical integrationist model of religion, which was to later become the commonplace view in the sociology of religion (See Swastos Jr., 1983).

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Just as artificial as the division between magic and religion was the separation between nature and society in Durkheim's sociology. In setting the boundaries of the domain of study for the new science of sociology, Durkheim conceived of the very emergence of the social as presupposing an ascendance from pre-social and instinctual human urges. And inasmuch as individuals continued to partake of this pre-social level of nature, this level of material or animal existence, they were deemed asocial. The category of the social in Durkheim was thus defined in terms of the *control* of asocial nature (Milbank, 2006: 52). This distinction of Durkheim, which would later be consolidated more fully into the distinction between nature and culture, thus had at its roots a Christian aversion for the bodily, the sensual, and the material.[59]

Parsons faithfully followed Durkheim's initial attempts at boundary-fencing, but took things to another level with his systems theory (See Parsons, 1991). He conceived the systems studied by the social and behavioural sciences to be embedded in

[59] Anthropology was to later use this distinction to identify a shared minimum of humanity in all peoples around the world, at the expense that the 'primitives' could now only have mythical, ritual or superstitious connections with nature, judged inferior to the rational and scientific knowledge of the modern West.

an environment consisting of other subsystems of the general system of action, 'open' and interpenetrating, though he had very little to say of the physical-organic environment itself, external to the individual actor. Nevertheless, the division between nature and culture is rendered even sharper in Parsons.

Crucial to Parsons' Systems theory is the separation of the individual biological and personality system, the social system, and the cultural system such that they could not be reduced to each other. The autonomy of the cultural system from social structure was an important development that was to be of significance in the future conceptualization of culture not just in sociology, but even anthropology. Thus in an essay (*The Concept of Culture and of Social System*) jointly authored with the anthropologist Kroeber, Parsons put forward that: "We suggest that it is useful to define the concept *culture* for most usages more narrowly than has generally been the case in the anthropological tradition, restricting its reference to transmitted and created content and patterns of values, ideas, and other symbolic-meaningful systems as factors in the shaping of human behavior and the artifacts produced through behavior. On the other hand, we suggest that the term *society*- or more generally, *social system*- be used to designate the specifically relational system of interaction among individuals and collectivities" (cited in Kuper, 1999: 69; emphasis original). Kuper has argued that this notion of culture as a symbolic system separate from the biological and social systems was significant to the line of thinking that culminated in later anthropology as that of David Schneider, who argued that "'nature' and the 'facts of life' are always a special case of the cultural definition of things; they have no independent existence apart from how they are defined by the culture"[60] (cited in Kuper, 1999: 72). Parsons' authoritative attempt at redefining the scope of the category of culture as including only the realm of ideas, values and

[60] It is important here that I mark out my strong opposition to a particular emphasis in this line of sociological and anthropological thought. The notion that one can relate to the social and physical environment only through the symbolic mediation afforded by culture is ocular-centric, and at its roots, derived from Christian conceptions. Culture, in this line of thinking, supplies the meaning that orders chaotic empirical reality, just as the meaningful cosmos was created by the Christian God out of chaos. At the level of material existence, the individual or social body cannot meaningfully relate to the world outside- only abstract symbols, mental images, ideational values can provide for the same, just as in Christian doctrine, it is only the spirit that can be united with its Creator in heaven. As a source of meaning and morality then, culture functions as per the Christian metaphor, as a 'light unto darkness'. This critique is further extended in the Conclusion of this study.

symbols thus successfully cocooned culture from material and physical nature. Once again, nature was drastically separated from culture, along the lines of the Christian division between spirit and matter[61].

Since his early work *The Structure of Social Action* Parsons was also interested in offering a solution to the Hobbesian problem of order. In particular, Parsons sought to explain the emergence and maintenance of social integration neither in utilitarian terms of rational calculation by individuals, nor based on the fear of punishment for violations of societal norms (Andersen, 1990: 323). In doing so, Parsons identified the source of human moral energizing as external to the individual: it is only the internalization of the values generated by the cultural system that allows for shared values to be held by disparate individuals in society, thus making social order possible. What needs to be recognized here is that Parsons' notion of culture as supplying the values essential for social integration, in fact involves an attempt to police the boundaries between the natural and the cultural by raising the specter of the problem of social order.

It is my submission regarding the nature-culture divide that 'culture' had to be invented by the social sciences as a new source of meaning and morality for humans in modern society, for nature had already been rendered devoid of magical, mythical, and mystical meaning. This impotence of nature in the schemes of sociologists, it may be remembered, derives just as much from scientific notions of a mechanical universe, as it does from a late medieval/ early modern Christian worldview. And while sociologists may be content with having solved the problem of meaning and morality in modernity by means of the analytic category of culture, the separation between nature and culture remains no less artificial due to such a gain.

[61] It is not simply a coincidence to note that, as we had pointed to in the case of Durkheim, Parsons too thought of the secularization, religious pluralism and individualism of modernity as involving an extension of the Christianization of society- the post-Reformation period for Parsons is a Christian one. For more on this, see Seidman (1985).

CONCLUSION

Aargh!
How restless I am!
Driven weary by endless frustration.
This game I had devised
Has been played till now on the terms of my opponent;
I have been caught up too long in wrenching
The moves of my imagined combatant.
The time is apt now to unleash
The beast
And wreak havoc over the game-board.
To trample all over it,
And Yea! To verily step beyond it!

The contingency of the modern self and the historical constructedness of its singularity have been recognized for quite some time now in the academic circles. Yet sociology in its post-humanist mode has rarely seemed comfortable relinquishing the measured tone of the serious scientist; even the postmodernists do not seem any less the well-meaning scholars the modernists had understood and projected themselves to be. Academic writing continues to be an exercise in the *clarification* of thought, with stylistic demands made of cohesion and coherence. Woefully, I too have thus far submitted to a style that enforces constraint and discipline in the elaboration of arguments.

This demand of rigor and discipline from the scholar only follows on account that theory itself is predominantly *seen* as involving the *conceptual* ordering of chaotic *material* reality. For Parsons, the empirical world is full of inconsistencies, discrepancies and ambiguities that had to be meaningfully interpreted and smoothed over to fit the logical structure of theory (Kwang-Ki Kim, 2003: 32). Scientific claims to authoritative knowledge thus involve a privileging of mind over matter, and the

maintenance of an artificial difference or distance from the field of experience they can then objectify.

The above partakes of the ocular-centrism that is held to be characteristic of Western culture and scholarship. Drawing from a Christian dualism, the *body* is here seen as the site of subjectivity, passion and unreason, whereas to the *gaze* of the scientist him/herself is attributed objectivity, privileged perspective, or reflexivity, given its association with the 'God's eye-view', the 'mind's eye', and so on. Likewise, the methodological insistence on *clarity* over *obscurity*, the supposed ordering of messy empirical reality involved in theorization, is metaphoric of the Christian notion of truth or knowledge as the triumph of light over darkness.

Yet such prescriptive insistence on clarity is akin to denying one's own shadow. Theory, representation, symbols can confound as much as they clarify. Symbols are associated with their referents only arbitrarily. Words are always in a difficult relationship with that which they name. Theory illuminates a particular set of data and interpretations, but can do so only by obscuring other equally valid sets of data and interpretations; frequently obscured by rigorous methodological prescriptions are also the rhetoric, politics and power struggles that are constitutive of all knowledge production.

The lesson to be learnt here is not so much that obscurity is inevitable in knowledge production, but to recognize that obscurity is as much a condition of knowledge as is vision or clarity. Sorel had thus long ago criticized bourgeois science for having confused clarity of exposition with truth. He held that in every complex body of knowledge there is a clear and an obscure region, and it was the obscure region which was more important for Sorel (2004: 133-134). My own methodological counter to the ocular-centrism of social science would be that seeing darkly, dimly, obscurely allows the reality of existence to impose itself on the senses in ways that the symbolic mediation of thought prohibits/ inhibits. With the knowing subject rescued from the discipline or methodological rigor of the disembodied eye, pride, rage, empathy, sensitivity, wonder, fear, irony and doubt may all now be actively enlisted in the pursuit of knowledge. I thus propose writing as the blackening of thought, as a sacrilegious exercise that violates the moral/disciplinary constraints of the academe to pursue knowledge in the depth of

darkness; Writing as a breach in the singularity of the self, as the summoning of beasts repressed within and without; Writing as demonically inspired...

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"Why do you raise your sword to the waves, lad,
And swing at it wildly so?"
Asked the wise old woman,
"The ocean is too vast, too fierce, to be tamed by your lowly blade."

"I strike not to subdue, let alone kill"
Answered the young man,
"The troubles in my life are but like these unceasing waves-
Sometimes a raging storm, often times a mere ripple-
They drench my soul in sorrow,
Wash away the frail castles I build in the sand,
And nourish the spring that is my resolve, coursing through my veins.
And yet never,
Never ever shall I drop my guard and meekly submit to the flow of life.
I strike not out of fear of drowning and dying;
I swing away with the full zest of my life!"

A fundamental irony of the West and the modern age has been that it has sought *mastery* over nature and purposive human action and social organization while being guided for the larger part by what would only merit the Nietzschean characterization of *slave* morality. The more powerful, uncanny, and frightening earthly, human and social forces have been diabolized, criminalized, and pathologized. Both Christianity and the Enlightenment promoted the notion of a *fall*en individual held captive by the base instincts and irrationality of nature and of the body, who had to be saved or liberated, albeit through a disciplining of these passions. The mastery of the modern West has been of this fallen, self-depreciative conception of the human seeking to tame the very forces that intimidate it. Those individuals and groups in thrall of their

passions, reveling in pride and the lust for life, and seeking knowledge, power and release in these- the practitioners of *maleficium* and witchcraft, the insane, the criminally and sexually deviant; those disruptive of the docile bodies and rational minds idealized by the modern West, have thus been at the receiving end of religious and penal codes, and the academic/disciplinary constitution of subjectivities. And that which is most telling about such repression has been the ascription of these aspects to the *externalized* figure of an absolute Other.

The case of Nazism is exemplary for the character-study of extreme evil as absolute Other in the Western psyche. The exaltation of Hitler as a satanic figure is properly interpreted in the original Judaic sense of Satan (Azazel) as scapegoat: Hitler is the 'projection' of gratuitous evil only in the psychoanalytic sense of the term, as involving the projection of one's own difficult emotions onto others. It was the diabolization of Hitler and the Nazis that allowed the European collective conscience to rest in peace, and that evaded the frightening prospect of confronting the wider culpability and guilt of the West itself in the events and outcomes of the said case.

Such has been the hold of Christian morality over the consciousness and conscience of the modern West that it has today become counter-intuitive to state the most immediate lesson of life and death that good and evil, order and disorder are not so much figures of an absolute other in relation to each other, but *intimate others*. Hannah Arendt has rightly termed the Nazi violence to be 'banal' evil, given the fact that most of the perpetrators of such violence were but ordinary everyday individuals (See Arendt, 1963), ambiguous in relation to the mutually exclusive categories of good and evil, and the meta-narratives of order and disorder. That which sustains this fallacy is also the fundamental Christian (but also Platonic) notion of the orderliness of all God's creation. The Christian God's original act of creation involved the establishment of order over a primordial and undifferentiated state of *chaos*, thus marking the universe as *cosmos*. It is this notion of an ordered totality that underlies the conception of nature as regular and uniform, and of moral order as the natural state of society. Sociologists have thus betrayed scant concern in reducing the range of human action into the two simplistic

models of conformity and deviance, and in judging disorder in social organization and communication to be aberrant, transient or temporary, and pathological.

The fundamental ontological recovery now required of sociology is the destruction of universe as cosmos. Chaos has to be released from the primordial state to which Christians had imagined it confined, and let loose over the pristine fields of infantile human cowardice. Sociologists may have come to realize the contingency and contestability of all social facts and norms, but have been hesitant to face up to its consequence that order is never the final state of any body or system, and that disorder is only as natural as social order. Meek submission to the cycles of nature or to the order of society has rarely been illuminative of the vital aspects of human behavior. Nature or society is never the harmonious totality that can accommodate, synthesize or eliminate contradictions. The complexity of systems is not premised on some higher sense of order that scientists are but waiting to discover, rather complexity partakes of the continual dissolution of order and harmony in the evolution of society and the universe.

I thus do not seek to resolve the contradictions between good and evil, order and disorder, and between other common dualisms including mind and matter, reason and unreason, truth and falsehood, or even to recognize these dichotomies as essentially contradictorily set up. Mine is not the battlefield where enemies are decimated and damned for ever; mine is more the site of endless confrontation and destruction, and it is the burden of the sociologist to equally discern in this site movement, evolution and creativity. Mine is not the site of the harmonious or authoritarian One, which is either pure illusion or pure truth. Mine is instead the manifest and impure site of the Two or Many, that of the eternal present and abominable reality, undifferentiated singularity and impossible universality, where even slain enemies are not eliminated, but rot and putrefy as much as they nourish the earth.

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Upon watching a procession of pilgrims, marching silent but resolute
The little boy asked the last among them, separated from her group by some distance:
"Why do you trail behind, traveler?
Do you not yearn to reach your shrine at the earliest?"
"Young one," replied she,
"I move amidst pilgrims, but am not one amongst them.
The pilgrim in moving towards a destination seeks but a home for his soul;
Whereas I have lost my soul in no-place, and wander about in search of no-thing.
My pilgrimage is to a place I cannot reach
Just by covering distance, without first scaling depth."

The notion of its ontological universe as cosmos also *grounds* the possibility and positivity of sociological discourse. The ideological and conceptual privileging of good over evil, order over disorder, has self-assured sociologists of the positivity of their practice, and the goodness of the values they uphold as ideals for society. Framed as sociological observation is on disembodied and detached vision, sociologists have largely remained innocent of the awareness of being implicated in the very schemes of disorder and pathology they seek to study/remedy, and of themselves being contributive to the order and disorder of the world.

The Western academia, however, has in the recent years witnessed a critique of *foundation*alism in discourse. Social constellations are no longer interpreted as rigid structures- stable and manipulable- but as fluid networks, complex, changing and unpredictable. Yet I do not find such lack of grounding in the description of social facts to be in any serious sense disruptive of the modernist discourse. In fact, the fear of being ungrounded, that which has been named 'risk' in sociological literature, only promotes another form of disembodied experience for the modern self. The critique of foundationalism thus runs the real possibility of contributing to a greater disembedding, connected with sociological narratives of globalization and risk. What has to be recognized is that sociological theories of uprooting are not simply revealing of reality, but frequently reinforce the disembedding of the modern self from its body, locale and the earth. It is this notion of the disembedded and disembodied universal modern self alone that allows sociologists to commit themselves to the pursuit of equality, justice and

freedom in the *abstract*, while contributing to the regime of their opposites in *concrete* contexts.

I suggest instead the need to dwell on the *undergrounded*ness of discourse, or in Foucauldian terms, the archaeology of knowledge, on the processes buried and operative from below the level of consciousness that demarcate boundaries and thus permit and constrain discourse at the conscious level. Sociology could be a homocentric discourse centered about a modern conception of the rational and autonomous self only by damning into subterranean ignominy the instinctual and collective forces disruptive of its own limited conception of that which is human and social- the underground of its discourse is populated by that which has been designated the inhuman, the savage, the deviant, the unnatural, the pathological, the fantastical, the absolute inimical Other. The methodological prescriptions sociologists so prize are the same they use to police the boundaries of this underground. The mediocrity of the sociologist is only a symptom of his/her academic training and disciplining that inhibits the enunciation of the demonic aspects of the scientist's self. This has meant that demonic voices from the underground have only been articulated from within the marginal spaces of the totalizing modernist discourse, and that too often in a comical idiom, at the level of literary and cinematic *fiction* or fantasy, but rarely at the level of scientific *truth*. I, however, do not seek an anti-discourse articulated from within the margins of discourse itself. Rather my sociology partakes of the impossibility of the grounding of discourse in the universal, the total, the rational, the truthful, and the good alone.

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Finally, our above attempt at conceptual restitution would have to assault that obstinate division between nature and culture in the social sciences which has been universalized to all socio-historical contexts, and which too has at its genealogical roots a Christian privileging of mind over matter, and order over disorder. One would have expected the inauguration of post-humanism to have seen the return of nature in sociological discourse, and not merely as the ecological habitat humans share with other living beings. Sadly, this has not been the case. The persistence of the nature-culture

divide rigidly defines humans in opposition to the animal and monstrous aspects of their selves. Culture as the ideational sphere of values Parsons had defined it to be is almost a theological concept explanative of the disciplining of the modern subject from the material passions and irrational drives deemed disruptive of social order. Moreover, the category of culture has today almost swallowed up nature: all meaningful human experience is held to be that which has been symbolically or semiotically mediated by society, history and culture. This is but the sociological version of the more instrumental-technological approach adopted by scientists to humanize and domesticate the fearsome and potent natural, and involves a re-enactment of humanism or anthropocentrism. Such a view presupposes nature as mere neutral resource and inanimate matter- a belief that has long driven humans to unchecked ecological destruction.

Instead, I insist on re-defining the human as also natural, in the sense that nature is also inhuman. Nature was never the convenient and resourceful abode built for humans that Christians believed it to be. This aspect of nature that is destructive of harmony and order, while simultaneously creative or evolutionary in consequence, I consider to be crucial in hammering at the cracks of the modern conception of the rational subject disciplined off its instinctual, bodily, and earthly aspects. The category of the human would now have to be re-imagined as capable of being driven by or riding over *forces of nature*, and in terms of the inhumanity it shares with wider nature. Indeed, I submit this work of mine to be provoked by just such forces!

O Night,
Under moonshine I stare in dreamful wake
At the lithe undulations of darkness let loose from your side
As you slither out naked from the vestments of morn.
Just how your unadorned, stark, strange, frightening beauty
Swells voluptuous over the expanse of infinitude,
Courting the lust of mirthful Satan, enchanting even the dead!

Grant that I may hurl my soul
To the darkest corner of the deepest gorge that is thy womb;
Knowing well that I am fated to shine
As the brightest star you ever held in rapture.

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Movies that were a source of inspiration, or were useful otherwise:-

Alejandro Jodorowsky: *El Topo* (1970); *The Holy Mountain* (1973); *Santa Sangre* (1989).

Andrei Tarkovsky: *Andrei Rublev* (1966).

Catherine Breillat: *Barbe Bleue* (2009).

David Cronenberg: *Videodrome* (1983).

Guiliano Montaldo: *Giordano Bruno* (1973).

Ingmar Bergman: *The Seventh Seal* (1957).

Luis Buñuel: *Viridiana* (1961); *Simon del Desierto* (1965).

Maurice Pialat: *Sous le Soleil de Satan* (1987).