Time, World, and Secularism

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Secularism is often treated as a sort of absence. It's what's left if religion fades. It's the exclusion of religion from the public sphere. But then it is seen as somehow in itself neutral. This is misleading. We need to see secularism as a presence. It is something, and therefore not entirely neutral, and in need of elaboration and understanding. It shapes not only religion but also culture more broadly. Whether we see it as an ideology, as a worldview, as a stance toward religion, as a constitutional approach, or as simply an aspect of some other project—of science or a philosophical system—secularism is something we need to think through, rather than merely the absence of religion. By the same token, post-secularism can hardly mean "after secularism," though it might signal an end to taking it for granted that a clear, stable, and consistent demarcation has been established between secular and religious dimensions of life.

Secularism, moreover, is only one of a cluster of related terms. Reference to the secular, secularity, secularism, and secularization can in confusing ways mean different things. There is no simple way to standardize usage now, no possibility of policing the association of each term with only one concept. But the fact that the different terms have a common linguistic root shouldn't obscure the fact that they operate in different conceptual frameworks with distinct histories. Although they sometimes inform one another, we should try to keep distinct such usages as reference to temporal existence,

to worldliness, to constitutions distinguishing religion from politics, or to a possible decline in religion.

It is helpful to unpack some of the range of references. These have a longer and more complex history than is implied by a secularization narrative starting in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries: secularism is not simply a creature of treaties to end religious wars, or the rise of science, or the Enlightenment. It is informed by a long history of engagements with the temporal world and purposes that imply no transcendence of immanent conditions. We need to understand this history in order to clarify contemporary discussions of religion and public life. Moreover, current discussions too often work within a sharp binary of secularism versus religion, and this too is problematic. Not least, such an approach obscures the important ways in which religious people engage this-worldly, temporal life; the important senses in which religion is established as a category not so much from within as from "secular" perspectives such as that of the state; and the ways in which there may be a secular orientation to the sacred or transcendent.

"Secularization" and Other Misleading Terminology

Secularism is clearly a contemporary public issue in its own right. France proclaims secularism, or *laïcité*, not simply as a policy choice but as part of its national identity. It is, however, a "Catholaïcité" shaped like French identity not just by generally Christian history but also by Catholic culture, its struggle against and ascendancy over Protestantism, and then the challenge brought by revolutionary and republican assertions of the primacy of citizenship over devotion. There remains a cross atop the Pantheon, a sign not only of its history as a church before it became a monument to the heroes of the secular state but also of the compromises between religion and *laïcité* that shape France today. These are informed by a specific history of anticlericalism, itself shaped not just by a long history of priestly involvement in politics, education, and other dimensions of social life but also by a strong reactionary effort to intensify that involvement during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Thus secularism shapes the French response to Islamic immigrants, but hardly as a neutral category unrelated to its own religious history.

A version of French *laïcité* was incorporated into the design of Attaturk's Turkey and, not surprisingly, was also changed by the context. It was

packaged into Attaturkism as an essential sign of modernity and as a demarcation not only from domestic Islamist politics but also from the Arab and Persian countries in which Islam has played a greater public role—at least until recently. A different model of secularism is a central part of the constitutional and policy formation in which India deals with religious diversity. In this case, secularism is identified not with distance from religion but with equity toward religions, including equitable state subsidies for Hindus, Muslims, and others. Still another secularism is embodied in the U.S. Constitution, which in prohibiting laws establishing churches has protected religious difference and helped to create a sort of marketplace of religions in which faith and active participation flourish. The reformulation of constitutional doctrine as separation of church and state later created its own controversies. And a broader secularism is attacked by parts of the American religious right as an element of the notorious "secular humanism." In each of these contexts, secularism takes on its own meanings, values, and associations; it is not simply a neutral antidote to religious conflicts.

Indeed, over a longer time frame, much of the most important thinking about the secular has been religious thinking about the relationship among God, the larger cosmos, and the world as we engage it in mortal and material life. Having an idea of the secular doesn't presume a secularist stance toward it. The Catholic Church, for example, distinguishes priests with secular vocations from those in monasteries or other institutions devoted wholly to contemplation and worship of God. A secular vocation, it should be clear, is not a vocation to promote secularism. It involves, rather, a calling to ministry in this world, to help people deal with temporal existence and maintain a religious orientation to their lives in this secular world.

The idea of secularization, by contrast, is a suggestion that there is a trend. It is a trend that has been expected at least since early modernity and given quasi-scientific status in sociological studies advancing a secularization hypothesis. This is often simply the prediction of a long-term, continuous decline in religious practice and diminution in the number of believers. This seems not to have occurred, save in Western Europe. A less tendentious version is embedded in the idea of a differentiation of value spheres. Religion may continue to exist, but in modernity it ceases to integrate economic, political, and other dimensions of life; it is one semiautonomous realm, perhaps protected from the others but also limited in its influence. In classic formulations such as Max Weber's notion of the disenchantment

of the world, "secularization" refers also to the growing capacity of secular explanations and secular institutions. There is reality to secularization in this second sense, though not in simplistic expectations of a, pardon the pun, secular decline in religion.[1]

There has been an enormous expansion in the construction of institutions for worldly purposes. These are often demarcated from spiritual engagements, sometimes with restrictions on explicit religious practices. They not only pursue goals other than promoting religion; they operate outside the control of specifically religious actors. Much of social life is organized by systems or "steering mechanisms" that are held to operate independently of religious belief, ritual practice, or divine guidance. Markets are a preeminent example. Participants may have religious motivations; they may pray for success; they may form alliances with coreligionists. But despite this, economists, financiers, investors, and traders understand markets mainly as products of buying and selling. It may take a certain amount of faith to believe in all the new financial instruments they create, but this is not in any strict sense religious faith. For most, it is not faith in divine intervention but rather faith in the honesty and competence of human actors, the accuracy of information, the wisdom of one's own investment decisions, and the efficacy of the legal and technological systems underpinning market exchange. In short, it is a secular faith. Or, put another way, people understand what markets are by means of a social imaginary in which the relevant explanations of their operations are all this-worldly.

Not only markets but also a variety of other institutions have been created to organize and advance projects in this world. Schools, welfare agencies, armies, hospitals, and water purification systems all operate within the terms of a secular imaginary. Of course, some people's actions may be shaped by religious motives, and religious bodies may organize such institutions in ways that serve their own purposes. But even for those who orient their lives in large part to religious or spiritual purposes, activities in relation to such institutions are widely structured by a secular imaginary. Cause-and-effect relationships are understood in this-worldly terms as matters of nature, technology, human intention, or even mere accident. This is part of what Charles Taylor means by describing modernity as a "secular age."[2] It is an age in which lots of people, including religious people, make sense of lots of things entirely or mainly in terms of this-worldly cause and effect. In Taylor's phrase, they think within "the immanent frame." They

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see nonmetaphysical, nontranscendent knowledge as sufficient for grasping a world that works entirely of itself. One of the themes of Taylor's *A Secular Age* is working out how people come to see this immanent frame as the normal, natural, tacit context for much or all of their action, and how this changes both religious belief and religious engagement in the world.

A secular imaginary has become more prominent, and a variety of institutions exists to do things in this world. In this sense, one might say that secularization has been real. But discussions of secularization generally are not limited to this sense; they present modernity as necessarily involving a progressive disappearance of religion. Particularly outside Europe, this simply hasn't happened, and there is almost no evidence of it happening. Even in Europe, the story is more complex. Certainly it is not simply a linear pattern revealing continuous religious decline. On the contrary, the later nineteenth century saw a renewal in popular devotions such as pilgrimage and veneration of Mary and the Sacred Heart even while it also saw more explicit unbelief. Widespread withdrawal from religious practice dates especially from the second half of the twentieth century—more or less the era of the welfare state. The differentiation of value spheres—religious, political, economic—that Max Weber described as basic to modernity may be the more basic pattern, bringing a compartmentalization of religion. But we should be clear that this pattern was ideological, not simply a natural evolution. Moreover, differentiation is not disappearance. Declaring oneself an unbeliever is different from accepting an order of society in which religion matters prominently in some affairs more than in others, on some days of the week more than on others.

Many accounts of secularization take the form of what Taylor has called "subtraction stories." That is, they suggest that religion used to fill a lot of space and that religion has been removed from some of the space, leaving everything else untouched. This is another sense of seeing the secular as the absence of religion rather than something, a presence, needing analysis. For the importance of secular institutions has grown through historical transformations, not simply through a process of subtraction. Secular institutions have facilitated some purposes and impeded others. They have taken forms that empowered some people more than others.

Many secularization narratives present religion as simply an illusory solution to problems that could in modernity be met by more realistic solutions. But even without taking a position on the truth of any particular

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religion, one can recognize that religious practice takes many forms other than advancing propositions that may be true or false. From marriages to mourning, from solidifying local communities to welcoming newcomers in large cities, from administering charities to sanctifying wars that made charities more necessary, religion involves a range of actions and institutions. Changes in religion, including reductions in religious belief or organized religious participation, cannot accordingly be mere subtractions. They are parts of more complex transformations.

In order to get a better picture of this process, it is helpful to reduce the extent to which discussions of the secular, secularism, and secularization start with either the Peace of Westphalia or the Enlightenment.

"The Secular" through Time

The root notion of the secular is a contrast not to religion but to eternity. It is derived from *saeculum*, a unit of time important to Etruscans and adapted by the Romans after them. For example, the lives of children born in the first year of a city's existence were held to constitute its first *saeculum*. The succession of *saecula* was marked with ritual. While some ancient texts held that this should be celebrated every 30 years, making the *saeculum* roughly equivalent to the notion of generation, more said every 100 or 110 years, reflecting the longest normal duration for a human life. The latter usage dominated as calendars were standardized, and the *saeculum* became roughly a century.

It is worth noting that already in this ancient usage there is reference both to the natural conditions of life and to the civil institution of ritual and a calendar. Each of these dimensions informed the contrast drawn by early Christian thinkers between earthly existence and eternal life with God. For many, it should be recalled, this was something that would come not simply after death but with the return of Christ after a thousand years, a millennium, or ten *saecula*. Here too an older idea was adapted. The Etruscans thought ten *saecula* to be the life span allotted to their city. Romans celebrated the thousandth anniversary of the founding of Rome with great ritual in 248. This marked the beginning of a *saeculum novum*, though Rome's situation in this new era quickly became troubled. Christians started a new calendar, of course, marking years before and after the birth of Christ and investing metaphysical hopes (and fears) in the millennium expected in the year 1000. Here the succession of *saecula* counted the time until Christ's

return and the end of history. In a very important sense, this was not what later came to be called "secular time." It was temporary, a time of waiting, not simply years stretching infinitely into the future.

Likewise, when Saint Augustine offered his famous and influential distinction separating the City of God from the City of Man, he did not mean to banish religion from "secular" affairs. On the contrary, his image of the City of God is the Church, religious people living in secular reality, and the contrast is to those who live in the same world but without the guidance of Christianity. Augustine wrote shortly after the sack of Rome in 410, an event that (not unlike the attacks of September 11, 2001) underscored the vulnerability of even a strong state. Some argued that Christianity helped bring on the attacks. Augustine not only insisted that Christian suppression of pagan religion was not to blame; he argued that Christian faith was all the more important amid worldly instability. He urged readers to look inward to find God, emphasizing the importance of this connection to the eternal for their ability to cope with the travails of the temporal world. They—even a Christian emperor—needed to resist the temptation to focus on material gains or worldly pleasures. One reason the pagans were often corrupt is that they lacked the advantage of Christianity. So Augustine distinguishes a spiritual orientation from an orientation to worldly things.

Augustine criticizes pagan religion for its expectation that gods can be mobilized to protect or advance the worldly projects of their mortal followers. Christians, he says, look to God for a connection to what lies beyond such "secular" affairs. God shapes human affairs according to a plan, but this includes human suffering, tests that challenge and deepen faith, and demands for sacrifice. Knowing this helps Christians escape from the tendency to desire worldly rather than spiritual gains. We need, says Augustine, to put this world in the perspective of a higher good.[3]

Augustine's discussion, along with others of the early Christian era, is informed by fear of an entanglement in worldly, sensual affairs. This is a theme dating back at least to Plato, a reflection of the prominence of ascetic and hermetic traditions in early Christianity and an anticipation of the prominence of monastic life in the Middle Ages. Caught up in the material world, we lose sight of the ideal and run the risk of corruption. This is an anxiety that comes to inform ideas of the secular. It is not merely the world of human temporality in which we all must live until the Second Coming. It is the world of temptation and illusion.

The contrast of sensuous and corrupt to ideal and pure is mapped onto that of secular to eternal. For one thread of the ensuing conceptual history, the secular is associated more with the fallen than simply with the created. Asceticism, retreat from worldly engagements, and monastic disciplines are all attempts to minimize the pull of worldly ends and maximize focus on ultimate ends. In this context, Christianity has long had special issues with sex and bodily pleasures. These run from early Christian debates about marriage and celibacy, reflected in Paul's instructions to the Christians of Corinth, through the tradition of priestly celibacy, to nineteenth-century utopian communities like the Shakers. The issue remains powerful in the current context, in which the fault lines of politically contested debates over religion and the secular turn impressively often on issues of sexuality and of bodies: abortion, homosexuality, sex education, and promiscuity have all been presented as reflections of a corrupt secular society in need of religious improvement.

Yet this very idea of subjecting the secular world to religious action is different from simply keeping it at a distance. The two notions have subsisted side-by-side through Church history. Both parish ministry and monastic discipline have been important. There are "religious" priests in orders that call for specific liturgical practices. There are "secular" priests who have not taken vows specific to any of these orders and who live "in the world." But religious priests may also serve parishes or go out into the world as missionaries. This isn't the place to try to untangle a complex and sometimes contested distinction, but we should note that its meaning has shifted with contexts and over time. For example, in some colonial settings, indigenous priests were more likely secular and resented what they saw as preferential treatment for priests in religious orders who were more likely to be European. More generally, secular priests were important to a growing sense of the positive value of engagement with the world. Overlapping the era of the Reformation, this period included figures like Bartholomew Holzhauser whose communitarian—perhaps even communist—Apostolic Union of Secular Priests formed in the aftermath of the Thirty Years War for the purpose of leading a renewal of religious life among laypeople.

This development coincided with what Taylor has called a new value on "ordinary happiness." A variety of this-worldly virtue received new levels of praise; new moral value was attached, for example, to family life.[4] Priests were called to minister to the affairs and moral conditions of this world, not only to the connections of people to the transcendent. In no sense uniquely

Catholic, this trend runs from the seventeenth century through missionary work that emphasized hospitals and schools as much as conversion and salvation to the recent dramatic expansion in the role of churches—not least large Evangelical churches—as service-delivery institutions. That is, they may espouse biblically literalist, or fundamentalist, or enthusiastically celebrationist theologies and religious practices, but they are also organized, in very large part, to deliver secular services in the world: marriage counseling, psychotherapy, job placement, education, help for immigrants. They are, in that sense, secular-while-religious. All the more so are those religious mobilizations that seek not just to serve people in their worldly lives but also to change the world itself, not least through politics.[5]

There is also a long and overlapping history around humanism and indeed humanitarianism. This appears in theological debates over the significance of the humanity of Christ, in late medieval and early Modern humanism, and in questions about the spiritual status of New World peoples. The Valladolid controversy, for example, famously pitted Bartolomé de Las Casas against Juan Gines de Sepùlveda and made clear that answers to religious questions had secular consequences: "Do the natives have souls?" "Should we think about them as needing to be saved?" "Are they somehow like animals and thus to be treated as mere labor?" Versions of these debates were intertwined with missionary activity throughout the era of European colonialism. They also influenced the idea of humanitarianism as a kind of value and a virtue linked to progress in this world. Informed by the idea of imitating Christ, by the nineteenth century, to be a good humanitarian was to be somebody who helps humanity in general and advances progress in society. This was an ultimately secular project, though it might have religious motivation for many participants. And this remains important in humanitarian action today: emergency relief in situations of natural disaster or war and refugee displacement is an important project for religious people and organizations (as well as others), but it is organized very much in terms of ministering to the needs of people in the secular world.

Some of the same ideas can inform ethics—and spiritual engagements—that do not privilege the human. Seeing environmentalism as stewardship of God's creation is a religiously organized engagement with (quite literally) the world. The Deep Ecology movement even introduces new metaphysical ideas, new notions of immanence. Others approach environmental issues with equal dedication but entirely within the immanent frame.

Religion, Politics, and the State

Throughout the Christian era, a key question was how the Church—and, after successive splits, the various churches—would relate to states and politics. It's an issue that goes back to the first century of the Christian Era. It forms the context for *The Book of Revelations*, written in the aftermath of the Jewish Wars. It shapes centuries of struggle over papal and monarchical power and, ultimately, issues with Marsilius of Padua in the doctrine of the Two Swords. Of course, this notion of distinct powers in different spheres was honored more in doctrine than ever in reality. Which is to say that the pope and the monarchs of Europe, who represented a kind of secular counterpart to church power, didn't live up to the notion of separate-but-equal for very long.

The Reformation brought an intensification of religion's relationship to politics. This produced considerable violence within states as religious minorities were persecuted, sometimes on a large scale as in France's St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572. It also shaped 150 years of interstate war. Of course, the "religious wars" that wracked Europe through the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries were also wars of state building. In other words, they expanded secular power even when they were fought in the name of religion. Indeed, the conclusion of these wars in the 1648 Peace of Westphalia is often cited as the beginning of a secular state system in Europe. It is claimed as the beginning of modern international relations, understood as a matter of secular relations among sovereign states.

This is profoundly misleading. The Peace of Westphalia did not make states secular. It established the principle of *cuius regio eius religio*—who rules, his religion.[6] What followed was a mixture of migration, forced conversion, and legal sanctions against religious minorities. European states after the Peace of Westphalia were primarily confessional states with established churches. Members of some minorities moved to European colonies abroad, including English settlers who fled religious persecution only to set up state churches of their own in American colonies they dominated. Colonial-era governments (which often had established churches) further developed the category of religion—that is, reference to a set of bodies of partially analogous cultural practice and belief—in order to take account of the religions of the people they governed.[7]

There is much more to this story, of course, including different formations and transformations of nationalism. Sometimes closely related to

religion, this was increasingly a secular narrative establishing the nation as the always already identified and proper people of a state and thereby a secular basis for legitimacy. It became harder for monarchs to claim divine right and more important for them to claim to serve the interests of the people. Where the power of absolutist states was closely tied up with religious claims to authority (and the daily domination of religious authorities)—as in France—revolution took up the mantle of secularism.

The European path to relatively strong secularism—and, in some countries, eventually irreligion—was not a direct one from the Peace of Westphalia. It was, rather, shaped by struggles against the enforced religious conformity that followed the 1648 treaties. The alignment of church with state after the Reformation produced relative peace in the early eighteenth century followed by growing conflicts over new philosophical and scientific ideas and challenges to the intellectual as well as sometimes the temporal authority of churches.

Though the Enlightenment came to be identified with secularism and free thought, it was shaped in significant ways by intellectual innovations among religious thinkers.[8] The Scottish moralists included some secularists like Hume, but more broadly the Scottish Enlightenment was shaped by a call for moderate religion, rejecting the "enthusiasm" of seventeenth-century Puritans and other militants not only because it brought political turmoil but also because it was rooted in appeal to personal conviction and experience outside the realm of intersubjective validation. Many participants called for grounding religious discussion in scholarship, not just personal revelation. Like German and other northern European Protestant counterparts, many emphasized the authority of the Bible but held that its texts were hardly transparent. They studied Hebrew, Greek, and sometimes Aramaic in order to understand the Bible better. This didn't succeed in banishing biblical literalism or claims to direct inspiration—to this day, many so-called fundamentalists are deeply suspicious that the "higher criticism" (to use a later phrase) means putting the norms of secular scholarship above commitment to fundamental Christian truths. But this began an argument within largely religious contexts that influenced religious developments and sometimes dovetailed with more secular attitudes toward the Bible as a historical text.[9]

Other participants in the Scottish and, more generally, British Enlightenment tended toward Deism, with more or less faith in Providence. Most were not hostile to religion even if they objected to both sectarianism and

enthusiasm. Their followers were prominent among the American founders and were influential in the U.S. Constitution's guarantee of freedom of religion through its prohibition on the government establishment of religion. In England, the collusion of the established church in repressing popular protest brought Thomas Paine more readers of *The Age of Reason* than he had in America. And elsewhere too the role of churches in authoritarian politics helped to discredit religion and produce sharply secularist responses.

It is worth remembering that Catholic intellectuals also flourished in the Age of Enlightenment. Though the Jesuit order was identified with militant and sometimes intolerant defense of the faith, in this period it became increasingly scholarly and more deeply influenced by the cosmopolitan character of its work—as well as entangled controversially in politics. France produced numerous polemics against priests and religion before the Revolution and more afterward. The French Enlightenment was more directly antireligious than that of Protestant countries—perhaps because most Protestant countries had enough religious pluralism for confutative struggles to be played out among religious protagonists. But Catholic intellectuals were also active in the eighteenth century, not only in rebuttal of the Enlighteners outside the Church but also in pursuit of Church reform and theological advancement.

Anticlericalism was important in the French Revolution, but it was really in the late nineteenth century that the doctrine of *laïcité* took deep root. Right-wing Catholic nationalists and monarchists attempted to regain ground lost in 1789 and to suppress republican, radical, and indeed secular thought (not least after the insurrections of 1848 and 1871). They had considerable if unstable popular support, which they abused with anti-Semitic mobilizations like that of the notorious Dreyfus affair (as well as with financial machinations that eventually led to scandals). They were sufficiently hostile to the Republic that when the Republic triumphed decisively, it made *laïcité* not merely policy but a part of its vision of French national identity. This stronger version of secularism was the product of unchurching struggles—struggles against priestly authority—that continued through the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. These gave a more militant form to secularism and positioned it as a dimension of social struggle and liberation.

Struggles against clerical domination intensified largely because leaders of established churches tied religion closely to conservative political projects. The struggle against this, as José Casanova has argued as clearly as anyone,

is central to what has made Europe particularly secular. It contrasts with situations in which there is more of an open marketplace for religion. This is one reason, perhaps ironically, the U.S. separation of church and state has been conducive to high levels of religious belief and participation.

More generally, such secularizing struggles confronted not only ancient state churches but new church-state partnerships forged in the wake of 1648. Indeed, Enlightenment-era intellectuals contributed to a misleading secularization story by presenting religion as simply the dark shadows of ancient superstition. But the intense focus on religion was not simply ancient. It was in many ways the product of the Reformation. Renaissance intellectuals—largely humanists and classicists—would have been shocked by the frequency with which their seventeenth- and eighteenth-century heirs quoted the Bible and insisted on doctrinal religious conformity. Religious engagement has ebbed and flowed, among both intellectuals and broader populations. It is crucial to recognize that it was made much stronger by the Reformation and by religion's entanglement in politics after as well as before 1648. Religious and secular action were constantly entangled in the making of modern Europe, at every level including motivation, organization, and ideology. The one-directional story told by Carl Schmitt and similar thinkers of a long-standing, nearly unquestioned political theology that gave way to modern secular states is simply not true.

It was not linear "progress" that produced modern, doctrinaire secularism but first an intensified project of religious domination and then reaction and resistance to it. The project of domination was not confined to a separate spiritual realm; that would involve the kind of thinking about differentiated spheres that developed in the course of modern social thought. It included the politics of states that were growing powerful enough to shape the life of whole nations, and it included intervention in ever more active pursuit of scientific knowledge. It was the struggles against such claimed authority that produced a strident, militant *laïcité*.

We see confused echoes of these struggles in today's European panics over Islam, which often strike a chord among populists and intellectuals alike that is not well-recognized. On the one hand, there are frequent contrasts of Enlightenment reason to unenlightened versions of faith. And many are indeed committed to an idea of comprehensive rationality, the supremacy not just of logic and empirical research but also of systematic, thorough, and exclusive reliance on them. This European history and concept-formation

also informs the *laïcité* of other countries where anxiety over religious-political rule is strong—not least Turkey—though transposing it into a new context changes at least some of its meaning. Yet to take such commitments as though they are the whole story—their virtues a sufficient explanation for holding them—is to obscure both the more specific European history and the extent to which reliance on these ideas is informed by anxiety over specific manifestations of religion, notably Islam but also evangelical Christianity. As I suggested, the same issues were at the forefront of the Scottish Enlightenment. The great philosophers were proponents in various combinations of reason and research, but they were also opponents of religious enthusiasm. Enthusiasm always seemed to them to encourage not only belief on bases not subjected to rational criticism but failures of discipline. Enthusiasm encouraged both strong convictions and a willingness to express them directly in action. This was dangerous not only in religion but in politics, where it might seem to give warrant to radicals seeking to mobilize the "lower orders" in wholesale transformation of social institutions.[10]

Secularism can also designate a framework for religious pluralism, but this is by no means always the case. If Europe's trajectory was state churches followed by militant *laïcité*, the United States, India, and a number of other postcolonial states produced much stronger practices of religious pluralism. In fact, postcolonial societies around the world have given rise to most of the regimes of religious pluralism and religious tolerance. These are much less directly products of the European Enlightenment than is sometimes thought. They are shaped by particular contexts, and usually more by the pursuit of equitable and nonviolent coexistence among religions than by a notion of unbelief versus belief. They are institutionalized in very different models of state neutrality: if separation of church and state is the rule in the United States, the Indian state subsidizes religion but seeks to do so without bias for or against any.[11] And there is attempted neutrality, which need not be secularism, in the attempts of some self-declared Islamic republics to resist taking the side of either Shi'a or Sunni.

Nondominant religions may actually be disadvantaged by apparently neutral regimes that mask tacit understandings of legitimate religious identity. In other words, the secular may be constructed with one kind of religion in mind, such that it legitimates that kind of religion but doesn't do a good job of being neutral toward other kinds of religions or projects. Arguably, European secularism remains tacitly Christian in this sense, even while

relatively few Europeans are committed Christians. This is important, because ideas of citizenship have been constructed in secular terms in most of the societies of the world.

This is also an issue with regard to how secularism gets mobilized in other projects. For example, the assertion of secularism may seem to be just an assertion of neutrality. But when it is written into a constitution, it typically reflects events that are not neutral: a new party coming to power, a revolution, or conflicts with international actors in other states. So there's always a political context, and one needs to ask of particular secular regimes what they express in that political context and how they shape distributions of power and recognition.

In a more general sense, the category of religion reflects not so much the self-understanding of the religious as the gaze on a plurality of religious practices—particularly from the standpoint of states. It is often argued that the root of the term "religion" is Latin for "binding."[12] But it is not the experience of being bound together with others or with God that gives us the category so much as the recognition of multiple different ways of being bound and organizing the ritual practices, moral understandings, and beliefs that follow from this. This idea was developed already in Rome, as imperial authorities recognized that other peoples had practices and beliefs not commensurate with those of Roman custom.[13] It was echoed in the Mughal, Ottoman, and other empires. The category of religion groups together objects—religions—understood as cultural phenomena. It thus includes those considered false religion—errors—not only the true and correct. It is a reference to phenomena in the secular world, even when articulated by someone who is religious as well as by someone who believes all religions to be erroneous.

Awareness of "other religions" was thus an awareness of systems of belief and practice partially analogous to one's own or that are prevalent in one's own society. It coexisted with other notions, like that of the infidel—one who lacked faith or at least the proper faith or, as importantly, failed to adhere faithfully to the proper practices. Faced with new divisions among Christians in the era of the Reformation, the idea of religion as a category gained importance, not least in pleas for religious tolerance but also in the attempt to separate religion from politics, especially interstate politics and war.

This awareness informed the Peace of Westphalia and with it the founding myth of modern international relations. This is grounded in the view

that both religions and states exist as objects in the secular world. Each state is sovereign, without reference to any encompassing doctrine such as divine right. Carl Schmitt saw this as the transfer of an idea of the absolute from theology proper to political theology, rendering each state in a sense an exception but also beyond the reach of any discourse of comparative legitimacy. The Peace of Westphalia produced a division of the international from the domestic modeled on that between the public and the private, and it urged treating religion as a domestic matter. Both diplomatic practice and eventually the academic discipline of international relations would come to treat states as externally secular—that is, they attempted to banish religion from relations between states.

So thoroughly did the academic field of international relations absorb the idea that interstate relations were essentially secular that it became all but blind to religious influences on international affairs.[14] As Robert Keohane explains, "the attacks of September 11 reveal that all mainstream theories of world politics are relentlessly secular with respect to motivation. They ignore the impact of religion, despite the fact that world-shaking political movements have so often been fueled by religious fervor."[15] After all, it is not as though religion was not a force in international politics between 1648 and 2001 and somehow erupted out of the domestic sphere to shape international politics only in this era of Al Qaeda and other non-state movements. And of course it is not only Muslims who bring religion into international politics, as though they were simply confused about the proper modern separation. Consider, to the contrary, recent U.S. legislation mandating an international defense of religious freedom. As Saba Mahmood has indicated, the ostensible secularism or at least neutrality of the legislation obscures the fact that it is strongly informed by specific religious understandings.[16] Much the same goes for the demonization of Islam in the name of a secular national security.

But if the field of international relations is extreme, it is not alone. In general, social science is a deeply secular project, secular almost by its very definition. Particularly in the North American context, the group of fields called "the social sciences" became a separate faculty within the arts and sciences partly on the basis of a late nineteenth-century determination to separate itself from religion and moral philosophy.[17] More generally, in their very pursuit of scientific objectivity (and status), the social sciences (some more than others) have tended to approach religion less than one might have expected, based on its prominence in social life, and often only in ostensibly

value-free external terms, leaving more hermeneutic inquiries to other fields. They also subscribed to the secularization narrative longer than dispassionate weighing of the evidence might have suggested.

Social science discussion of secularism centers largely on the role of religion in politics. What should be the role of religion in politics, if any? How autonomous should the state be from religion? How autonomous should religion be from the state? Certainly some social scientists join in the so-called New Atheism espoused by a variety of scientific authors seeking a more stringent secularism in reaction to religious movements. But this is more a matter of personal ideology than of research and scholarly argumentation.

Situated in the context of a dominant interest in the relationship of religion to politics, secularism is easily backgrounded. It is in this context that it is commonly treated as an absence more than a presence. But there is growing recognition that constructions of the secular and governmental arrangements to promote secularism both vary a good deal. Constitutional regimes approach the secular in very different ways, as a look at the United States, India, France, and Turkey quickly suggests. Questions of freedom of religion, of the neutrality of the state toward religion, of the extent to which religious laws should be acknowledged by secular states all put the varied structures of secularism on the research agenda. Likewise, there is growing recognition that secularism is not simply a universal or a constant in comparative research. On the contrary, secularism takes different shapes in relation to different religions and different political and cultural milieus. I have discussed mainly the development of European secularism in a history dominated by Christianity, but distinct issues arise around secularism among Jews and in Israel, among Muslims in different regions, among Buddhists, among Hindus, and in countries where more than one of these or other religions are important.

Ideas of the secular concern not only the separation of religion from politics but also the separation—or relation—between religion and other dimensions of culture and ethnicity. For some people, religion appears as a quasi-ethnic secular identity. Being Muslim, being Christian, being Hindu, being Jewish are mobilized as secular identities, like ethnic identities. People who don't practice the religion in any active way sometimes claim religious identities as secular markers, as do some people who explicitly declare themselves unbelievers. Likewise, recent use of the idea of "civilization" in reference to both "the clash of civilizations" and "dialogue of civilizations" has

often situated religion as a central feature of a broader cultural complex and identity. This renews a sense of religion as culture, reversing the efforts of religious reformers who have sought to purify religion by separating it from nonreligious beliefs and practices.

Reform and purification movements in Europe in the late medieval and early modern period sought to separate proper Christian practice from pre-Christian inheritance: from magic, from superstition. Such purification efforts have continued, particularly among religious intellectuals, and not only within Christianity. This new policing of the proper content of religion also intensified religion's boundary with the secular as well as with other religions and other spiritual practices. It may have made explicit professions of unbelief more likely.[18]

Attempts to enforce doctrinal orthodoxy also raise issues about the extent to which "a" religion is unitary and the extent to which different national or other cultures shape versions of such an ostensibly unified religion. Do all Catholics in the world believe the same things? North American Catholics are a little bit shaky on this. Or are there strong national differences but limited capacity to recognize them? The Islamic *ummah*, or community of believers, ostensibly a unit of common submission to teaching and law, is divided not just between Shia and Sunni but also on national lines. What's distinctive in Indonesia, or in Pakistan, or in Yemen? Again, intellectual resources for thinking through the relationships among "secular" culture, varied religious practices, and proclamations of religious unity are important but often underdeveloped. Catholicism and Islam offer just two examples. We could add the upheavals of the Anglican Communion to this picture, or tensions over who is recognized as a Jew in different contexts. In general, it is unclear how much we can separate religion from culture, ethnicity, national identity, or a variety of other concepts constructed in secular terms. Or, put another way, how "the secular" is constructed shapes not only how religion is conceptualized but how culture more generally is understood.

But even people who are serious about their religious commitments and practices can be unclear about the relationship between the use of a religious label to denote religion as such or to denote a population. Muslim attitudes toward the relation of religion to politics, for example, are shaped not just by religious ideologies but also by resentment of external political domination. Such resentment is common among Muslims, but it is misleading to see it as an attribute of Islam per se.[19] Indeed, it is striking how much of what goes on

among, or is ascribed to, Muslims is understood by ostensibly secular Westerners as integral to Islam. More room needs to be made for attention to the secular institutions of the "Islamic" world.

Questions continue to be raised as to whether Islam can be separated from politics. Debates about this, however, are shaped by previous debates over the division of religion and politics in Christendom. Aspects of European history are now projected onto and reworked in Islam. This isn't only a question about alleged theocracy or about clerical rule of one kind or another. It is also a question that shapes the whole idea of what counts as modern. The separation of religion from politics has come to all but define the modern for some.

Ironically, there are also concerns that this very separation has gone too far. Twenty-five years ago, this was the theme of Richard John Neuhaus's *The Naked Public Square*. More surprisingly, it has emerged in the recent writings of Jürgen Habermas,[20] which have generated discussions of "postsecularism." The term is confusing because it often isn't clear whether those who use it intend to describe a change in the attitudes of a large population or only a shift from their own previous, more doctrinaire, secularism. The stakes of the discussion are whether the democratic public sphere, first, loses the capacity to integrate public opinion if it can't include religious voices and, second, is deprived of possible creative resources, insights, and ethical orientations if it isn't informed by ideas with roots in religion.

Both John Rawls and Jürgen Habermas have reconsidered their previous arguments that the public sphere has to be completely secular in order to be neutrally accessible to all. Both have been advocates for a mainly processual, nonsubstantive treatment of public discourse. They argue that constitutional arrangements and normative presuppositions for democracy should focus on achieving just procedures rather than pursuing a particular substantive definition of the good.[21] Rawls initially excluded religious reasons from public debates; late in his life, he reconsidered and argued that they should be included so long as they could be translated into secular terms.[22] Habermas has gone further, worrying that the demand for "translation" imposes an asymmetrical burden; he is also concerned not to lose religious insights that may still have liberatory potential.[23] Habermas seeks to defend a less narrow liberalism, one that admits religion more fully into public discourse but seeks to maintain a secular conception of the state. He understands this as requiring impartiality in state relations to religion, including to unbelief,

but not as requiring the stronger *laïc* prohibition on state action affecting religion, even if impartially. Indeed, he goes so far as to suggest that the liberal state and its advocates are not merely enjoined to practice religious tolerance but—at least potentially—should be cognizant of a functional interest in public expressions of religion. These may be key resources for the creation of meaning and identity; secular citizens can learn from religious contributions to public discourse (not least when these help clarify intuitions the secular has not made explicit). But, Habermas insists, it remains the case that a direct appeal to the absolute, a transcendent notion of ultimate truth, is a step outside the bounds of reasoned public discourse.

Habermas's argument presumes that such absolutes, or higher-order values, are absent from ordinary rational discourse and introduced only by religious beliefs (or close analogues such as nationalist politics informed by Schmitt's political theology). But here I would follow Taylor in suggesting that all normative orientations, even those that claim to be entirely rational, in fact depend on higher-order values.[24] Being completely rational can be one such value. Some higher values are very this-worldly, as, for example, in economic discussions in which either some indicator of utility or some hedonic principle of human happiness is clearly the higher value on which the entire discussion is organized and has a standing apart from any of the mere incremental values. So it is not clear that reference to higher values clearly demarcates religious from secular reason. The question of how "secular" the public sphere can and should be remains contested.

Secular Transcendence

The relationship between eternity and the temporal lies at the root of the idea of the secular. The secular world, this world, is the world of temporal change and also finitude. Transcendence implies reaching beyond this world to eternity and to God. But we should not ignore the possibility of another sense of transcendence, that of reaching beyond the limits of what actually exists, beyond the now and the identification of the real with the actual. To engage the possible and the future may arguably entail some version of what Kant called "the transcendental," that is, the capacity to know objects even before we experience them.[25] But I am concerned here not so much with the transcendental conditions of knowledge as with the capacity to imagine the future and orient oneself toward it (a capacity that I think also entails

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imagining the past and the continuity of the world beyond oneself as a specific subject).

In considering "the immanent frame," Taylor examines the rise of insistence on the adequacy of this-worldly explanation and understanding of all phenomena including human life.[26] Such thought seeks both meaning and causation in the world of senses and human action. Taylor suggests that life itself may be foreshortened by assumptions about what is possible and what counts as explanatory. Ruling out theocentric explanations is part of this. More generally, attempts to purge philosophy of metaphysics raise similar questions. The issue is not just the viability of particular explanations that rely on God or Gaia or *Geist*. It is a preference for reductionistic and decontextualizing explanations, and frequently explanations that resist reliance on ideas of "meaning." This preference is not entailed by insistence on this-worldly explanations; it is a sort of epistemic elective affinity. Ironically, it often has the effect of limiting the idea of the human even in philosophies (and scientific thought) that would appear to support humanism.

The limits are of various kinds. Mechanistic explanations bring some. An insistence that consciousness is a phenomenon of discrete, individual minds brings others. So does a sharp distinction between poetry and the reliance on unambiguous constative statements to represent (let alone evoke) truth. So does giving rational consistency paramount value. But my main focus here is on the tendency to equate the real with the actual. This inhibits attention to the past, the future, the centrality of poiesis, and important aspects of human being-in-the-world. It makes it much harder to recognize and appreciate the ways in which some "values," or what Taylor calls "hypergoods," give order to human life and action.

If we reduce "value" to "desire," for example, we can effectively work within the limits of reductionist explanations. Desires are as immediate as projected outcomes; they can be understood in purely material terms. But a value is something different insofar as it suggests a determination to make certain preference orderings in the future. Even desire is more complicated than often imagined. The model of desiring, say, food or even specific foods doesn't exhaust what we mean by the word. Desire for a life with my wife and family, for example, extends beyond possession and beyond experience of current pleasures. It places a value not only on what I might acquire but also on what I might be and what I might create. It includes current "tastes" but also anticipations—for example, that while I do not desire to be old, I prefer

to be old in my marriage than without it. It includes commitments, world-making promises in Hannah Arendt's sense, and also hopes (including for forgiveness when promises are broken). But value also has other meanings, as, for example, valuing freedom isn't the same as wishing for the freedom to pursue any particular course of action (though how we think about it is surely informed by concrete images and desires). Even so, we could understand, or try to understand, freedom as simply one potential good among many—alongside dinner, a good night's sleep, and remembering your wife's birthday. When I sit in a faculty meeting and wish to be free of it, the meaning is of this sort. But the point of the idea of hypergoods is to remind us that the work done by values like freedom is not just of that sort. Beyond the concrete freedoms we wish, we may—most of us probably do—value freedom in a way that gives order to our other values and desires and thus to our actions, our lives, and our imaginings of possible futures.

We could say that freedom is a sacred value. The exaltation of specific values is one plausible meaning of "sacred." Whether equating the sacred to hypergoods is an adequate exploration of the concept is not my primary question here, but my sense is that it is not. This is only part of what the sacred means to us. The sacred is a matter of awe in a way that hypergoods may not necessarily be.

In any case, hypergoods, even if not sacred, reach beyond the immediate and beyond the immanent. They describe a way in which we are oriented beyond not only what we have now but also what we are or what we can achieve. Wanting ourselves to have better wants is a part of this. To be sure, valuing rational explanations and "being reasonable" are not transcendent in the way valuing God's will is. But what, say, of valuing universal justice or care for all who suffer or, for that matter, the beauty of the world? Universal justice and care for all who suffer are clearly aspirational. They can be located only in the future and, I think, only in a particularly hypothetical future, since it is not at all clear that faith in this future would be rationally justified. The beauty of the world is different. There is more than enough beauty in the world to inspire awe and wonder and longing and attachment. Yet every day, some of it vanishes; recurrently, we fear its loss, or loss of our access to it. This is part of the meaning of mortality, as well as part of the anxiety in a strong environmental consciousness.

Our relationship to the beauty of the world transcends the existing, even though it is intensely related to it. We understand that this beauty belongs

to the world, not only to our experience of it.[27] As immediate as experience of it can be, its very magnificence and our awe and wonder are related to the fact that it is part of the world that existed before us and will exist after us—although anxiety about how long the world will endure may inflect and perhaps intensify our sensitivity to this beauty. This may offer a version of the experience of "fullness" that Taylor evokes. Taylor exemplifies this with a lovely passage from Bede Griffiths—troubling to some readers because of its apparent sentimentality—which indeed engages the beauty of the world. For Griffiths and perhaps for Taylor, the experience of fullness points to something beyond the world; it is a fusion of the immediately material with the cosmic and spiritual. Without denying that experience (or interpretation), I want to evoke the possibility of a transcendent experience of the beauty of the world that does not depend on fusion with something beyond the world but, rather, relies on the extent to which the world itself is beyond us, is enormous, and is, at least in the aspect of its beauty, whole. With a nod to Griffiths's efforts to fuse East and West, we might say it is integral. But we should be cautious here. The integration in question may not be a matter of logical consistency. The opposite of "fragmented" need not be "systematically integrated."

We may grasp the beauty of the world as involving innumerable connections without necessarily apprehending it as systematic. Thus by the "wholeness" of the world's beauty, I want to designate the sense of connections that constitute something larger. The connections are not only of classification, nor of cause and effect. They are of diverse and not necessarily commensurable sorts. We cannot abstract particulars fully from their contexts and connections. I mean to suggest something integral rather than fragmented, and thus not something complete in the sense of plenitude. By contrast, Taylor's metaphor of fullness could be read—against his own inclination—as signaling the kind of Neoplatonic completeness (and indeed hierarchy) traced by Arthur Lovejoy in his account of the great chain of being. That would be a matter of all spaces being filled in, recognizing connections especially in hierarchy, rather than of the ubiquity of connections and omnipresence of spiritual meaning.[28]

What I hope to evoke is the possibility of dramatic, moving connections that are nonetheless multiple and not readily commensurable. We could evoke this through the distinction between a polytheistic sense of the gods and the at least reductionistic versions of monotheism. In any case,

monistic system building is not the only way in which we apprehend large-scale connections.

Connections are different from equivalences, and connections are not only matters of cause and effect. They involve shared culture and common histories. They involve the closeness to specific settings and versions of being-in-the-world that Heidegger described as "dwelling." This may involve a recognition of others as belonging in some of the same settings even without a sense of being the same as them or feeling fond of them. At a global scale, thus, we might helpfully think of a cosmopolitanism of connections, rather than one only of universal categorical equivalences. And at a local level, we may create the conditions of peaceful coexistence better through recognition of fellow-belonging despite difference than through a search for universalistic common denominators.[29]

In any case, there may be something transcendent in our connection to the beauty of the world. We reach beyond the moment, beyond our individual lives, and beyond a fragmented sense of existence. Something of the same transcendent connection may be forged in relation to the sorrows of the world. Think, for example, of the empathy felt for victims of the 2010 Haitian earthquake (or any of a host of other disasters). We respond not simply to recognition that those suffering are human. Our sense of common humanity is often represented as membership in a set of more or less equivalent individuals—this is the logic of human rights, for example. But that is not the only way in which we apprehend the human. We apprehend it in analogies, contexts, and connections. The suffering human beings who are represented as interchangeable masses in many media images are also connected to us by intertwined histories such as colonialism and slavery, by recognition of analogous roles like those of parent and child, and by the awareness that we have a capacity to act to mitigate suffering or to fail to act.

Our potentially transcendent relationship to the world depends in important ways on recognition that it exists without us. Yet we may also recognize that the world is in part made by human action (not only damaged by it), and indeed that we participate in that action, albeit usually in rather small ways. For example, it matters both that the consequences of the 2010 Haitian earthquake were so devastating because of conditions the United States helped to create—poverty, political instability, and the growth of Port-au-Prince precisely at an ecologically unsustainable site on a tectonic fault

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line—and that as individuals we have genuine options to care or not care, help or not help.

Connection to history and to projects of making the future is potentially a source of secular transcendence. By this, I mean two things. First, both consciousness of the past and anticipation of the future enable people to recognize the institutional arrangements and other features of the present as contingent rather than essential or necessary. This invites an awareness of larger (or at least other) possibilities. It may also suggest connections to people, culture, ideas, and threads of experience that transcend the immediately given. Second, people may work actively to transcend the limits of existing social conditions or culture. They may do this as individuals, but social movements are particularly important to this effort. They both depend on a sense of the possibility of transcending the given and (at least sometimes) reinforce this with experiences of transcendent solidarity.

Participating in a movement brings to many both a heightened sense of the possibility of transforming conditions others take as unalterable and a heightened sense of connection to others in the movement. These connections are not necessarily—and are generally not primarily—connections to humanity as whole. Nor are they necessarily "oceanic" feelings of connection to everything. They are connections to others who join in shared actions, to specific individuals and larger groups. They evoke the sense not so much of equivalence or sameness as of connection despite difference and of being in something together. Likewise, the sense of possibility need not be the anticipation of perfection. There may be mountains beyond mountains, movements beyond movements. Movements link the general sense of potential transcendence we gain from taking the historicity of human existence seriously to engagement in particular transformations. We wish to overcome capitalist exploitation, or environmental deprivation, or war—and usually specific capitalist abuses, specific degradations of the environment, and specific conflicts.

Similar thoughts might inform a different theological understanding. We might engage God less as the Absolute or the One at the center of the Neoplatonic order and more as being "in the struggle with us." Likewise, we might explore the extent to which transcendent connections to music and art are not to those categories as such but to much more specific works and events of performance or contemplation. These are mediated by history and culture even though they may take us beyond the limits of historical

circumstances and cultural categories. But my main point is to urge us to think of both experiences of and commitments to transcendence in this-worldly, temporal life. A secondary point, which I have not developed, is that this need not be understood in the register of the "aesthetic." It may be much more directly connected to action in the world. In this regard, many modern versions of "the secular" and "the immanent frame" are importantly antihistorical. They suggest that we must accept the world as it is. They may argue especially against the hope that God offers something better in eternal life. But implicitly, their frameworks argue also against the hope that we can make this into a better world. This is ironic, since many of these self-declared secularists are in fact committed to making the world better through science, technology, and social reform. But the potential of these projects is often hemmed in by the tendency to treat too much of the existing as necessary and inevitable.

Conclusion

Distinctions between the religious and the secular are embedded in a modern era that also imposes a range of other differentiations, notably that of public and private. Many of these are closely linked to states and their administrative practices—indeed, in both colonial and domestic administration, states helped to create the very category of religion as one that would subsume a whole class of ostensibly analogous phenomena. But the differentiation of states from market economies, sometimes understood to be self-moving, is also powerful. These differentiations shape modern social imaginaries that in turn help to make the world. That is, by distinguishing politics from religion, or the economy from both, we inform our material practices and the way we build institutions in the world. Thus, the distinctions take on a certain material reality, but they can also be obstacles to a better intellectual analysis. The distinction between the secular and the religious is a case in point. It obscures both the ways in which religious people engage the temporal world and the ways in which states and other this-world institutional structures inform the idea of religion itself.

Max Weber famously argued that the differentiation of value spheres—religious, economic, political, social, aesthetic—was basic to modernity. The notion of value spheres is informative, but we should also be clear that the differentiations reflect (and reproduce) tensions among projects, not just

values. The making of the world is pursued by both religious and nonreligious projects. There is contention among these projects over the nature of institutions. Some of that contention is between the religious and the nonreligious. Part of the advance of what we call "the secular" stems from creating new domains of this-worldly efficacy and action. Science is important in this way, not just as a clashing value system or ideology. Medicine is not just another domain of knowledge but now meddles with the very nature of life through genetic engineering. The economy, the state, and social movements all involve world-making projects. These may contend with one another as well as with specifically religious projects. But the expansion of reliance on this-worldly institutions and practices is an expansion of the secular even when it is compatible with or carried out by religious people.

Finally, we should recognize the prominence of a secularist ideology that goes beyond affirming the virtues of the ostensibly neutral. The demarcation between religion and the secular is made, not just found. The secular is claimed by many not just as one way of organizing life, not just as useful in order to ensure peace and harmony among different religions, but as a kind of maturation. It is held to be a kind of developmental achievement. Some people feel they are "better" because they have overcome illusion and reached the point of secularism. That ideological self-understanding is itself powerful in a variety of contexts. It shapes even the way in which many think of global cosmopolitanism as a kind of escape from culture, nation, and religion into a realm of apparently pure reason, universal rights, and global connections. We might, by contrast, think of cosmopolitanism as something to be achieved through the connections among all the people who come from and are rooted in and belong to different traditions, different social structures, different countries, different faiths. There is a profound difference between an ideology of escape and the idea of interconnected *ecumenae*.

In any case, secularism is not simply the Other to religion. It is a phenomenon in its own right that demands reflexive scholarship, critique, and open-minded exploration.

Notes

1. The idea of a secular trend, after all, is of a pattern of change that moves linearly through time—and thus a reminder of the centrality of temporality to the notion of the secular.

2. Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007). See also Michael Warner, Jonathan VanAntwerpen, and Craig Calhoun, eds., *Varieties of Secularism in a Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

3. Some five hundred years after Augustine, the great Muslim thinker Abu Nasr al-Farabi also used the idea of the city to explore the issue of virtue and imperfection in the world. Influenced even more by Neoplatonism than Augustine was, he saw life in terms of emanations from the universal and perfect one, descending into a plural and imperfect temporal world. His vision did not include the mediation of the Church, of course, nor come as close to binary distinction between matters of world and soul, but did insist as much as Augustine's on the necessity of the perfect in order to put the quotidian in perspective.

4. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

5. See James Davidson Hunter, *To Change the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). Hunter argues that such engagement with the world rightly follows from Christian commitments, but that it is often distorted by a model of producing secular change by combat over belief and moral conviction and by seeking secular power, rather than by a commitment to "faithful presence" honoring the Creator of all.

6. Spain, though associated more with empire in histories of the seventeenth century, had actually pioneered in this trend, expelling and forcibly converting Jews and Muslims under those most Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella and pursuing national integration and even a specifically Spanish— not papal—inquisition.

7. There has been much discussion in the field of comparative religion of the formation of the category that defines it, including its colonial-era roots and the importance of international assemblies purporting to represent the world's religions. See, for example, Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2005).

8. See David Sorkin, *The Religious Enlightenment: Protestants, Jews, and Catholics from London to Vienna* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010); Eric Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic: Jewish Sources and the Transformation of European Political Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); Michael Allen Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Joshua Mitchell, *Not by Reason Alone: Religion, History and Identity in Early Modern Political Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Eldon Eisenach, *Two Worlds of Liberalism: Religion and Politics in Hobbes, Locke, and Mill* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

9. Henning Graf Reventlow, *The Authority of the Bible and the Rise of the Modern World* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985).

10. Here we see the link between figures such as Hume in the Scottish Enlightenment and Burke's famous response to the French Revolution. But we should not equate this with conservatism in the sense of a "right wing." Even the early anarchist William Godwin insisted on gradualism, resisted enthusiasm (which he thought as likely to take the form of church-and-king mobs as Jacobinism), and abhorred the idea that the undisciplined lower orders would participate directly in politics. See Alex Benchimol, "Cultural Historiography and the Scottish Enlightenment Public Sphere: Placing Habermas in Eighteenth-Century Edinburgh," in Alex Benchimol and Willy Maley, eds., *Spheres of Influence: Intellectual and Cultural Publics from Shakespeare to Habermas* (Bern, Switzerland: Lang, 2007), and Don Herzog, *Poisoning the Minds of the Lower Orders* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

11. See Alfred Stepan's review in "The Twin Tolerations," and the various chapters in Rajeev Bhargava, ed., *Secularism*. In regard to the U.S. case, note that though Jefferson spoke of a separation of church and state, that formulation does not appear in the Constitution, enters Supreme Court jurisprudence only in the 1870s, and comes to the foreground only after the Second World War.

12. Though cases are also made for other etymologies.

13. Somewhat similarly, the Roman idea of "nation" was shaped not by self-reflection but by reference to the distinctive cultures of others, including conquered peoples and enemies. These were nations partly because inclusion was reckoned in terms of descent rather than citizenship. See Patrick J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).

14. Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

15. Robert O. Keohane, "The Globalization of Informal Violence, Theories of World Politics, and 'The Liberalism of Fear'" in C. Calhoun, P. Price, and A. Timmer, eds., *Understanding September 11* (New York: New Press 2002), 72.

16. "Politics of Religious Freedom: Minority Rights, Sovereignty, and Gender." Speech at the American Academy of Religion, Montreal, 9 November 2009.

17. See Julie Reuben, *The Making of the Modern University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

18. This is an important contention of Taylor's *A Secular Age*.

19. See Tariq Ramadan, "Manifesto for a New 'We,'" 7 July 2006, available at http://www.tariqramadan.com/spip.php?article743.

20. Richard John Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Square* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984); Habermas, *Between Naturalism and Religion* (Cambridge: Polity, 2008).

21. Compare Alastair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice, Which Rationality* (South Bend: Notre Dame University Press, 1988) and *After Virtue* (South Bend, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1981).

22. John Rawls, "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited," *University of Chicago Law Review* 64, no. 3 (Summer 1997): 765-807.

23. See Jürgen Habermas, *Rationality and Religion: Essays on Reason, God, and Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002) and "Religion in the Public Sphere," in *Between Naturalism and Religion*.

24. See the discussion of "hypergoods" in Taylor, *Sources of the Self*.

25. Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason* (orig. 1781; London: Penguin, 2008).

26. Charles Taylor, "The Immanent Frame," in *A Secular Age*, 539-93 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2007).

27. I am using the phrase "beauty of the world" rather than, say, "experience of the sublime" precisely to emphasize reference to aspects of the world itself that we experience, rather than of our experience as such. I have in mind something of the orientation to nature suggested by the nineteenth-century New England transcendentalists among others. This is not nature as a system, though thinking of nature that way need not preclude access to the beauty of the world.

28. Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936).

29. Such a conclusion fits, for example, with Varshney's findings about the presence or absence of intercommunal violence in Indian cities.