

POLITICAL THEOLOGY AS FOUNDATIONAL THEOLOGY

To refer to "political theology" as "foundational theology" often confuses more than it illuminates. The basic terms are not only ambiguous and their relation to one another unclear, but their connotations are often misleading and go contrary to the intended meaning. Therefore some preliminary clarifications are offered before presenting a historical and analytical description of political theology as foundational theology.

PRELIMINARY CLARIFICATIONS

Foundational Theology: This term, often associated with "fundamental theology" is easily misunderstood. It is mistakenly seen as a contemporary expression for the traditional discipline of fundamental theology. Yet the term "foundational theology" is used here precisely to avoid the common connotations and implications of fundamental theology that often refers to an apologetical or natural theology. Such a fundamental theology traditionally seeks to establish a rational proof for the Christian faith that is prior to the Christian faith. It serves as a prolegomenon to theology by providing a natural basis or rational foundation for the faith. As an intellectual discipline, it is prior to systematic theology and can be exercised independently of constructive theology.¹

The technical term "foundational theology" seeks to avoid this very conception, even though foundational theology is understood in various ways. For my purposes, Lonergan's description suffices. He notes that "foundations presents not the doctrines, but the horizon within which the meaning of doctrines can be apprehended."² In this definition foundational theology is not prior to theology, but analyzes the concrete horizons of theology. Lonergan's foundational theology can be distinguished not only from traditional fundamental theology but also from the more recent attempt of Peter Hodgson who understands it as the phenomenological endeavor to bracket out history and thereby to uncover general anthropological structures.³ Instead it seeks to

¹Cf. H. Fries, "From Apologetics to Fundamental Theology," *Concilium* 5 (1969), 442-7 and C. Geffré, "Recent Developments in Fundamental Theology," in his book *A New Age in Theology*, trans. by R. Shillenn *et al.* (New York: Paulist Press, 1974), pp. 11-30.

²B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972), p. 131.

³P. Hodgson, *New Birth of Freedom* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), pp. 114-22.

reflect upon the total praxis (intellectual as well as imaginative, symbolic as well as conceptual, individual as well as social) of religious conversion and flowing from religious conversion.⁴

Such a foundational theology, moreover, would have the task of elucidating the basic criteria by which the adequacy of theological methods and the comprehensiveness of theological constructions can be evaluated. This concern with criteria resembles the very definition first suggested by Friedrich Pelt for fundamental theology in his *Theologische Enzyklopädie*⁵ of 1843 and has been recently applied to foundational theology by David Tracy.⁶

Political Theology: This term is perhaps even much more misleading than foundational theology. It conjurs up images of a "theology of politics" or a "liberation theology." Whereas the former is often seen as a theology demanding a direct and immediate political involvement, the theology of liberation is often mistakenly identified solely with a theology of revolution. It is likewise discredited as just one of the many recent fashionable modes in theology alongside of narrative or story theology.⁷ This paper will seek to counter such predominant and widespread prejudices by tracing the complex issues associated with political theology from antiquity through the Enlightenment to the present situation.

Nevertheless a preliminary clarification of the term "political" might from the very beginning help avoid many of the misunderstandings of "political theology." Many of these can be attributed to the failure to attend to the basic differences between the classic and modern conception of the "political."

Three differences are crucial.⁸ *First*, the classic concept of the political primarily refers to the good and just life. Aristotle did not contrast the laws of government with the ethos of the social life. In the modern conception, the political is not primarily the good and just life, but rather the proper management of state and the efficient administration of government. *Secondly*, the classic concept focused on *praxis* instead of *techne*. Praxis as a way of life

⁴Loneragan, *Method in Theology*, pp. 267-93.

⁵Cf. G. Ebeling, "Erwägungen zu einer evangelischen Fundamentaltheologie," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 67 (1970), 479-524, esp. 500f.

⁶D. Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), p. 56, n. 1.

⁷Sallie TeSelle in *Speaking in Parables* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975) lists theologies of the death of God, of play, of drug-induced religious experiences, as parallels to political theology.

⁸J. Habermas, *Theory and Praxis*, trans. by J. Viertel (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), esp. the first essay, "The Classical Doctrine of Politics in Relation to Social Philosophy," pp. 41-81.

involves character formation rather than the technical skill as is required in the manufacture of artifacts. Modern political science, however, views political problems not as problems of life-praxis, but as technical problems which require administrative procedures, regulatory institutions, and calculated strategies that are ordered to specific goals. *Thirdly*, the classic concept does not signify a rigorous science of apodictic knowledge, but rather a practical philosophy based on prudence. In contrast, modern political science separates the political from the moral. It is a science of governmental and administrative engineering.

This distinction between the classic and modern understanding of the political brings to the fore the ambiguities of political theology. In some ways, political theology can be viewed as the attempt within theology to retrieve elements of the classic notion of political life. It is a question of the good and just life; it involves *praxis*, and it demands prudence. In this respect, it can be brought into association with similar attempts of such diverse thinkers as Hannah Arendt,⁹ Sheldon Wolin,¹⁰ Leo Strauss,¹¹ Joachim Ritter,¹² and Hannah Pitkin-Fenichel¹³ to regain elements of the classic theory of politics that have been lost in the more recent scientific notion of the political.

The ambiguity of political theology lies in this conceptual ambivalence. It is moreover compounded by the failures of the leading advocates of a political theology to locate and to clarify their understanding of the political. On the one hand, political theology is mainly proposed as a reaction to the individualizing and privatizing tendencies of existential theology.¹⁴ In this perspective political theology appears as the theological endeavor to reintroduce into theology the classic understanding of the political as the just and good social life praxis. As such it might be fittingly called "social theology." In fact "public theology" has been suggested as a more appropriate title.¹⁵ On the other hand, political

⁹*The Human Condition* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959).

¹⁰*Politics and Vision* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1960).

¹¹*Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953).

¹²*Metaphysik und Politik* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1969); see his essay, "Politik und Ethik in der praktischen Philosophie des Aristoteles," pp. 106-32, where Ritter shows that "polis" is not so much a constitutional as a identity-notion.

¹³*Wittgenstein and Justice* (Berkeley: University of California, 1972).

¹⁴Cf. F. Fiorenza, "Political Theology and Liberation Theology," in T. McFadden, *Liberation, Freedom, and Revolution* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), pp. 3-29.

¹⁵The notion of "public theology" or "public theologian" has been suggested by Martin Marty, "Two Kinds of Two Kinds of Civil Religion," in R. Richey and D. Jones, eds., *American Civil Religion* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), p. 148.

theology is given its task in relation to the changed situation of modern society, the challenges of the Enlightenment, and the necessity for ideology criticism. In this perspective political theology appears not so much as a "public theology," but rather as a theology concerned with the political dimension of social problems.

Despite this ambiguity, I should like to suggest that the term "political theology" be retained. The concept of "public theology" conceals how the dynamics of modern society have obliterated the distinction between the political and the public or social realm and between state and society. The pure public realm of liberalism has become nonexistent in our contemporary society. Perhaps the term "societal" would most appropriately express the intent and nature of political theology.¹⁶ Yet it would be an unnecessary neologism that lacks the long history and tradition of the term "political theology" (as this essay will show). Moreover, it keeps explicit the awareness that societal issues also involve political dimensions.

In using the term "political theology" I am nevertheless aware that many of its contemporary representatives have failed to give a more specific analysis of what precisely constitutes the "political." Its German representatives have even failed to take into account the delineations of the political within its own tradition in terms of power by Max Weber¹⁷ or as the friend-enemy relation by Carl Schmitt,¹⁸ just to list two examples. The recent representatives of political theology have failed to explore the distinction between the political as the employment of legitimate power and as the acquiring of power. Likewise the extent to which the modern administrative system intertwines the political with the

¹⁶F. Fiorenza, "American Culture and Modernism: Shailer Mathews's Interpretation of American Christianity," in T. McFadden, *America in Theological Perspective* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), pp. 163-86. In this article, I have appropriated Shailer Mathews' use of "social-mind-sets" to indicate how a different perspective toward the concept of civil religion can thereby be obtained. Mathews' understanding of the relation between theology and "social-mind-sets" represents an earlier and parallel attempt at the conceptual problems underlying a "political theology." Unfortunately, he did not see that this own understanding of theology demanded that he acknowledge the relativity of his own excessive nationalism and patriotism.

¹⁷J. Habermas, "Hannah Arendt's Communications Concept of Power," *Social Research* 44 (1977), 3-24, where he also discusses Weber and Parsons. See also, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. and ed. by H. H. Gerth and C. W. Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946) and Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, ed. by T. Parsons (New York: The Free Press, 1947).

¹⁸*Der Begriff des Politischen* (München: Duncker & Humblot, 1932).

economic, strategic, societal has received insufficient attention especially in so far as it demands a revision of the classic notion of the political and points to problems of structural violence.¹⁹ Many of these problems lie beyond the scope of this paper, but they do reveal the limitations of the concept of political theology and the need for its further differentiation.

Political Theology as Foundational Theology: To describe political theology as foundational theology is not to imply that the political dimension is the exclusive horizon for understanding Christian doctrine nor to assert that the political dimension of theology is exhausted in its foundational function. Several important reasons speak against the implication that the political horizon is the sole horizon:

First, that there are existential and transcendental horizons that can and should be analyzed in reference to their societal and political dimension in no way denies their significance as distinct horizons. The political and the existential are each more extensive than the other. Existential questions of birth, life, and death transcend the societal and cannot be politically resolved. Nor can every political issue be reduced to an existential question. Nevertheless these existential questions do have a political dimension and political questions do have existential significance. The affirmation within political theology of the interrelation of these dimensions does not deny their distinction.

Secondly, it is necessary to reflect explicitly upon the distinction but not separation of the political from the transcendental, existential, and anthropological because the political is often understood by means of the very metaphors, images, and models of the former. For example, Turner has outlined how humans use metaphors and paradigms in relation to symbolic action and to give meaning to societal action.²⁰ Douglas has pointed out how various usages of the image of the body reflect the self-understanding of a political society.²¹ Therefore, political theology must necessarily examine how distinct anthropological images serve society's self-understanding and correlate with its political understanding.

The *third* reason for asserting that political theology represents only one horizon and not the sole horizon of theology as a founda-

¹⁹Cf. Habermas, *Theory and Praxis*, pp. 13-24.

²⁰V. Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974) where he outlines how humans use metaphors and paradigms to relate and give meanings to symbolic action. See his earlier works, *The Ritual Process* (New York: Aldine, 1969) and *The Forest of Symbols* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967).

²¹M. Douglas, *Natural Symbols* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973).

tional theology rests upon the intricacies of the relation between the transcendental and the political. Since Kant it has become clear that material experience does not flow from the external properties of the objective world, but rather flows from how the human subject orders experience. Kant's transcendental approach to human rationality finds its correlation today in the cultural universals of structuralism or in Chomsky's structures of deep grammar or in Piaget's developmental cognitive psychology. Although this structuralist approach may not provide an adequate account of human rationality, as Stephan Toulmin with his populational analysis will argue,²² it is necessary for political theology to come to terms with the problem of human rationality. A political theology that would too readily abandon a transcendental method would fail to elaborate the complexity of issues in specifying what is rationality and how the order of human rationality and the political order are interrelated.

With these preliminary clarifications in view, the conception of political theology as foundational theology can be outlined in two basic steps. First, the various issues of political theology can be traced and developed by a historical survey of the diverse conceptions of political theology from antiquity until the present. Secondly, political theology will be systematically defined and constructively described as a reconstructive foundational theology that investigates the pragmatics of religious symbols.

I. HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE CONCEPT OF POLITICAL THEOLOGY

The notion of political theology is not a recent concept. Instead it goes back to antiquity. In the following section, three decisive controversies involving the concept of political theology or its equivalent will be analyzed as a background to our own systematic definition. The first of these involves the tripartite division of theology in antiquity in which the debate centers around the superiority of political theology or natural theology. The second debate concerns the relation between civil religion or political theology and political religion in which the functional aspect of political theology and the functional method of theology is underscored. The third debate concerns the relation between political theology and liberation theology. Here the issue concerns the relation of theory to praxis and the appeal to praxis. In each of

²²S. Toulmin, *Human Understanding*, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970).

these debates, political theology will be discussed in relation to two problems: (a) an interpretative problem, and (b) a truth problem. The first problem concerns the method of interpretation and the second relates to the criteria or evaluation of theological method.

A. Antiquity's Tripartite Division: Mythic, Natural and Political Theology

The term "political theology" originates in Stoic philosophy with its tripartite division of theology into a mythic, natural, and political theology. Intimations of a distinction between political and mythic theology stem from even an earlier date. Plato had already distinguished between the mythic theology and the philosophical critique of the mythic. Moreover, he contrasted the gods that are real and natural with those that are artificial and conventional. The latter are constituted by the diverse legislations and legal conventions of distinct places.²³ The term "political theology" and the tripartite division has been attributed by Pohlenz to Panaetius (185-109 BC), Antipater's successor as head of the Stoa.²⁴ Others have attributed this division to Poseidonius. What is evident is that the tripartite division of theology is widespread within middle Stoicism.²⁵ The tripartite division also became established in Roman theology. Pontifex Quintus Mucius Scaevola, author of the first systematic treatise on civil law, takes over this division from Stoicism and functionalizes it into a defense of the Roman state religion. Since his position is known by reconstruction from secondary sources, e.g. Tertullian and Augustine, some debate exists as to his understanding and evaluation of the tripartite division.²⁶

²³Laws X, 889e-890 where the distinction between nature and law is presupposed. Cf. *Gorgias* 482e and *Protagoras* 337cd. In the *Gorgias*, Calicles criticizes Socrates for invoking the tribunal. He distinguishes between nature and law or convention. This distinction becomes in the religious realm a distinction between physical and legal theology.

²⁴M. Pohlenz, *Die Stoa* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964), I:197-8.

²⁵Cf. P. Boyance, "Sur la théologie de Varron," *Revue des études anciennes* (*Annales de la Faculté des lettres de Bordeaux* LXXIIe)57 (1955), pp. 57-84, esp. pp. 74-84; A. Schmekel, *Die Philosophie der mittleren Stoa* (Berlin, 1892), pp. 104-55 and R. Agadh, *M. Terenti Varronis Antiquitates Rerum divinarum libri I, XIV, XV, XVI, Neue Jahrbücher Für Philologie X* (Suppl. XXIV, 1898), 111.

²⁶H. Hagendhal, *Augustine and the Latin Classics* (Göteborg: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1967), pp. 611-3; J. Pepin, "La 'theologia tripartite' de Varron," *Revue des études augustiniennes* 2 (1956), 265-94. For Augustine's critique, cf. J. Pepin, "Critica augustiniana de la teologia de Varron," *Augustinus* 4 (1959), 155-87.

Scaevola quite clearly rejected mythic theology. Much mythic material is nonsense and is even unworthy of divinity. In comparison with human persons, the gods appear to be morally deformed. Scaevola takes issue with philosophical theology also. It contains many superfluous opinions. It is, moreover, harmful to the population because it denies that many heroes were indeed gods and it criticizes the images and statues of gods for their anthropomorphisms. In short, Scaevola appears to argue that philosophical theology was harmful to the Roman religion. He therefore criticizes it in favor of the Roman political theology. For this defense, Augustine accuses Scaevola of duplicity. He claims that Scaevola knew that the philosophical theology contained the truth, but for the sake of the state, for the sake of political utility, he defended the Roman political theology and promoted its myths, fables and statues.²⁷

Varro's Concept of Political Theology

The tripartite division is taken over by Marcus Terentius Varro (116-27 BC) and appears in his *Antiquities*. They provide a major source of information about the tripartite division even though they are no longer extant and must be reconstructed from Tertullian's *Ad nationes*²⁸ and Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*.²⁹ Augustine writes, "I wish to deal with Varro as a political theologian,"³⁰ and gives the following description of the tripartite division. "There are three theologies which the Greeks call respectively mythical, physical, and political, and which may be called in Latin fabulous, natural, and civil."³¹ Augustine and Tertullian basically agree in their descriptions of the tripartite division. The slight differences in their presentation, however, lead to much more fundamental differences in their criticisms of the three theologies.

Tertullian considers each of the three theologies as independent, mutually exclusive, autonomous theological or religious options. The division refers to the different sources of human ideas

²⁷ *The City of God* (abbreviated as CD), IV, 27.

²⁸ II, 1, Pl 1 Sp. 587. "Hunc si interrogam, qui insinuates deorum? Aut philosophos designat aut populos aut poetas. Triplici enim genere deorum censum distinxit: unum esse physicum quod philosophi retractant; aliud mythicum, quod inter poetas volutetur, tertium gentile, quod populi quique adoptaverunt."

²⁹ CD IV, 27 - Scaevola; CD, VI, 5; and VI, 12 - Varro.

³⁰ CD VII, 23. Rather loose and free translation by J. J. Smith in the Marcus Dods translation. *The City of God* (New York: Modern Library, 1950), p. 229.

³¹ CD VI, 12 (Dods translation). The original reads: "Nunc propter tres theologias, quas Graeci dicunt mythicen physicen politicen, Latine autem dici possunt fabulosa naturalis civilis."

about the gods. These sources are the philosophers, poets, or the laws proper to each city. The distinct sources produce distinct theologies. Since Tertullian interprets them as distinct options, he will criticize them separately.

Tertullian argues that valid theology demands criteria of certitude (*certa*) morality or honest decency (*integra*), and universality (*communis*). The philosophical theology is false because it lacks certitude. Its schools have produced speculative hypotheses that contradict one another. The mythic theology of the poets is false since it lacks moral decency. Its fables are scandalous, degrading, and immoral. The theology of the cities is false because it lacks universality. The people of each city and state chose their own gods. Their choices are arbitrary and vary from city to city.³²

Augustine's confrontation with Varro provides more information about tripartite division. It reveals the differences between Varro's and Scaevola's evaluation of political theology and shows how Augustine's interpretation and critique differs from Tertullian's.

Augustine observes that each of these theologies has a specific source, locus, and theme.³³ The mythic theology consists of the divine myths and stories produced by the poets and its locus is the theatre. Natural theology has its locus in the philosophical schools where the philosophers expound a metaphysical view of the world. Political theology is attributed to the priests and its locus is the cities.³⁴ Since each society should give honor to the gods, each state or city has its own religion and theology. The tripartite division of theology can be thus schematized:

<i>mythic theology</i>	<i>natural theology</i>	<i>political theology</i>
poets	philosophers	statesmen, priests/people
theatre	school/world	city
fabulous stories	world-views	state or civil religion

In addition, a difference between Varro and Scaevola in their evaluation of political theology can be reconstructed from Augustine's presentation. Scaevola criticizes the mythic and natural

³² *Ad nationes*, II, 1,2.

³³ CD VI, 6. Augustine has *civilis* whereas Tertullian has *gentile*. Both have probably translated from Varro's text which had the Greek *politiken*. Augustine's rendition in VI, 12 indicates the Greek original.

³⁴ Tertullian has the people as the source of the political theology. In CD IV, 27 Augustine has "statesmen" and in VI, 6 he refers to citizens, especially priests.

theology from the standpoint of political theology. Even the natural theology, which according to Augustine's claim Scaevola thinks is true, is sacrificed for the sake of the political theology. Varro, however, is much more nuanced in his approach to political theology and the tripartite division. He employs allegorical interpretation to unify and salvage the various theologies. Like Scaevola, he criticizes the mythic theology. However, there is an ambivalence in his evaluation of the natural and political theology. On the one hand, Varro does not criticize the natural theology of the philosophers as Scaevola did. Instead he praises it not only for its truth, but also for its political-religious utility. Its criticism of the anthropomorphism of statues does not weaken Roman religion but leads it back to its original purity. By means of an allegorical interpretation Varro seeks to show how the stories about the gods in the political theology are narrative expressions of the philosophical truths of a natural theology that views the divinity as the soul of the universe. On the other hand, Varro defends the political theology. The mythic theology contains less than the people should follow and the philosophical theology contains more than the people can follow. The strength of the political theology lies in its avoidance of each of these extremes. Furthermore, his division of the gods into certain and uncertain and his allegorical interpretations serves to defend the Roman political theology against its detractors.³⁵

Although Varro perceives that the three theologies are interrelated, he does not realize how intertwined they are. Here Augustine's interpretation and critique differs from that of Tertullian. In contrast to Tertullian, Augustine argues that the tripartite division involves not three distinct options but three interrelated ways of talking about the gods. Augustine understands the tripartite division to be based not on three distinct groups of gods or on three different sources of human knowledge about the gods but rather on three different ways of talking about the gods.³⁶ Therefore he will not criticize them separately as Tertullian did, but together.

Augustine, moreover, radicalizes this perception of the interrelation of the three theologies to obtain a basis for criticizing Varro's political theology. He notes that political theology as a way of talking about the gods cannot be separated from mythic theology since political theology incorporates the religious myths, narratives and symbols of the mythic theology.³⁷ Varro had criticized the mythic

³⁵On Varro's allegorical interpretation, cf. J. Pepin, *Mythe et allégorie* (Paris: Aubier: Editions Montaigne, 1958) especially chaps. 6 and 7.

³⁶CD VI, 6, "id est rationis quo de diis explicatur."

³⁷CD VI, 7, "That theology, therefore, which is fabulous, theatrical, scenic, and full of all baseness and unseemliness, is taken up into the civil theology." A part

theology but had defended the political theology. Augustine argues that if the mythic theology is false, then the political theology is false. Likewise, Augustine's criticism of Varro's natural theology involves a criticism of his political theology.³⁸ In short, Augustine counters the Roman political theology of Varro with a double critique. Its myths are false because they go against the basic principles of morality. Since the political cannot be separated from the mythic, this critique of the mythic also hits the political theology. Augustine likewise criticizes Varro's natural theology and attempts to demonstrate the metaphysical inadequacy of his conception of the divinity as the soul of the universe. He thereby seeks to undercut Varro's allegorical interpretation of the myths of the Roman political theology. Augustine has therefore produced a moral and a metaphysical critique of Varro's political theology. The vulnerability of political theology to such a critique lies in the intertwinement of the three theologies.

Significance of Augustine's Analysis

As a conclusion to this brief survey of the use of political theology in antiquity, the following significant elements of Augustine's presentation, analysis, and critique of political theology can be underscored. *Firstly, political theology as a way of talking about God.* Previous to Augustine the tripartite division was understood as relating to three types of divinity or three sources of our knowledge of the gods. In dealing with Varro, Augustine underscores that the distinction of the three theologies does not represent three distinct religious options but rather distinct ways of talking about God. It is a question of the *ratio, quae de diis explicatur*.³⁹ In discussing the merits and demerits of each of these theologies, it becomes clear that it is not a question about which god one talks about, but rather about how one should speak of the divine. It is not a question of the preeminence of one group of gods over another, but rather the epistemological and metaphysical question of the evaluation of correct language about God.

Secondly, mythic, natural and political theology are radically intertwined. Strikingly, the concept of political theology does not appear in isolation but only in relation to other theologies. Despite this fact, the three theologies appear as autonomous systems. This

of Augustine's argumentation is to divide the civil and mythic theology as human creations from the natural theology as dealing not with human creations but with the work of God. Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Volk und Haus Gottes in Augustins Lehre von der Kirche* (München: Karl Zink Verlag, 1954), pp. 265-75.

³⁸Ratzinger, *Volk und Haus Gottes in Augustins Lehre von der Kirche*.

³⁹CD VI, 6.

is in all probability because the basis of the division involves polytheism and the belief in diverse gods. Nevertheless, the intertwinement of the theologies comes to the fore in Varro's allegorical interpretation and defense of political theology and in Augustine's critique. It has demonstrated how a political theology necessarily presupposes narrative or mythic elements as well as it involves metaphysical assumption.⁴⁰

Thirdly, validity of political theology. From the perspective of Scaevola and Varro the form of religion is determined by the state. The norm for the validity of religion is the state. That religion is the best that serves the well-being of the state.⁴¹ The criteria appealed to in the defense of political theology stem from the political function of religion. Augustine's *City of God* represents a major confrontation with Roman political theology. Not only are the gods of the Roman political religion criticized as human creations, but the basis of Roman political theology is criticized as an immanentizing process. Not only does it absolutize the religious myths of political institutions, but it fails to reach true transcendence. Augustine presents a vision of transcendence and of a transcendent city that alone can be the source and locus of that well-being that is not merely temporal but eternal. In short, utilitarian argument is presented in favor of political theology and it is criticized by a metaphysical analysis and an appeal to a higher and transcendent goal.⁴²

These three points betray the relevance of the discussion in antiquity for the contemporary situation. This discussion raised an interpretative and critical question. The interpretative point is that the mythic, metaphysical and political represent three distinct but interrelated ways of speaking about God. Even though today, the underlying polytheism does not exist, it becomes essential to see that all language about God has a mythic, metaphysical, and political or societal structure. Each of these is accentuated in the contemporary emphases on a story or narrative theology, a transcendental or process metaphysical approach or in a political or liberation theology. Each of these theologies would fall behind the insight of Augustine if they did not perceive their interrelation. However, it is was the insight of Augustine to demonstrate how the political theology is dependent upon the mythic and metaphysical

⁴⁰CD, IV, 31; VI, 4.

⁴¹Cf. Pepin, 1956, *op. cit.*, pp. 276-8, for a defense of Varro against Augustine's charges. Varro appears to be not as utilitarian as Scaevola.

⁴²U. Duchrow, *Christenheit und Weltverantwortung* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1970), pp. 181-319.

theology; it will become the insight of the Enlightenment that these are in turn also dependent upon societal and political presuppositions. The question of the validity was met by political theology with an appeal to utility and political function. Augustine raised the moral and metaphysical criteria and appealed to a higher goal.

B. The Enlightenment: Civil Religion or Political Theology

The notion of "political theology" and Augustine's confrontation with Varro did not remain unknown in the Middle Ages. Yet it had no significance as the example of Thomas Aquinas shows. He refers to the tripartite division of theology in the *Summa Theologica* and in his *Commentary on Romans*.⁴³ The context of the discussion in the *Summa* is not so much political theology or natural religion as the problem of idolatry. In discussing whether idolatry is a species of superstition, Thomas distinguishes three types of idolatry in antiquity. They are subsumed under the three types of theology, the natural, mythical, and civil theology. The mythical and civil theologies of antiquity entailed idolatrous actions in so far as they promoted the worship of human persons as divine. The natural theology was also idolatrous in so far as it regarded the soul or the parts of the world as divine. All three theologies are equally idolatrous because they promote either the divinization of the world and its soul or of human persons.⁴⁴

It is only during the Enlightenment and the reaction to the Enlightenment that the notion of political theology becomes a crucial issue. In the wake of the religious wars, there was a renewed interest in the sixteenth century in natural religion and natural theology. The alternative between natural religion and political theology is again raised but with a crucial difference. Now the meaning of natural theology has radically changed its meaning from the time of antiquity. Whereas natural theology had been understood by Varro and Cicero to refer to nature as the being, essence or true reality of things, the modern concept of natural theology relates to the distinction in the Christian tradition between the light of grace and the light of reason. Hence natural theology is now primarily distinguished from a revealed theology.⁴⁵ This differentiation is important to understand the

⁴³II, II, 94, Al and *Comm ad Romanos* I, 7.

⁴⁴II, II, 94, Al.

⁴⁵Cf. R. Cudworth (1617-1688) *Systema intellectuale . . . seu de veris naturae rerum originibus* (Lugduni, 1773), 2nd ed. vol. I, chap. 4, #26, pp. 671ff. He argues against G. J. Vossius that Varro's tripartite division and especially his natural theology means something quite different. The change in the meaning of natural theology is noted.

significance of the discussion during the Enlightenment and the Catholic reaction to the Enlightenment.

The Enlightenment's demand for a natural religion or natural theology in distinction to the historical religions with their theologies based upon special revelations is not unrelated to the religious wars. Although political reasons and economic motives play an important role in the religious wars between Catholics and Protestants, these wars were viewed by representatives of the Enlightenment to be the result of dogmatic and confessional differences. These confessional differences implied political theologies, that is, they implied a theological justification for the civil support of particular confessions. The Enlightenment's attempt to give religion a foundation that transcends confessional differences would not be merely the rationalistic attempt to identify the biblical religion with a religion of reason or a natural theology. It also and especially had the practical effect of working against the possibility of political hostilities that result from positive confessional and theological differences.⁴⁶ H. Grotius (1583-1645) with his elaboration of natural law and J. Bodin (1530-1596) with his coinage of the term "natural religion" stand in this religious political context.

In fact, H. Grotius refers in his *Adnotationes in Epistulam ad Romanos* (I,25) to the Varro quotation and the distinction between civil, poetic, and natural theology.⁴⁷ Moreover, he was quite familiar with Roman political theology.⁴⁸ Similar references to the tripartite division can be found among the leading representatives of the Enlightenment such as E. Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1581-1648),⁴⁹ P. Bayle (1647-1706),⁵⁰ and G. Vico (1668-1744).⁵¹ Characteristic of these references is the awareness of the tripartite division of antiquity. The *Encyclopedia* of M. Diderot and J.-L. d'Alembert, for example, states that the ancients had three types of theology and they define political theology as follows: "embrassée principalement par les princes, les magistrats, les prêtres et les corps des peuples, comme la science la plus utile et la

⁴⁶Cf. B. de Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise* (1670), trans. by R. H. M. Elwes (New York: Dover Publications, 1951), p. 6.

⁴⁷"non civilem se sequi Theologiam aut poeticam, sed naturalem, ut ista distinguebat Varro," in *Opera theologica*, vol. III (Basle, 1732), p. 679a.

⁴⁸Cf. also his *Adnotationes ad Acta Apostolorum* 16,21 in *Opera theologica*, vol. II (Basle, 1732), p. 626b.

⁴⁹*De religione gentilium* (Amsterdam, 1663), chap. 16, p. 227.

⁵⁰*Continuation des Pensées Diverses in Oeuvres Diverses* (Den Haag, 1727; reprint Hildesheim, 1966), p. 255.

⁵¹The Varro quotation appears in both *Principles of the Philosophy of History* and in *De nostri temporis studiorum ratione*, IX (Darmstadt, 1963), p. 83.

plus nécessaire pour la sûreté, la tranquillité et la prospérité."⁵² In the Enlightenment this political theology, however, is rejected. Interesting is the reason given by Christian Wolff (1679-1754): "per impietatem vero theologiam naturalem cum civili confundunt athei, dum theologiam omnem pro figmento politicorum habent."⁵³ This statement reminds one of the original political intent of the Enlightenment's appeal to natural theology, even though it had lost its political force at the time of Wolff. The conceptual problems raised by the relation between political theology and natural theology can be best illustrated by analyzing Jean-Jacques Rousseau's understanding of "civil religion" and the political theology of the Catholic Restoration of the eighteenth century.

Rousseau's Civil Religion

Rousseau's most extended analysis of "civil religion" appears in chapter 8 of Book IV of the *Social Contract*.⁵⁴ This chapter, entitled "civil religion," discusses the relation between religion and state from a historical and systematic perspective.⁵⁵ Historically, he contrasts the paganism of antiquity and Christianity. In paganism, God was at the head of every political society and as many gods existed as peoples. There were no specific religious wars because every political war was as much a theological war. In short, Rousseau is referring to the political theology of the cities and states of antiquity whereby the religious and political fate of each city or state was intertwined. In contrast, Christianity's proclamation of a heavenly kingdom vitiated the political theology of antiquity. Since the transcendent eschatological spirit of Christianity does not allow it to be integrated into any state, Christianity led to two sovereignties: state and church. The resulting division of

⁵² *Encyclopedie* XXXIII (Lausanne-Bern, 1781), p. 423.

⁵³ *Theologia naturalis* (Frankfurt/Leipzig, 1736), p. 3.

⁵⁴ A basic and thorough analysis that has been neglected in the recent studies on Rousseau is Karl Dietrich Erdmann, *Das Verhältnis von Staat und Religion nach der Sozialphilosophie Rousseaus (Der Begriff der 'religion civile')* (Berlin: Verlag D. Emil Ebering, 1935). For more recent analyses cf. R. Derathé, "La religion civile selon Rousseau," *Annales de la société J. J. Rousseau* 35 (1959/62), 161-80; R. Masters, *The Political Philosophy of Rousseau* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968), esp. pp. 87-8 and 408-9; S. Cotta, "Théorie religieuse et théorie politique chez Rousseau," *Annales de philosophie politique* 5 (1965), 171-94; H. Gouhier, *Les méditations métaphysiques de Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1970), pp. 244-57. For an analysis of the problems, the classic work of Pierre Maurice Masson is still useful, *La religion de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, vol. II, *La 'Profession de Foi' de Jean-Jacques* (Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1916), pp. 178-204.

⁵⁵ *The Social Contract*. Trans. by M. Cranston (Baltimore: Penguin, 1968).

power made good policy impossible because it produced a conflict of jurisdictions in which citizens did not know which authority to obey. Although no state has been established without religion, Christianity proves to be more harmful than helpful for the welfare of states.⁵⁶

This historical contrast receives a further systematic explication. Rousseau contrasts conceptually the religion of humanity with the religion of a particular nation. The religion of humanity represents the true theism and true natural divine law. It believes in a supreme God and the eternal obligations of morality, but has neither temples nor rituals. It is the simple religion of the Gospel. In contrast, the national religion of a particular country represents the political religion that provides a country with its special tutelary deities. Its dogmas and rituals are legislated by law. What is outside the nation is not only foreign, but infidel. This represents the positive political religions of antiquity. There is, however, a mixed type, of which Catholic Christianity is an example. It has two legislative orders because it mixes each and hence prevents persons from fulfilling their roles as either members of a country or of a church.

Rousseau evaluates these contrasting options from a political and legal point of view. The religion of humanity is the religion of the human person as a private individual. It represents the pure Christianity of the Gospel. But it has no connection with law. It leaves law as law without any transcendent support. It is therefore contrary to the social spirit and is politically useless. The national political religion is the religion of the citizen. Such a religion is legally and politically very useful and advantageous. Nevertheless it is based on error. Equally important, it is also harmful. Because it is particularistic, i.e., limited to a particular country or political unit, it is exclusive, intolerant, and leads to holy wars. The third type of Catholic Christianity is, as noted, only a mixture and not good because it destroys social unity.⁵⁷

What is the result of Rousseau's analysis? The natural religion of humanity, which he identifies with the pure Christianity of the Gospel, is true. Despite its truth, it is politically useless. The particular national or political religions are useful, but they are false and even harmful.⁵⁸ Yet this places him before a dilemma. On

⁵⁶"The Christian law is at bottom more injurious than serviceable to a robust state." *Ibid.*, p. 180.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, p. 181.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 182-3. Erdmann, *Das Verhältnis von Staat und Religion*, pp. 47-8.

the one hand, he thinks that the social contract alone does not suffice. Religion is needed so that citizens would love their duties and so that the contract is not broken. On the other hand, the true religion is useless whereas the useful religion is false and harmful. It is in this context that he introduces the notion of civil religion with a profession of faith that is purely civil.

But can this civil religion achieve its purpose? How is it related to the natural religion?⁵⁹ The dogmas of the civil religion are five: (1) existence of a powerful divinity, (2) divine providence, (3) future retribution and reward, (4) the sanctity of the social contract and law, (5) the sole negative dogma, the prohibition of intolerance. The civil religion of the social contract omits elements of the natural religion of the profession of faith in *Emile*. It does not include the belief that all persons are children of God, that agreements with enemies must be kept and that beneficence and pity should be given to persons as persons. Yet these very differences indicate the difficulty of the notion of civil religion. On the one hand, it should enable persons to love their civil duties, even to the point of self-sacrifice for them. On the other hand, the natural religion that is true has a universality that goes against the very particularity that a civil religion would demand. The principles of the natural religion are based on a universal truth whereas the principles of a civil religion are based on social utility. That they conflict is the basic problem of Rousseau's notion of civil religion. It does not suffice to appeal to the moral utility of religion because, as Rousseau himself notes, moral truth and political utility are not one and the same. The differences between the profession of faith by the Savoyard Vicar in *Emile* and the civil religion of the *Social Contract* betray the fundamental ambiguity of Rousseau's position as well as the intrinsic difficulty of a religion that claims or aims to be purely natural.⁶⁰

No one has caused Rousseau's notion of civil religion to be discussed more than Robert Bellah and his analysis of the American civil religion.⁶¹ Nevertheless the same ambiguity appears in his own concept. On the one hand, the god of the American civil religion represents a rather deistic or "unitarian" god who is related to law, order and rights. On the other hand, in order for this god and this religion to function precisely as the American civil

⁵⁹Masters, *The Political Philosophy of Rousseau*, pp. 87f.

⁶⁰Such a difficulty has already been pointed out by Félicité Lamennais, *Essai sur l'indifférence en matière de religion* (1817) in *Oeuvres Complètes de F. De La Mennais* (Paris: Dubrée et Cailleux, 1836), I:63-85.

⁶¹Cf. Richey and Jones, *American Civil Religion*.

religion, it becomes necessary to involve this god in human history and attribute to this god a special concern for America such as Israel enjoyed in antiquity. In short, the universalism of a natural religion must necessarily be undercut by particular nationalism if religion is to serve as a civil religion.⁶²

The Political Theology of the Catholic Restoration

Both the term "political theology" and the attempt to develop political theologies emerges in the Catholic Restoration.⁶³ In France, Spain, and Germany a reaction takes place to the Enlightenment and to the French Revolution. Spearheaded by Catholics, often nobility in exile, this reaction is given various labels. In Germany it is referred to as the traditionalist or romantic position. In France, it is called the royalist, theocratic, ultramontane or reactionary position. Its representatives are J. Donoso Cortés (1809-1853),⁶⁴ Louis G. A. de Bonald (1754-1840),⁶⁵ Joseph de Maistre (1773-1821),⁶⁶ Carl Ludwig von Haller (1768-1854)⁶⁷ and the early Félicité Lamennais (1782-1854).⁶⁸ Although they wrote against the revolution and often in favor of the reestablishment of the monarchical order, their intention was not only practical and political, but it was also apologetic and it betrayed a new fundamental theology. Unless this apologetic intent is viewed alongside

⁶²*Beyond Belief* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 175.

⁶³See H. Maier, *Revolution and Church. The Early History of Christian Democracy 1789-1901*. Trans. E. Schossberger (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), pp. 142-78; D. Bagge, *Les idées politiques en France sous la restauration* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1952); M. Baumotte, *Theologie als politische Aufklärung* (Gerd Mohn: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1973).

⁶⁴Juan Donoso Cortés, *Obras completas de don Juan Donoso Cortés*. Ed. by J. Juretschke, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1946). Cf. J. T. Graham, *Donoso Cortés* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1974); C. Schmitt, *Donoso Cortés in gesamt-europäischer Interpretation* (Köln: Greven Verlag, 1950), and P. Westemeyer, *Donoso Cortés Staatsmann und Theologe* (Münster: Aschaffendorf, 1941). Both Schmitt and Westemeyer focus on Cortés' political theology. Westemeyer notes (p. 27) the use of the term "political theology" by Cortés and claims that he has originated it.

⁶⁵Vicomte L. G. A. de Bonald, *Oeuvres de M. de Bonald* (Brussels: Société Nationale, 1845). Cf. R. Spaemann, *Der Ursprung der Soziologie aus dem Geist der Restauration. Studien über L. G. A. de Bonald* (München: Kösel Verlag, 1959).

⁶⁶J. de Maistre, *Oeuvres Complètes* (Lyon: Edition Vitte, 1884-1887). Cf. also *The Works of Joseph de Maistre*, trans. and ed. by J. Lively (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1965).

⁶⁷C. L. von Haller, *Politische Religion oder biblische Lehre über die Staaten* (Winterthur, 1811).

⁶⁸*Op. cit.*; see fn. 60. Cf. J. Oldfield, *The Problem of Tolerance and Social Existence in the Writings of Félicité Lamennais 1809-1831* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973) and L. LeGuillou, *L' évolution de la pensée religieuse de Félicité Lamennais* (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1966).

with the political intent, the Catholic Restoration is not understood. Unless it is viewed not only as a reaction to the revolution, but also as a reaction to the Enlightenment and as such also a child of the Enlightenment, its contribution to Western culture is not understood. In fact, one author has shown that Catholic traditionalism was originally a fundamental theology and a theory of cognition that became thought of in time mainly as political and social.⁶⁹

The political practical intention of traditionalism was to reconstitute society on the basis of religion.⁷⁰ All the traditionalists can be brought under this formula. They all underscored the necessity and utility of religion for the maintenance of the political and social order. In discussing the generative principle of political constitutions, Maistre argues from a metaphysical and sociological perspective that religion is necessary for the establishment of durable institutions. His position goes beyond the Enlightenment. The utility of religion was a common assumption of the Enlightenment, but its utilitarian function was primarily necessary for the masses. Maistre stresses that not only the masses, but all persons even the educated and the nobility need religion. This utility was not simply pragmatic or instrumental. Maistre praises Christianity for its improvement of morals and sees this moral improvement as underlying its political utility.⁷¹

In the political situation of the time, this stress on the utility of religion leads to an explicit program to reconstitute society by religion.⁷² What this concretely meant was the reestablishment of the authority of the monarchy and authority of the papacy. The need for strong religious and political authorities were intertwined. It was seen to be founded in a theory that human nature was bad and needed authority as also in an organic notion that society needed leadership and a head.

⁶⁹Maier, *Revolution and Church*, p. 174. "Although originally a theory of cognition and a system of fundamental theology [traditionalism] became identified in time with certain conclusions which shifted it from the religious to the political and social spheres."

⁷⁰Bonald writes: "to consider the political society from the viewpoint of religion and the religious society from the viewpoint of the political government," and therefore "to speak of politics as theology and of religion as a politicum" *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 327.

⁷¹*Op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 343. Cf. R. Lebrun, *Throne and Altar. The Political and Religious Thought of Joseph de Maistre* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1965), pp. 123f., where he argues for an interpretation of Maistre's understanding of the utility of religion that is more than instrumental pragmatic. This is argued vs. John Courtney Murray, "Political Thought of Joseph de Maistre," *Review of Politics* 11 (1949), 63-86.

⁷²Lamennais, *Oeuvres Complètes de F. De La Mennais*, vol. 2, p. xix. "De reconstituer la société politique à l'aide de la société religieuse."

But this stress on the positive function of religion was not only part of a restorative political program; it formed the center of a "new apologetics"⁷³ or a new method of theology and a new approach to fundamental theology. This new apologetics and new method was essential to the Catholic restoration. It formed the cognitive and metaphysical center of their political theologies. This new apologetics had several common elements: the necessity of religion, the primacy of the social, the interrelation between social and political questions, and a social functional criterion of truth.

The social necessity of religion. Lamennais' great apologetic, *Essai sur l'indifférence en matière de religion* attacked the indifferentism of the Enlightenment or any intellectual system that assumed that ethics is not dependent upon creeds or conduct on belief. The intrinsic relation between theory and praxis was elaborated. As with all the traditionalists this emphasis on the importance of theory for praxis centered on the effects of religion upon society rather than on the individual. Lamennais argues against both the Enlightenment and Rousseau. The inconsistency of the Enlightenment is demonstrated. The philosophers consider religion to be necessary for society since it encourages persons to perform those duties upon which society depends. Yet they attack positive religion and many truths of religion. However, only if religion is believed as true can it support the moral and legal order. Against Rousseau's deism and natural religion, Lamennais writes: "C'est un fait remarquable, qu'il n'existe dans aucun temps de peuple déiste."⁷⁴ A natural religion as such does not exist. Only positive religion exists. Lamennais's *Essai* represents a major apologetics and a fundamental theological defense of the social necessity of positive religion in the face of the Enlightenment's critique. At first Lamennais' defense served conservative political options, but later it will of necessity lead to his liberalism.

A second element in the new apologetic of the Catholic restoration is the stress on the *primacy of the social over the individual*. The central thesis of Bonald's *Théorie du pouvoir politique et religieuse* is that society forms the person and not the person forms society.⁷⁵ Individual reason is subordinated to collective reason. Bonald attacks Rousseau's anthropology. The natural is not what

⁷³Cf. A. Vidler, *Prophecy and Papacy A Study of Lamennais* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954). Chap. 3 is entitled "New Apologetics 1117-1824, pp. 68-100.

⁷⁴*Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 112 (*Essai*).

⁷⁵*Op. cit.*, vol. I. This is the thesis of the opening chapter.

is good and is the norm. Nature represents the underdeveloped stage and humans are bad by nature. Rationality is a child of society and we become good through society. These ideas are associated with a special theory of the divine origin of language and of a primitive revelation. However, they influence Lamennais and Maistre. Bonald distinguished between argumentation and reason and underscored the dependence of individual reason upon general reason. Lamennais develops the idea of the "general reason" and its infallibility, Maistre relates truth to the testimony of the times. What is true is what all persons believe to be unarguable. *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod omnibus* is a proof of the truth.⁷⁶

Thirdly, there is an *identification of theological questions with political and social questions*. Again common to the Catholic Restoration thinkers is the attempt to show that political questions involve theological questions. Don Juan Donoso Cortés opens his *An Essay on Catholicism, Authority and Order considered in their Fundamental Principles*⁷⁷ with the quotation from Proudhon's *Confessions of a Revolutionary* as the leitmotif that affirms that all political questions imply a theological truth. In fact, Donoso Cortés will boldly assert "it follows that every affirmation respecting society or government supposes an affirmation relative to God; or, what is the same thing, that every political or social truth necessarily resolves itself into a theological truth."⁷⁸ Through historical analyses Donoso Cortés argues for a parallelism between theology and society. An analysis of Hindu theology and society as well as Roman theology and society reflects this parallelism. Changes in the order of each are reflected in the order of the other. Likewise the political options of the present such as liberalism and socialism betray the changes in theological ideas. The revolutionary abolishment of the monarchy reveals itself as a consequence of deism and the Enlightenment's critique of religion.

In asserting this parallelism between religious and political ideas, the political theology of the Catholic Enlightenment foreshadowed the Marxist analysis of religion and society. In fact, Marxism can be seen as a reversal of the central thesis of the Catholic Restoration. They sought to underscore how political ideas and religious ideas were parallel for the sake of arguing that a change in theological and religious ideas leads to a change in

⁷⁶For the differences between Maistre, Bonald, and Lamennais, cf. M. Ferraz, *Histoire de la philosophie en France au XIX^e siècle* (Paris: Didier et Cie, 1880), first three chapters, pp. 1-268.

⁷⁷Trans. by M. Goddard (New York: Joseph Wagner, 1925), pp. 1-3.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, p. 4.

political and social patterns. Marxism will reverse the dependency and underscore how changes in political and social patterns effect theological or religious notions.

Finally, the new apologetics of the Catholic Restoration will develop a *new theory, method or criterion of theological truth*. In the preface of *Du Pape*, Maistre readily admits the newness of this theological methodology.⁷⁹ He argues that societal and political function is a criterion with foundational significance for theology. The traditional theological method drew its arguments from Scripture and tradition. The more ancient the evidence, the stronger the argument for a theological position. Maistre's new method draws not from the past but rather from the present. An institution should be judged by its present function. The contemporary conditions of the Church in its maturity rather than its stage of infancy should provide the measure or standard by which the institutional nature of the Church was to be theologically determined. Maistre has replaced a historical criterion with one of societal efficacy and political utility. This criterion was not totally utilitarian since the historical permanence and endurance of an institution or praxis was a part of this criterion of truth.

Maistre's method should not be understood as establishing political and societal utility as the sole criterion of truth,⁸⁰ for he also elaborated a theory of analogy by which he sought to demonstrate that revealed truths were "divinizations" of rational truths and had an anthropological universality. Analogies of Christian dogmas were sought for in theory and praxis in other cultures and religions. Lamennais argued with reliance on Rousseau's *Emile* for an understanding of true utility as based on truth. The common reason that determined what was true or not had also been given in the Catholic Restoration a theological underpinning in so far as it was seen to be based on a primordial revelation.

Nevertheless, the apologetic methods proposed by Lamennais and Maistre constituted a new fundamental theology. It went beyond the traditional arguments from Scripture or tradition or the method of St. Sulpice with its natural theology as a foundation for revealed theology. Because of its newness it came under attack.

⁷⁹For the critical edition see Du Pape. *Édition critique avec une Introduction* par J. Lovie et J. Chetail (Geneva: 1966). The criticism of this method is mentioned and discussed by Maistre in his manuscript, "Amica collatio, ou échange d'observations sur le livre français intitulé *Du Pape*" 1820), published in *Études* 73 (October 5, 1897), 5-32.

⁸⁰Cf. R. Triomphe, *Joseph de Maistre. Étude sur la vie et sur la doctrine d'un matérialiste mystique* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1968).

Maistre's principle of analogy and his appeal to societal function and political utility was severely criticized by his contemporaries.⁸¹ Lamennais's new apologetics came under sharp attack when its implications were fully grasped with the publication of the second volume of the *Essai*. The prevailing theological opinion concerning this new method has been well put by John Courtney Murray in his description of Maistre's theological apologetic as a sociological and pragmatic defense of religion. This, he argues, "may have been good sociology and good statesmanship, but it was far from being good theology."⁸² Even more devastating is the claim of G. Lecigne that this new theological method is not at all theological either in its point of departure or in its dialectic.⁸³

These criticisms recall the debate between Augustine and Varro. Similarities and differences emerge. Augustine had argued that the Roman political theology depended upon a mythic and metaphysical theology. The Catholic Restoration argued against the Enlightenment that no natural religion exists, but only positive religion. Hence civil religion as a part of a natural religion and without positive religion was an impossibility. Like Augustine, they argued that political beliefs depend upon metaphysical presuppositions.⁸⁴

Despite such similarities, the political theology of the Catholic Restoration goes beyond the debate of antiquity in several ways. Firstly, the social nature of religion is acknowledged in a way not seen in antiquity. Although Lamennais refers back to Plato and Cicero as ancient witnesses of the social nature of religion, his own position goes far beyond them as seen in his letter to Count Senfft: "for it seems to me that until now neither ancient society nor Christian society has been well understood. Those who have seen most clearly have recognized that there are intimate, necessary

⁸¹ Cf. fn. 79.

⁸² *Op. cit.*, p. 77.

⁸³ G. Lecigne, *Joseph de Maistre* (Paris: Lethielleux, 1914), p. 218.

⁸⁴ It should not be overlooked that references to political theology as a specific term are still within the context of the tripartite division. Cf. F. Baader (1765-1841) refers to the Varro tripartite division with the note "Tout comme chez nous!" in *Sämmtliche Werke* (Leipzig: 1851-1860; reprint Aalen, 1963), XIV:332. See his *Über das durch die Französische Revolution herbeigeführte Bedürfnis einer neuen und innigeren Verbindung der Religion mit der Politik* in *SW*, VI, pp. 11-28; as well as his review of Bonald and Lamennais in vol. V. In his review of Lamennais' *Paroles d'un croyant* (Paris, 1834), Baader accuses Lamennais of confusing political and religious freedom. Against his political theology, he writes, "Wenn du als Theologe bedacht hättest, dass das christliche Element als das befreiende nicht von aussen her und im äusseren politischen Forum zu den Menschen tritt . . . sondern von innen heraus . . ." *SW* VI, pp. 111-23.

relations between religious society and political society; but they have not recognized that religion is the whole of society considered under diverse relations. . . ."⁸⁵ The extent of this interrelation and its totality is the distinctive feature of the political theology of the Catholic restoration.

Secondly, the political theology of the Catholic Restoration underscored the functional and utilitarian nature of religion so much that this functionalism and utilitarianism became a new method of apologetics with new criteria of theological adequacy. This functionalism has of course been criticized. In a way, just as Augustine criticized the utilitarian criteria of Scaevola and Varro, theologians have criticized the Catholic Restoration. If political utility is a criterion, it can be used to criticize and not just defend Christianity. Moreover, from a metaphysical and ethical point of view, the adequacy of such functionalism with its too facile identification of truth and utility can readily be challenged. Yet it is important to note that the functionalism of the Catholic Restoration was not simply pragmatic or instrumentalist. Instead it was based on an insight into the historical and social nature of truth. It developed a social theory of certitude and a consensual theory of truth. In this respect it has anticipated contemporary theories of functionalism as well as the attempt to construct a consensual theory of truth.⁸⁶ The achievement of the Catholic Restoration was the insight that fundamental theology as a political theology also demanded a social theory of truth. Whether their theories adequately took into account transcendental and metaphysical analyses of the nature of truth and morality can be debated. Yet they did pose a fundamental problem of political theology: what are its criteria?

Thirdly, whereas Augustine criticized the Roman political theology on the basis of the transcendent belief of Catholic faith, the Catholic Restoration defended a traditional political order on the basis of the same faith. This contrast comes to the fore in the debate about political theology in the 1920's. In various monographs, including studies on *Donoso Cortés*⁸⁷ and *Political*

⁸⁵Letter from Lamennais to Count Senfft, dated May 15, 1824, is reproduced in P. Dudon, "Lamennais en Italie," *Études* (Febrier, 1933), p. 431.

⁸⁶J. Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorien," in *Wirklichkeit und Reflexion. Festschrift für Walter Schultz*, ed. by H. Fahrenbach (Pfullingen: Verlag Gunther Neske, 1973), pp. 166-211. For a critical analysis of Habermas' theory, cf. T. McCarthy, "A Theory of Communicative Competence," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 3 (1973), pp. 135-56.

⁸⁷*Op. cit.*, cf. fn. 64.

Theology,⁸⁸ Carl Schmitt attempted to renew the political theology of the Catholic Restoration.⁸⁹ He shared much with the Catholic Restoration: the hermeneutical or interpretative assumption of a parallel between religious beliefs and categories of politics and jurisprudence; the assumption that political decisions and governmental forms needed the support of theological symbols; and his reaction to the liberal Weimar democracy paralleled Cortés' reaction to the liberalism of his time.

Erik Peterson, the converted Catholic patristic scholar, argued in a study on *Monotheism as a Political Problem*⁹⁰ that political theology was not merely a product of the Enlightenment and the Catholic Restoration but a characteristic feature of the specific monotheistic belief that results from the hellenistic transformation of the Jewish belief in God in so far as it merged the God of the Jews with that of the monarchical principle of Greek philosophy. This notion of God became a political theological propaganda formula for the Jews and was taken over by the Church in its mission in the Roman Empire. It ran up against a pagan political theology according to which the divine monarch rules, but the individual national gods govern. The Christians fought these national gods, however, by means of an interpretation of the *Pax Augusta* as a fulfillment of the eschatology of the Old Testament. The teaching of the divine monarchy, however, failed in the face of the trinitarian dogma; the theological interpretation of the *Pax Augusta* failed in the face of Christian eschatology. Peterson argues that only Jewish or pagan theology can have a political theology: the Christian preaching of the Trinity and of transcendent eschatology goes against each and every political theology. In short, political theology is inconsistent with Christian theology.⁹¹

⁸⁸ *Politische Theologie. Vier Kapitel zur Lehre von der Souveränität* (München: Verlag von Duncker & Humblot, 1922).

⁸⁹ *Politische Romantik* (München: Verlag von Duncker & Humblot, 1925). Cf. K. Kodalle, *Politik als Macht und Mythos. Carl Schmitts 'Politische Theologie'* (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1973).

⁹⁰ *Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem* (Leipzig, 1935), reprinted in E. Peterson, *Theologische Traktate* (München: Kösel, 1951), pp. 45-147.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* Cf. also E. Peterson, "Kaiser Augustus im Urteil des antiken Christentums. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der politischen Theologie," *Hochland* 30 (1933), 289-99; H. Hirt, "Monotheismus als politisches Problem?" *Hochland* 35 (1937/1938), 319-24. See also H. Ball, "Carl Schmitts Politische Theologie," *Hochland* 21 (1924), 263-86; Jean Stehl, "Carl Schmitt und die Politische Theologie," *Frankfurter Hefte* 27 (1972), 407-17.

C. Political Theology or Liberation Theology?

In the 1960's the terms "political theology" and "liberation theology" come into vogue and express new trends in theology.⁹² In Germany, the term was introduced at first without any awareness of its previous background. It was coined to express a theological reaction to the individualism of existential theology. It sought to underscore the public, societal and political dimensions of the Christian faith. In Latin America, liberation theology came into public and official consciousness at the Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops in Medellin where, in a discussion of the educational task of the Church, the term "liberation" was used. In the general theological literature it replaced "development" as an approach to the Latin American situation. Various movements for emancipation, equality and autonomy have underscored the importance of change not only on the political and social level but also on the cultural level. In this connection theologies of Black liberation or women's liberation have emerged. Although the recent German political theology has often been associated with either the political theology of the Catholic Restoration or with the liberation theology of Latin America, it should be quite clearly differentiated from each. The points of comparison are: the analysis of the situation, the reaction to the previous theologies, the methodological principles, and the political goal. The following chart might help illustrate the differences:

(1) *Situation Analysis*: German political theology departs from an analysis of the societal situation as secularized. This theme of secularization echoes through the writings of Metz, Moltmann, and Sölle. It is understood as the demystification of nature due to technological developments (Metz),⁹³ the exchange nature of modern industrial society in which religion has no public place (Moltmann)⁹⁴ and the death of the theistic notion of God (Sölle).⁹⁵

⁹²Cf. F. Fiorenza, "Political Theology," *op. cit.*, fn. 14; also *ibid.* "Latin American Liberation Theology," *Interpretation* 28, 4 (October, 1974), 441-57.

⁹³J. B. Metz, *Theology of the World* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969). Cf. F. Fiorenza, "The Thought of J. B. Metz: Origin, Positions, Development," *Philosophy Today* 10 (1966), 247-52.

⁹⁴J. Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, trans. by J. Leitch (New York: Harper and Row, 1967). Cf. F. Fiorenza, "Dialectical Theology and Hope, I," *Heythrop Journal* 9 (1968), 143-63.

⁹⁵Dorothee Sölle, *Christ the Representative*, trans. by D. Lewis (London: SCM, 1967). Cf. F. Fiorenza, "Personal Self-Identity and Political Theology," *Horizons* 1 (1975), 125-30.

This situational analysis separates political theology not only from Latin American liberation theology, but also the political theology of the Catholic Restoration. In Latin America not secularization but dependency and oppression characterize the situation. The Church is seen as still having enormous public influence and this public influence is the basis for the demand that the Church engage itself politically. A major criticism made by the Latin American theologians is that the German theologians presupposed that their own secularized situation is universal. Moreover, they point out that their situational analysis is primarily cultural. It overlooks economic and political dependencies. In this respect, the political theology appears to be "apolitical."

In relation to the political theology of the Catholic Restoration, it appears that the recent political theology is both less political and less cultural. It is less political because the Catholic Restoration was concretely concerned with the new governmental forms that resulted from the French Revolution and it strove for a restoration of the monarchy. It is also less cultural because the Catholic Restoration did not simply interpret the situation as secularized but rather argued for the interrelation between political and religious ideas and hence saw the structural interrelation between the French Enlightenment and the rise of democracy.

(2) *Previous theological and philosophical positions:* The German political theologians argue that the response to the secularized situation by existentialism or by transcendental theology is inadequate. Faith is reduced to the private sphere of individual existence or to transcendental subjectivity. Existential theology does not attempt to overcome the societal situation of secularization but merely confirms the public-private split of the modern world. If society has reduced faith to the private sphere, then existential theology accentuates this privatization rather than works against it.⁹⁶

In Latin American liberation theology, developmentalism and liberalism are likewise criticized for failing to come to terms with the situation. Developmentalism assumes that the situation can be remedied without changing the very structures that cause situations of dependency. Liberalism with its two levels relegated the layman to the world and the Church to the religious sphere. Hence

⁹⁶Cf. J. B. Metz, "Political Theology," in *Sacramentum Mundi* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), pp. 34-8; Dorothee Sölle, *Political Theology*, trans. by J. Shelley (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974). The subtitle of the German original is: "Confrontation with Rudolf Bultmann."

	<i>Political Theology of Catholic Restoration</i>	<i>Latin American Liberation Theology</i>	<i>Political Theology 1960's</i>
<i>Situation</i>	Enlightenment, French Revolution, Rise of Democracy	Oppression and Poverty, Economic Dependency	Secularization and privatization through industrialization, technology and market society
<i>Reaction to Previous Theology or Philosophy</i>	Individualism of Enlightenment, Natural Theology of St. Sulpice, Cartesian influence in theology	Economic developmental theories, Two levels of Catholic liberalism	Individualism of existential theology and philosophy
<i>Methodic Emphasis</i>	Utilitarianism, Common consent, Historical-development	Praxis to theory, Ideology criticism	Theory-praxis, eschatology, narrative theology
<i>Political Goal</i>	Restoration of monarchy, Strengthening of papal authority	Overcoming of relations of dependency, equality	No specific goal, constant critique

it undercut more than it intended the engagement of the Church in the world.⁹⁷

The political theology of the Restoration criticized the deism of the Enlightenment as the theological and theoretical constellation leading to the French Revolution. It sought by means of a new apologetic both to argue against the very presuppositions of the Enlightenment, but on the basis of the Enlightenment itself. It sought to restore the institutional authority of the Church as a means of supporting political institutions and the authority of the monarchy.

(3) *In response to the situation each develops a new methodology.* The political theology demands a new hermeneutic. Instead of an existential understanding of the Gospel, it demands a political interpretation. What this claim asserts is that the meaning of the Gospel is not exhausted in its significance for the individual nor is its application limited to the private realm. Instead the Gospel message has public meaning and social application.⁹⁸ Noting that theory and praxis are intrinsically related, political

⁹⁷G. Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, trans. C. Inda and J. Eagleson (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1973).

⁹⁸Cf. J. Moltmann, "Toward a Political Hermeneutic of the Gospel," in his *Religion, Revolution and the Future*, trans. by M. Meeks (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), pp. 83-107.

theology affirms that the faith must necessarily relate to social and political praxis. How the faith is related to praxis is, however, not clarified. Metz refers to the role of political ethics in linking faith and praxis. The mediation function of political ethics is not elaborated. Instead, emphasis is given to a new fundamental theology that is not formal and transcendental but stresses the cultural retrieval of eschatology or the memory of the passion of Christ.⁹⁹ This fundamental theology argues that a narrative rather than a metaphysical analysis is the appropriate methodological approach to cultural retrieval. In the background of this fundamental theology is the challenge of Marxism to the Christian faith and its accusation that faith alienates. This accusation is turned around with the argument that the faith has a praxis that overcomes the alienation of contemporary society.¹⁰⁰

Liberation theology does not so much move from theory to praxis as from praxis to theory.¹⁰¹ It places a premium on partisanship, commitment to the oppressed, and involvement as presuppositions of the discovery of truth. The experience of injustice leads to ideological suspicion which is in turn applied to theological superstructures. The result of such ideology criticism is the ability to read the Scriptures in a new light and gain insights that can illumine the faith and enlighten us as to the present task. This approach is proclaimed as a new method that leads to a liberation of theology. In so far as ideology criticism plays an important role, it is indebted to Marxism not only for its analysis of the situation but also for its interpretative approach.

The contrast with the political theology of the Catholic Restoration is quite striking. On the one hand, the Catholic traditionalists were much more reflexive in their attempts to develop a new apologetics with social and functional criteria. They developed it not in isolation but in relation to principles of analogy, historical development or anthropological truth. On the other hand, the political praxis sought by the Catholic Restoration was traditional rather than revolutionary. It sought to meet the challenge, not of Marxism, but of the Enlightenment and of the French Revolution.

⁹⁹Cf. J. B. Metz, "The Future *Ex Memoria Passionis*," *Concilium* 76 (1972), 9-25 and "A Short Apology of Narrative," *Concilium* 77 (1973), 84-96. J. Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, trans. by R. A. Wilson and J. Bowden (New York: Harper & Row, 1974).

¹⁰⁰See S. Wiedenhofer, *Politische Theologie* (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1976).

¹⁰¹J. Miguez Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), and J. Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology*, trans. by J. Drury (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1976).

Of the three, the recent German political theology is the least political. Although Sölle has advocated socialism, as a general rule political theology has been more concerned with hermeneutical questions and has limited the political role to one of mere critique. Liberation theology has sought a goal that involved radical political, economic and societal change, whereas the Catholic Restoration had sought to undo the changes that took place and to restore authority and tradition amidst a sea of change.

Conclusion: This survey of the political theology of the Roman religion, the Catholic Restoration, and the present German theology indicates two basic traits. *Firstly*, political theology appears as a fundamental theology. The Roman political theology made use of allegorical interpretation both as a means of understanding the Roman civil religion and also as a defense of its truth. The political theology of the Catholic Restoration underscored the interrelation between religious beliefs and political patterns. This interrelationship was the basis not only of its interpretation of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution but also of its development of a "new apologetics." The political theology in Germany during the 1960's developed as a reaction to existential hermeneutics. In confrontation with Marxism, it re-thought the theory-praxis relation and it sought to demonstrate that the Christian faith had a societal and public dimension.

Secondly, political theology raises the question of the truth of its theology. In all three political theologies, political or societal utility appears to be a criterion of truth. The problem of this criterion can be seen in the different results of the political theology of the Catholic Restoration and the more recent attempts to indicate the emancipatory elements of faith. If the relation between faith and praxis can lead to the affirmation of two radically different societal orders, the question of the criteria of a political theology becomes all important.

II. POLITICAL THEOLOGY AS A RECONSTRUCTIVE FOUNDATIONAL THEOLOGY

The historical survey has demonstrated that political theology has a long and varied tradition. It is false to identify political theology simply with a theology of politics or with a theology of restorative or revolutionary praxis. Our survey, moreover, indicated a certain ambivalence in the notion and use of political theology. On the one hand, political theology consisted in the use of religious symbols to interpret sociopolitical patterns and change

and even to support certain governmental forms. As such political theology is not only conscious and explicit as in the three periods discussed but it is also a symbolic process that is more often unconscious. On the other hand, political theology has also meant a new apologetics, a new fundamental theology or a hermeneutics that included the sociopolitical horizon.

Since this paper is intended to discuss political theology as foundational theology, as explained in the preliminary clarifications, I would like to suggest that political theology as foundational theology reflects upon the societal and political use of religious symbols. In this respect I am not concerned with the development of a particular political theology for the American scene nor am I concerned with specific questions of political ethics. Instead I am concerned with foundational theology as an analysis of a horizon and the elucidation of criteria. As such political theology can be defined in reference to its content and method. *Political theology as foundational theology is the reconstructive analysis of the pragmatics of religious symbols.* Its object is the pragmatics of religious symbols. Its method is neither simply hermeneutic nor transcendental, but reconstructive. The following is offered as a programmatic clarification of these two dimensions:

(1) Political theology as foundational theology studies the *pragmatics of religious symbols*. The term "pragmatics" refers in linguistic philosophy to the relation of the linguistic element to its production, use or reception.¹⁰² Pragmatics deals with the generative development, competency and use of language. It investigates the *de facto* praxis and use of language in a communicative situation. A text pragmatic treatment of a book would not simply analyze the text of the book but would include as a part of its analysis the origin, context and goal of the text. Without abstracting from the latter, it would relate them to these broader contexts. A pragmatic analysis of language is concerned not only with use, but with the non-linguistic factors of competency and effect.

Political theology as foundational theology is the study of the pragmatics of religious symbols in so far as it analyzes how religious symbols are generated, used and what effects they have. This generation, use and effect involves not only a transcendental and psychological dimension but also a societal and political horizon. Just as a linguistic pragmatic analyzes the conditions and consequences of speech-acts, so political theology as foundational must analyze the political and societal conditions of religious sym-

¹⁰²W. Dressler, *Einführung in die Textlinguistik* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1973).

bols as well as the consequences of these symbols for the political and societal realm.

This understanding of foundational theology goes contrary to a foundational theology based on a more formal or textual hermeneutical theory. Currently, many limit the interpretative task of theology to a hermeneutics of the text. Moreover, this hermeneutics is further narrowed by the use of the distinction between the temporal, communicative and referential speech-event (*parole*) and the atemporal, non-communicative, element of language as a system of signs (*langue*) to argue that the meaning of a text is to be solely identified with the latter and not the former.¹⁰³ Despite the validity of this distinction, it should not be overlooked how the temporal and communicative situation comes to expression within the text itself. The meaning of the text can be illuminated therefore by an analysis of this situation and context as well as by a study of the effects (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) of the text.

A simple example illustrates the theological significance and importance of an interpretative method that takes into account the societal context. Adolf Harnack's interpretation and evaluation of Anselm's theory of redemption has become commonplace. Harnack claims that Anselm's "theory is entirely untenable" and "does violence to reason and to morality (not to speak of the attack on the Gospel)." Why? "The worst thing in Anselm's theory: the mythological conception of God as the mighty private man, who is incensed at the injury done to his honor and does not forgo his wrath till He has received at least adequately great equivalent."¹⁰⁴ But what does God's honor mean? Harnack presumes that honor is to be understood as personal glory or personal reputation. An analysis of the feudal societal patterns and feudal law at the time can help illumine the meaning of the text and Anselm's theory. Honor was not understood as personal, but much more in the sense of a societal order and position. The juridic terms need to be understood in terms of the institutions of the time. The point of Anselm's text would then be, not to much personal honor, but an ordered and just society.¹⁰⁵ Anselm's theory of satisfaction might still be open to theological criticisms, but at least an interpretation that takes into account societal patterns and laws to understand it

¹⁰³ Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order*, pp. 73-9.

¹⁰⁴ A. Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. N. Buchanan (New York: Dover Publications, 1961, a reprint of 1900 trans.), pp. 54-83; here 71f and 76.

¹⁰⁵ G. Greshake, "Erlösung und Freiheit. Zur Neinterpretation der Erlösungslehre Anselms von Canterbury," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 153 (1973), 323-45. Cf. also F. Fiorenza, "Critical Social Theory and Christology," *CTSA Proceedings* 30 (1975), 63-110.

must come to a much more nuanced interpretation and evaluation than Harnack's.

Likewise political texts betray a theological background and influence. Important in the support of the French monarchy was the view of the country as the mystical body of the king. Jean Gerson (1362-1429) writes in a letter on the education of the Dauphin, "Thou has those of the first estate as the very strong arm to defend thy mystical body, which is the royal polity."¹⁰⁶ An analysis of the background of this notion reveals how changes in the Eucharistic doctrine and in ecclesiology enormously influenced the political self-understanding of society and its rulers. The concept of mystical body became transferred from the Eucharist to the Church and then to the political kingdom. This historical process indicates how theological symbols and political self-understanding are interrelated. Political theology as the analysis of the pragmatics of religious symbols would have as its task the uncovering of such relationships and the analysis of the symbols themselves in relation to correctness and appropriateness of such usage.

(2) Political theology as foundational theology is *reconstructive*. In analyzing the pragmatics of religious beliefs, political theology's method should be more than purely descriptive or hermeneutical. It should be prescriptive, but employing a *reconstructive* rather than transcendental method.

A reconstructive approach includes self-reflection but goes beyond it and should be distinguished from self-reflection. In the act of self-reflection what is previously unconscious becomes conscious with an intentional practical goal. Psychoanalytic discourse provides an example of self-reflection. Its goal is to make conscious certain unconscious patterns. This making conscious, however, has certain practical consequences for a person's life-praxis. A person might be subject to a phobia inhibiting certain actions or have a compulsion to repeat a certain behavioral pattern. The self-reflection aimed at in the analysis should bring to light an unconscious event with the practical effect of enabling the person to overcome the phobia or compulsion. Self-reflection not only entails the theoretical acquisition of knowledge, but also involves practical consequences.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶Quoted by E. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 219.

¹⁰⁷J. Habermas, "Introduction: Some Difficulties in the Attempt to Link Theory and Praxis," in *Theory and Practice*, trans. by J. Viertel (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), pp. 1-40.

In so far as political theology analyzes how religious ideas have unconsciously (or sometimes consciously) influenced political beliefs or how religious patterns have been determined by societal patterns, it aims at a level of theological self-reflection and insight that should enable us to overcome neurotic political compulsions of excessive patriotism due to an illegitimate theological sanctioning or the uncritical acceptance of certain religious formulas or belief-patterns that betray societal influences more than anything else. Political theology, by analyzing the pragmatics of religious symbols, has a theoretical and practical intent. Its aim is not only the self-reflection and increased self-awareness of the origin, use and practice of Christian symbols in the sociopolitical realms, but it is also the achievement of a practical competency to believe and to act without unreflected compulsions in regard to religious beliefs, societal-political patterns and the interrelation of each.

But political theology as the theoretical discipline of foundational theology involves more than self-reflection. It has a *reconstructive* task. It is asserted in linguistics that there is something like an implicit set of rules that govern the appropriate ways of using an expression. Such rules are not immediately evident nor can they easily be formulated. Nevertheless a skilled speaker can discriminate ways of using a language that are correct and appropriate from those that are not. Political theology should be reconstructive in that it not only seeks to obtain insight into the often-unconscious pragmatics of religious beliefs but also aims to elucidate the rule systems and competencies of the correct and appropriate interrelation of religious beliefs and political patterns.

In linguistics, a rational reconstruction makes explicit the competencies and rules involved in learning a language. But like learning logic or linguistics, it does not immediately change one's previous practice of reasoning and of speaking. Political theology as a reconstructive foundational theology would not be immediately practical. It would involve the analysis of the history and practice of the political intertwinement of religious symbols for the sake of discovering and reconstructing possible structural patterns of interrelation, the genetic development of such patterns and the rules and criteria of such interrelationships. The goal of a political theology could be described as the attempt to elucidate the grammar of the political dimension of faith. It presupposes a distinction between justifiable and non-justifiable intertwinement and a distinction between the descriptive and empirical use and normative use.

This task of political theology as foundational theology is not simply a moral or ethical task, such as the confusion of political theology with political ethics might indicate. An example can illustrate the difference. The religious symbol of the Exodus from Egypt has been appropriated as a symbol to support political liberation from oppressive situations. In the nineteenth century, the religious symbol of the conquest of Canaan had also been used to support the colonial take-over of certain lands and peoples. How are these two political uses of theological symbols to be evaluated? It is not enough simply to argue that the liberation from exploitative oppression is more moral than the colonial conquest for the sake of enrichment. It would also be necessary to appeal to theological reasons to explain why liberation is more consonant with the Christian experience of God and the Christian preaching of Jesus than conquest is. Moreover, political theology as a reconstructive foundational theology would have to reconstruct criteria from the history and development of the pragmatics of religious symbols to exercise its prescriptive task.

In this way justice can be done to the results of our historical survey of the debates about political theology. We have shown that historically two alternative criteria have been proposed: the metaphysical and transcendental or the social and functional. These are often seen in isolation or contrasted. Since the historical survey has indicated how the sociopolitical and the metaphysical are interrelated, a reconstructive method is necessary that would not play off the essentialistic against the empirical. Instead it would attempt to combine both in elucidating the criteria of any political theology.

In developing such criteria political theology cannot simply take a transcendental approach that would evaluate the pragmatics of religious symbols in terms of the transcendental conditions of experience. Instead it would seek by historical reconstructions to discover not only the *de facto* patterns of the political intertwining of certain religious symbols to discover their inner logic, but it would also seek to elucidate the historical development of both the structures of religious beliefs and the criteria of their praxis. A reconstructive approach suggests that theological criteria for the pragmatics of religious symbols must be elaborated by a logical and genetic reconstruction of the historical development of the faith and its praxis. In many respects, this historical process can be described as a learning process and betrays a developmental logic so that the structures of justification change. Recently James

Fowler has appropriated Kohlberg's moral stages to elucidate stages of faith. The elaboration of developmental stages for the personal psychology of faith can and should be applied also the political and societal pragmatics of religious symbols in such a way as to keep the descriptive and normative distinct.¹⁰⁸

My proposal is at present programmatic and formal. I hope my historical analysis has shown why political theology can be understood as a function of foundational theology, especially in the sense in which each was initially defined. I have suggested a methodology of political theology as foundational that is not only self-reflective, but also reconstructive. Political theology as foundational theology demands that we are not only self-reflectively conscious of the pragmatics of our religious symbols, but also develop criteria to evaluate these pragmatics. Such criteria demand historical research and systematic conceptualization. This task is at its beginning. I hope this paper has demonstrated the tradition and seriousness of the task.

FRANCIS SCHÜSSLER FIORENZA
Villanova University

¹⁰⁸Cf. B. Marthaler, "To Teach the Faith or to Teach Theology: Dilemma for Religious Education," *CTSA Proceedings* 31 (1976), 217-33. Marthaler raises in conclusion the important question of distinguishing the descriptive empirical data from the prescriptive and normative judgment.