

The Judgment of God and the Immeasurable: Political Theology and Organizations of Power¹

Politics is largely concerned with the organization of power. The organization of power, whether it is in a State or a site of resistance, is ultimately a tactical question. For, the organization of power may either capture and dissipate the varied energies of the political or it may transform and proliferate those energies. One may provide a phenomenology of this organization of power, but such a phenomenology would be incomplete without questioning the ends of both politics and the organization of power that largely forms the political. Is the end of politics simply the creation of more politics itself? If so, politics would merely repeat the logic of capitalism and all organizations of power would be capitalist, with Western style democracy as the gold standard by which all other organizations are valued. For the anti-capitalist, revolutionary left the end of politics is nothing less than the creation of a new world. Such a statement is necessarily esoteric, in that no one can quite say with certainty what this world would look like, and at the same time it is rational, in that this creation is possible within the conditions of this world. Yet, such a creation has not happened. This can be said in the classical form – the revolution has not taken place. Indeed, all revolutions thus far have ended short of the creation hoped for, they have been betrayed and betrayed by the very organizations that were supposed to represent and direct their energy.

Such a betrayal can be traced, as suggested by the critiques of the New Left since 1968, to the organization of power itself.² In order then to further the end of politics, which is the creation of a new world, it is necessary to continue the critique of the organization of

¹ Sections of this paper were delivered at the 2007 American Academy of Religion in San Diego. I would like to thank Bradley Johnson, Philip Goodchild, Clayton Crockett, and Tyler Roberts for their constructive comments then. Another version of the paper was also presented to my colleagues at the University of Nottingham and I would like to thank specifically Alex Andrews and Patrick Riches for their suggestions as well as the advice of Dominic Fox. I would also like to thank Daniel Barber for his suggestions and for continued intellectual friendship. Some of the issues dealt with in this work were prompted by our co-written article entitled “Giving Content to the Immeasurable: Negri on Poverty,” in *Anti-Liberalism and Political Theology*, ed. Erich Kofmel (Charlottesville, VA: Imprint Academic: Forthcoming 2009).

² Representative of this critique is that of the Cohn-Bendit brothers, student leaders of the 1968 revolt. See Gabriel Cohn-Bendit and Daniel Cohn-Bendit, “The Strategy of the State” and “Stalinist Bureaucracy and the Class Struggle in France,” in *Obsolete Communism: The Left-Wing Alternative*, trans. Arnold Pomerans (London: Penguin Books, 1968). The first is their critique of the Western state and the second is their critique of the Soviet state and the organization of the established French Communist Party.

power. Philip Goodchild outlines the three kinds of power which make up the political. The first kind of power is the purely physical power of limited, physical resources, such as petrol, ammunition, and food. The second kind of power is that of the human will as expressed in speech and action as articulated in law and the market. These two kinds of power constitute the focus of modern political thought, largely conforming to the Cartesian image of thought that splits the physical from the psychical.³ It is easy to see the connection of these two kinds of energy within, as Goodchild notes, Carl Schmitt's friend/enemy distinction. The distribution of resources makes friends through the forming of pacts, while the refusal of resources makes enemies through the declaration and act of war.⁴ Yet, Goodchild argues that something else in politics lies prior to even the friend/enemy distinction. An intangible energy which cannot be identified with either physical power or human will: "It is the authority that guides and authorizes the action of will upon will."⁵ While it may appear that such intangible energy is simply another aspect of human will, it is actually that which allows for the very expression of the power of human will for it lies beyond human intentionality. Such energy must be investigated within the bounds of political theology for it concerns the formations of piety and belief that form the unconscious structures that are the technology of directing political power.⁶ As Goodchild writes, "The modern notion of the political remains contaminated by a theological problematic inherent in its very notion of power. Power rests on meta-human flows of beliefs and desires."⁷

For the anti-capitalist revolutionary left hoping for the creation of a new world, the problem of betrayed revolutions can be traced back to the political theology of hierarchy on which actually existing socialist states depended (and, in the few that are left, largely continue to depend). This New Left critique remains true today, but the New Left itself failed to direct and proliferate power due largely to its own political anti-theology. These two forms of political theology form an antinomy of revolutionary reason that could be crystallized in the statement that the creation of a new world requires an organization of power, but every organization of power betrays the creation of a new world. Thus, towards overcoming this

³ Philip Goodchild, *Theology of Money*, (London: SCM Press, 2008), 31.

⁴ Goodchild, 32. Cf. Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 35.

⁵ Goodchild, 32.

⁶ Piety is here understood in the conceptual sense given it by Philip Goodchild: "We shall call 'piety' any determinate practice of directing attention." Philip Goodchild, *Capitalism and Religion: The Price of Piety* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 210. See the whole of the book for a development of this concept.

⁷ Goodchild, *Theology of Money*, 39.

antinomy of revolution, this paper considers if a different political theology could be formulated. We begin by considering two influential strands of theological thought that is taken up as political theology. These forms of contemporary political theology, deconstructive or weak theology and Radical Orthodoxy, necessarily select a hierarchical organization of power. Such organizations of power are susceptible to the political anti-theology, which we locate in the work of Deleuze and Guattari, for they fail to account for or create any mechanism which would protect the constitutive power underneath the organization of power. This constitutive power is simply is, following the formulation of Antonio Negri, the immeasurable itself. It is the immeasurable itself that any organization of power aiming beyond itself must both direct and free to proliferate beyond the organization of power. Towards that end the paper makes a suggestion about a political non-theology which may use political theology to construct different organizations of power with more efficacies.

The Spectre of Hierarchy

When we attempt to think anew about the organization of power we think within the twin histories of both the political and the religious – twin histories haunted by the spectre of hierarchy. This spectre haunts us in part because those forms of political theology which today are influential in rethinking the relationship of the political and the religious we see that they are captivated by thinking of organizations of power hierarchically – haunted by the figure of Pseudo-Dionysius.

In his own ghost story Carl Schmitt famously said that all modern theories of the State, and thus all theories of the political even when in anti-Statist garb, are secularized theological concepts.⁸ Michael Hardt echoed this statement when he said in a recent interview that he and Antonio Negri write about the history of theology and employ theological concepts because the history of politics has been the history of theology.⁹ It is unsurprising then that in the history of ideas “hierarchy” comes to us first as a theological concept and not a political one. The first instance of the concept of hierarchy we’re familiar

⁸ Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 36.

⁹ Michael Hardt, interview by Creston Davis, “A Conversation with Michael Hardt,” *Journal of Cultural and Religious Theory*, 8, no. 2 (Spring 2007): 180.

with today, as an abstract noun, comes from the theology of Pseudo-Dionysius.¹⁰ In Dionysius' formulation a hierarchy is "a sacred order, a state of understanding and an activity approximating as closely as possible to the divine" receiving all power from God to move toward that for which the power is given.¹¹ The goal of a hierarchy is to enable beings to be as like as possible to God and at one with God.¹² Staying within the limits of Dionysius' thinking it is hard to see hierarchy as anything but a good organization of power, for the more we are like God the more we are good and humble, holy and just, loving and creative, just as God is all these in perfection.

John Caputo is haunted by this vision of Dionysian hierarchy, despite his explicit desire to deconstruct and escape power. Before we turn to how Caputo is haunted by Dionysius it is worthwhile to consider Caputo's criticism of hierarchy and power. For Caputo the history of theology and religion has been one of "rouged theology", by which he is not all that subtly intimating that theology has been a whore to power.¹³ Caputo's weak theology of the event attempts to outdo Luther with his own grievances against not just the Catholic Church, but all religious organizations. For religious organizations, in Caputo's view, organize themselves hierarchically with people claiming and exercising power over others in such a way that they commit violence against others and thereby commit violence to the very spirit of their religion. Caputo's negative view of hierarchy is thus a critique of power and its organization and is in that way not altogether different from the New Left critique.

But Caputo's is a political negative theology, and not a political anti-theology, as evidenced by his inability stop thinking about hierarchy. For he finds himself saying, despite all his hatred for power and hierarchy, that "'kingdom' is not, in itself, altogether a 'bad name' [...] Just so long as what reigns in this kingdom is justice and not terror, and no one enjoys special royal privileges or privileged access in the corridors of power, and there is not a purple or royal robe anywhere to be found, then I will be the first to step forward and

¹⁰ Sarah Klitenic Wear and John Dillon, *Dionysius the Areopagite and the Neoplatonist Tradition: Despoiling the Hellenes* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 56. 'Hierarch' did refer to a Bishop and, prior to Christianity, other priestly persons.

¹¹ Pseudo-Dionysius, "The Celestial Hierarchy," in *The Complete Works*, trans. Colm Luibheid (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 153.

¹² Pseudo-Dionysius, 154.

¹³ John D. Caputo, *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 33.

declare myself a royalist who is dreaming of a kingdom to come.”¹⁴ Moreover he can’t bring himself to stop thinking about hierarchy because the entire project of weak theology is predicated on not foreclosing any possibility of a good name, including the possibility of the kind of Kingdom just described, but also there being an infinite deferral of judgment and fulfilment. If there was not hierarchy or power there would be no deconstruction, for deconstruction cannot exist in a universe of entropy. Ultimately this means that Caputo’s theology brings us to the conclusion that only liberalism can open the path to true religiosity – remaining open, thus faithful, to the weak call of God. In a 2005 keynote address in Knoxville, Tennessee, Caputo presented the political import of his weak theology by stating that if it called for any global politics it would be closely akin to three branches of government, balanced against one another by various checks, and with a strong tradition of rights stemming from the undeconstructability of justice.¹⁵ That is to say, the political import of weak theology is a version of the American liberal system, albeit one that attempts to save the name, writ global. Such a politic is necessary considering that Caputo’s Kingdom of God is always deferred in its fullness and never is on earth as it is in heaven.

This sort of infinite deferral forms the negative eschatology of classical liberalism in that here positive liberty is infinitely deferred via the apparatus of negative liberty. But we now live in a neo-liberal world, of which American neo-conservatives form but a quasi-heretical sect, where negative liberty has been taken as positive liberty. Violence is used to bring to the peoples of the world, as if a gift from God, this freedom not to be anything except what they want. One cannot but recognize that, of course, much liberation comes from being free of the identities that hierarchies bestow or force on people, but liberation at the hands of neo-liberal politics (which is to say capitalism) is nothing but illusion, for there is always a hidden, seemingly apolitical economic master within this so-called liberation of neo-liberalism. To avoid such illusions any attempt to think the political or the religious must think the non-representative apolitical powers of capitalism. Caputo’s critique of hierarchy as power is incomplete because it only offers negative liberty via the infinite deconstruction of hierarchy; this neither avoids the confusion of negative liberty with positive liberty nor responds to the powers of capitalism which thrive on such infinite deferral. Thus when

¹⁴ Caputo, 29.

¹⁵ John D. Caputo, Keynote address, NEXUS: An Interdisciplinary Conference, Department of English, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, April 7th, 2006.

Caputo says that he does not support radical revolution, but rather piecemeal reform, it is because he has lacked the vision to see that all capitalist economics has taken on political powers outside any influence from representation and thus can only be overcome by way of sufficient strength of piety.¹⁶ Thus, weak theology is haunted and constantly troubled by the construction of ever new hierarchies of which it depends. It may thus be called the political theology of liberalism.

Some will surely see how close this critique of liberalism is to that of Radical Orthodoxy. Indeed, Caputo's thought does not escape John Milbank's critique of liberalism. In Milbank's theology hierarchy is not at the root of abuses of power. Rather, the highest and most intimate within hierarchy – God – actually limits and measures violence. The need for hierarchy is based on the need to reject “secular immanence” “which is totalizing and terroristic because it acknowledges no supra-human power beyond itself by which it might be measured and limited”.¹⁷ God's name has become so deterritorialized that the death of God has truly opened not to liberation, but to more and more cultural scientism and blindness to the limits of consumption (and thus to capitalism itself). Milbank locates this deterritorialization via voluntarist trends coming to prominence in both theology and philosophy – a vision of God within a static hierarchy of power separated from the substantial good. This secular, static hierarchy, which is nevertheless predicated on theological terms, is not the same hierarchy of Dionysius to be sure and Milbank rightly rejects it while embracing the Dionysian vision of hierarchy. However, Milbank has his own haunting here, but it is not the spectre of fascism that too many of his critics sometimes level against him, but that of a hierarchy so intimately connected with the notion of Good, or what may be called the immeasurable, that there is no difference between the hierarchy, which is the organization of power, and the Good itself. This is evident in the way he understands ruling, what one entity in a hierarchy does to another, to be an exchange of mutual respects. He claims that this was the historical situation between the King of France and his subject cities up until 1548 when Henry II broke with tradition and stopped coming to the city to be with his subjects, bearing gifts and accepting gifts in turn in an elaborate performance of social contract, and instead merely sent them the contract. At that moment,

¹⁶ See John D. Caputo and Gianni Vattimo, *After the Death of God*, ed. Jefferey W. Robbins (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 124.

¹⁷ John Milbank, *Being Reconciled: Ontology and Pardon*, (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), 5.

Milbank says, those in Lyon knew the King stopped ruling his subjects and began commanding them.¹⁸ Yet, he provides no account of why such a change from ruling to commanding would occur within the hierarchy of ruling.

This short mapping suggests that both Caputo and Milbank represent two starkly opposed positions. But our map clearly shares the same Pseudo-Dionysian territory for we do not find ourselves hopelessly torn between two sets of coordinates, but focused on what could be a coordinated attempt to bring about a thought of all good, all justice, love, and peace, as being gifts from a loving, creative God that yearns for creation to be free. Caputo, the one who hates all power and hierarchy – above all the colour purple – is caught saying he would gladly be a royalist, maybe even wear a bit of purple, if it meant true peace and justice would reign. Milbank, the one painted to be conservative and Constantinian, hoping for a return to the hierarchy of the Middle Ages with its serfs and lords, is caught with his own “Viens! Viens!” for liberation on his lips: “By contrast, transcendence appears hierarchic and fixed, but its ontological height resides beyond all immanent heights, and therefore is as close to ontic depths as to ontic elevations. For this reason, its truth can be mediated to us and we can, one day, be liberated.”¹⁹ Perhaps it is surprising that they share so much, but this cuts to the real difference which is not located in thinking organizations of power as such. The true difference between their thinking of hierarchy is properly theological – they differ precisely on who God is. For, in thinking hierarchy, everything depends on who their God is. Milbank wants to propose that theology is the most important tool in dealing with our political problem today, yet he has not himself done an explicit or dogmatic theology – a science of God and who God is. Granted what he has written in this direction is stronger than Caputo, for Caputo has conceived of a God that is but a weak event – one that, if it is to be truly weak and not just a ruse of power, cannot be spoken of properly and thus leads to the weak (in a bad sense) political project that Caputo intimates.

It is suggested in Milbank’s writing that it is God is the God of the catholic tradition (in its Roman, Eastern, and Anglican forms) that he affirms. He and others in the Radical Orthodoxy movement want to suggest that this is not the same God of the imperial crusades of super powers or the God of fringe and heretical religious sects carrying out reactionary

¹⁸ John Milbank, “The Gift of Ruling: Secularization and Political Theory”, (unpublished manuscript, Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Nottingham, 2006), 14-15.

¹⁹ Milbank, *Being Reconciled*, 211.

terrorist attacks. But is their answer of who God is, if this is truly the defining issue of hierarchy, really sufficient to respond to these reactionary movements? Can a non-voluntarist god, the God they tell us that Thomas Aquinas wrote about, truly resist the voluntarist god? Will more Thomism, and Thomism of a strange stripe, really free Christianity from its most deterritorialized form (the American civil religion) or strengthen the backbone of the Vatican to emphasize their opposition to capitalism rather than repeating the capitalist logic of so-called family values? Not to say they won't, but thus far no real answer has been given aside from some vague intimations about participation and the *analogia entis* that have, with the idea of God as a weak event, not been satisfactory

This lack in Milbank's theology, and more generally in the theology of Radical Orthodoxy, is at the core of charges of nostalgia levelled against Radical Orthodoxy. A charge that has not gone without response – Milbank writes: “[it] is not at all to say that we should have remained forever in the culture of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. No, it is an unknown future that we have missed and must seek to rejoin.”²⁰ It seems that Milbank does show where his thought is not reactionary, in so far that he argues for a future different from the merely calculable quotidian future of capitalism, but this does not mean he has avoided nostalgia. Nostalgia here names the conjunction of a triumphalism of the Church to come as a repeated difference and the subsequent evasion of the consequences for all theological thought stemming from the actually-existing Church's repetition of the same failures of ecclesial hierarchy.²¹ For though he wants us to return to the future that could have been, and this is a future that Milbank believes would have been better, this is done through a return to the conditions of that future – the pre-1300's Middle Ages. Thus, we may locate here the political theology of a socialist traditionalism, what is now coming under the banner of Red Toryism.²² Setting aside the historical question of whether or not these were truly better, more hospitable times is it true to say, as Milbank does, that “contrary to

²⁰ Milbank, 119.

²¹ In Milbank's first major work, *Theology and Social Theory*, he puts the responsibility for the current political situation squarely on the failure of the Church “to be the Church”. He also suggests that there is a necessity for criticism of ecclesial *ordo* as “almost” a goal in itself. However, for whatever reason, perhaps tactical or because the focus became on attempting to create a positive vision, this aspect of the project was largely dropped or collapsed into a general critique of the genealogy of modern thought via the theology of Scotus. See John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 440-442.

²² See John Milbank, interview by Ben Suriano, “Three Questions on Modern Atheism: An Interview with John Milbank,” *The Other Journal*, 11 (Spring, 2008), <<http://www.theotherjournal.com/article.php?id=370>>. See also John Milbank, “Red Toryism is the Best Hope of a New Progressive Politics,” letter to the editor, *The Guardian*, May 22nd, 2008, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2008/may/22/2>>.

all the assumptions of secular sovereignty, [society is] all the more democratic the more it is genuinely hierarchical”²³? It seems that this proscription offers us but an incomplete fabulation that provides no protection from the self-destruction that hierarchy fosters in becoming an end unto itself. Though Milbank’s incomplete fabulation is preferable than the narrative of weakness (despite that narrative’s real value) it remains unable to look fully at the history of failure and betrayal in the Christian church, and all religious organization, in a way that allows for a truly revolutionary political theology that may forgive religious organization in a way that would recharge another effort of creation.

Against the Judgment of God

Perhaps hierarchy in its best theological formulation can be affirmed as a good organization of power, it also clearly engendered an understanding of God that created analogies between God as omnipotent ruler and the head of the State as similarly omnipotent (whether that be a dictatorship of one or the dictatorship of the represented people). We have already noted Schmitt’s now nearly axiomatic statement concerning the theological origin of political concepts. In the course of his *Political Theology* he traces the assumed secularization of these concepts ending in the weakness of the modern constitutional State. What Schmitt does not think to pursue, owing to his own conservative religious beliefs, is how a different conception of God altogether would develop a different conception of politics outside the stiling options he presents of authoritarianism and liberalism. Not the secularization of already existing concepts of God, but a new, or at least unknown, conception of God.

The conception of politics that Schmitt’s view of political theology engenders is predicated on the friend/enemy distinction.²⁴ Such an ultimately barbaric conception

²³ Milbank, *Being Reconciled*, 108.

²⁴ Schmitt, *Concept of the Political*, 26. This view is not obviously predicated on an ontology of violence, towards which Milbank could deploy his ontology of peace. Schmitt’s Roman Catholic formation allows him to hold that the ontology of creation is peaceful, but that peace is broken by the fall and its restoration threatened by human sin. Most notably sin organized in modernity’s concepts of liberal Enlightenment. Milbank’s own recent (and somewhat troubling) views concerning the confrontation between “the West and political Islam” show that his own ontology of peace must be fought for, or at the very least, defended from Islam: “it is also dangerous to our liberty to ignore the fact that most global terrorists are now indeed part of political Islam and that other manifestations of this also threaten the West. This is because the majority Islamic religious view that political law and the political state are full aspects of a religious order is not compatible with Christian religious views. There can be no dialogue’ about this. To the contrary, this constitutive aspect of Islam does in fact need to be defeated – as peacefully as possible. [...] Suddenly the idea that we do indeed have to defend ‘Christendom’ seems not entirely ridiculous to all those in the West who think clearly and rigorously.” John

expresses the failure of a hierarchical political theology to create any kind of mechanism which might subvert or overcome its own tendency towards a particularly destructive stratification. Stratification is a concept given philosophical weight by Deleuze and Guattari in their *A Thousand Plateaus*. There Deleuze and Guattari describe the process of stratification as occurring at the same time as the population of the “body-without-organs” by “free intensities or nomadic singularities”.²⁵ These terms are extremely technical in their philosophical use, rather than, as it may at first seem, the worst kind of hopelessly obscure, postmodernist jargon. Rather than a distracting unpacking of these notions let us instead note that the body-without-organs is also called the full body of the earth and this formulation offers us a better understanding of what Deleuze and Guattari mean. In short the body-without-organs is full and immeasurable in itself. Stratification is the process by which something comes to form an identity, but that identity is formed at the cost of losing the processes from which it arises. Strata are the discrete moments of this wider system of stratification that act to capture bits of the full earth by coding and territorialization.²⁶

This ontology is at the same time a critical, political anti-theology, echoing the anti-theology of Nietzsche in the title of the chapter where it appears, “The Geology of Morals (Who Does the Earth Think It Is?)” Of the strata and the wider system of stratification they write:

The strata are the judgement of God; stratification in general is the entire system of the judgment of God (but the earth, or the body without organs, constantly eludes that judgment, flees and becomes destratified, decoded, deterritorialized).²⁷

Milbank, interview by Luiz Felipe Pondé, “Appendix: An Interview with John Milbank and Conor Cunningham,” in *Belief and Metaphysics*, eds. Peter M. Candler Jr. and Conor Cunningham (London: SCM Press, 2007), 507. The closeness of Milbank’s views here with that of the imperial ambitions of the American empire should give pause, despite his own criticisms of the American empire. Any construction of a binary of “the West” and Islam already suggests a stratification that is not only conservative, but potentially extremely harmful in that it may lend theological credence to practices it may itself disapprove of (i.e. torture and the suspension of *habeas corpus*). This slippage is present when he says, “For to a certain degree, it is indeed plausible to say that the arrival of Islam in Europe is a danger and to say this has, of course, nothing to do with racism.” However, he immediately follows this by saying, “It is a threat in population terms” (ibid).

²⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 40.

²⁶ Some express confusion at the terminology of Deleuze and Guattari. However, terms like “coding” and “territorialization” can be understood rather intuitively prior to the more technical understanding. In the case of territorialization one may simply think of the creation of a discrete territory out of what was once part of a wider whole. Deterritorialization may then be understood as the intentional restoration of the wider whole.

²⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, 40.

The aim, for Deleuze and Guattari's political anti-theology, is to deterritorialize beyond capture of the judgment of God towards the absolute itself. However, that is not to say that one should rush too quickly towards this deterritorialization and Deleuze and Guattari urge caution: "You don't reach the [body without organs], and its plane of consistency, by wildly destratifying."²⁸ Rather, one must recognize and mimic the strata which allow for the most radical deterritorializations through intentional reterritorializations. For all their political anti-theology Deleuze and Guattari nevertheless write that stratification "is beneficial in many respects and unfortunate in many others".²⁹ Above we called Schmitt's political theology a particular destructive stratification and that comment should be understood in light of the beneficial or unfortunate nature of particular political-theological strata. Schmitt's political theology is ultimately destructive because it conceives of politics as an exercise largely in the establishment of limits, rather than the creation of a new world. The friend/enemy distinction is exactly such a limit and itself forms a strata dependent on the judgment of God. Using Deleuze and Guattari's political anti-theology we may aim to act politically and yet reject the structures upon which the modern conception of the political stand by locating and giving attention to the immeasurable which underlies every structure. Yet, something appears to be incomplete in this political anti-theology. It may fail to give content to the immeasurable in its caution against too quickly destratifying and in its criticism of organization. It appears to lack a mechanism by which to select the best organization of power other than vague suggestions at cautious experimentation.

Conclusion: Towards a Non-Theology

The giving of attention must still be theological, even if it is against the majoritarian conceptions of theology, for it concerns the meta-human flows of beliefs and desire. In each of the political theologies outlined above we may locate another theology which it resists: Caputo resists political theology of empire and fundamentalism; Milbank resists the political theology of liberalism which he sees leading to empire and fundamentalism; Deleuze and Guattari resist the majoritarian political theology of State politics itself. Thus, to varying degrees of success, each political theology outlined above directs attention to the highest within thought and existence – the immeasurable which underlies all attempts to form

²⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, 160.

²⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, 40.

organizations of power. For those of us attempting to think a reorganization of power, to create belief in this world, to resist entropy, should we not all be doing theology? Attempting to formulate exactly who God is? What our end is? What our highest is? Whether these are even coherent conceptions of God? Obviously in this day and age there is more need for theology than ever.

On the other hand, it is clear from the critique of Deleuze and Guattari that this need for theology is a need for a theology beyond the current available options. One must mimic theology, not bow before the varied forms of majoritarian theology which misdirect attention away from the immeasurable. There are options available for creating a new political theology no longer haunted by the spectre of hierarchy which provide some robust mechanisms of subverting its structures in the name of the immeasurable at those points where the structures threaten to become captive to the judgment of God. Three very current examples may be named here: Quentin Meillassoux's embryonic "divinology" of the inexistent God that may yet exist in the future, Hamid Dabashi's Islamic Liberation theodicy which aims not to account for "evil" in the world but "the presence of diversity, alterity, shades and shadows of truth, variations that collectively make the world wonder at its own marvel", and Antonio Negri's political theology of poverty.³⁰ What may be needed is a proliferation of such political theologies of apoptosis³¹, but in the face of such a proliferation what is certainly needed is autonomous discipline, or a science of theology that is not theological, which may select from among these political theologies those which deterritorialize most effectively in the name of the immeasurable. Such a task belongs to a non-theology yet to be formulated. In this concluding section the aim is to suggest what non-theology may do by showing the structures it locates in the thinking of political theology.

Non-theology may take as its model the non-philosophy of François Laruelle. A full exposition of Laruelle's work, and what exactly non-philosophy is, is beyond the scope of

³⁰ For Meillassoux's "prolegomena" to his proposed divinology thought see Quentin Meillassoux, "Spectral Dilemma," trans. Robin Mackay, *Collapse: Philosophical Research and Development IV* (2008): 261-275. Hamid Dabashi, *Islamic Liberation Theology: Resisting the Empire* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 22. For Antonio Negri's political theology of the poverty see Antonio Negri, "Kairos, Alma Venus, Multitudo," in *Time for Revolution*, trans. Matteo Mandarini (New York and London: Continuum Press, 2003).

³¹ Apoptosis is a type of programmed or "intentional" cell death that is, contrary to cell death by injury, beneficial to the survival of the organism. For instance, a lack of apoptosis results in cancer. For another more extend and rather contrary philosophical use of apoptosis see Ray Brassier, "The *Apoptosis* of Belief," in *Nilhil Unbound: Enlightenment and Extinction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

this paper.³² Rather, we use but one of non-philosophy's many concepts to intimate the inventive and emancipatory potential of a non-theology for political theology. Non-philosophy is not a polemical name and it does not name philosophy as its enemy. Rather, non-philosophy aims to be an autonomous discipline which uses philosophy as its material and its object of study.³³ What differentiates non-philosophy from a meta-philosophy is that it locates and refuses the principle of sufficient philosophy or the idea that everything may be philosophized about (including philosophy). It is this principle which blinds philosophy to its own limits and which leaves it unable to explain its self-affective and yet constituent Other, leading it to undertake seemingly infinite amounts of self-reflective critiques. The non-philosophical formulation of philosophy means "treating philosophy like a phobia", as John Mullarkey characterizes it, "saying that all philosophical thought is really about itself, it is auto-sufficient. Its so-called world – x – is actually a mirror of itself."³⁴

One may locate a very similar principle of sufficient theology that states that theology as the science of God has no object, for God is not an object, and thus theology must theologize about everything in so far as everything relates to God.³⁵ In this way theology may actually recognize its limits (God) more than philosophy does, but it still fails to give an explanation of its own theologizing as it gets trapped in its own decisions which it cannot theologize about. Like philosophy's decision, theology's decision also splits reality in two in an attempt to name reality. In political theology there is thus an obsession with the one decision – the judgment of God. This judgment of God is a dyad in that it is both the judgment of who God is and the judgment of that God upon the immeasurable, splitting it into friend and enemy. Non-theology would not seek not to replace this decision of political theology. Rather it would remain indifferent to it and instead use it in order to select which political theology is most effective in giving attention to the immeasurable while at the same

³² For those interested in an introduction to Laruelle's philosophy they may begin with François Laruelle, "What Can Non-Philosophy Do?" trans. Ray Brassier, *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, 8, no. 1 (2003): 169-90. Also his *Philosophie et non-philosophie* (Liège/Bruxelles: Mardaga, 1989). For introductory secondary works consult Ray Brassier, "Axiomatic Heresy: The Non-Philosophy of François Laruelle," *Radical Philosophy* 121 (September/October 2003): 24-35 and John Mullarkey, "From Philosophy to Non-Philosophy," in *Post-Continental Philosophy: An Outline* (London and New York: Continuum Press, 2006). For a critical evaluation of Laruelle's non-philosophy see Ray Brassier, "Being Nothing," in *Nil Unbound: Enlightenment and Extinction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

³³ See Laruelle, *Philosophie et non-philosophie*, 17-20.

³⁴ Mullarkey, 140.

³⁵ Laruelle himself creates his own kind of non-philosophy of religion and locates four principles in religion: the principle of sufficient church, principle of sufficient sacrament, principle of sufficient faith, and principle of sufficient heresy. See François Laruelle, *Le Christ futur. Une leçon d'hérésie* (Paris: Exils, 2002).

time overcoming itself when necessary. In that way it also recognizes that every political theology is ultimately the act of some human subject just as much as it may speak to some divine source. This recognition does not repeat Feuerbachian atheism, but instead creates a non-theological notion of the human as grace of the world.³⁶ It is impossible to think of God without also implicating the human in such a way that the transcendence of the one to the other is collapsed in the incarnation of the full earth.

Non-theology in this incarnational way *thinks* according to the immeasurable, but does not *decide* on it as such. It has not overcome the friend/enemy distinction, but rather is indifferent to it. This indifference stems from the recognition that the friend/enemy distinction itself speaks to something underlying its own coupling, that is it speaks to a radical non-relationality of the friend/enemy in its dis-joining. This is called dis-joining because the decision brings into relation friend and enemy while at the same time dis-joining them from relation in the decision itself. But, this non-relationality already shows that the decision speaks past what it takes as its sufficient statement of separation and to its own constitution in the immeasurable. Non-theology may bring attention to the immeasurable in the friend/enemy distinction as thinking with the immeasurable. The friend/enemy distinction may be located within the heart of thought itself with all thinking constituent on deciding upon an enemy which it will overcome. Thus, non-theology may use the notion of absolute enmity, the idea that there is an absolute enemy, to name the reality of exception. That is to say that non-theology makes of exception an absolute enemy of the decision for an enemy and a friend. It overcomes its enemies by being stronger than the notion of relative enmity and in that way it has no enemies. One may say that here non-theology does not know the exception, but rather the miracle of the incarnation as the world's grace to man and man's grace to the world.³⁷ Such incarnation, rather than an aspect of some political theology's orthodoxy, merely names the reality with which non-theology thinks and in that way may find itself as indifferent to its own incarnational heresy. Incarnation names the reality that is the immeasurable of the full earth which non-theology takes as axiomatic, rather than deciding for it in a way that would split it.

³⁶ This is Laruelle's own suggestion about the non-theological. See François Laruelle, "A New Presentation of Non-Philosophy," (working paper, L'Organisation Non-Philosophique Internationale, February 11th, 2004). Available online: < <http://www.onphi.net/texte-a-new-presentation-of-non-philosophy-32.html>>.

³⁷ *Ibid.* It should be noted that this formulation diverges somewhat with Laruelle's suggestions about the non-theological.

Non-theology, to be clear, does not provide the political theology that the creation of a new world through new organizations of power demands. The construction of a non-theology would only think past political theology in a way that would allow us to select the best political theology. That is, non-theology may allow us to locate the elements in political theology which may allow for the creation of a new earth that recognizes that such a new earth must be radically this worldly. Non-theology even here thinks and brings attention to what has already been decided at the start of this article, the splitting of the new from the old, and in this brings our attention yet again to the immeasurable demanding that we think with it, rather than split it.

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