

The Heart of the Matter

Christianity, Materiality, and Modernity

by Chris Hann

At the microlevel, this paper focuses on the Roman Catholic cult of the Sacred Heart, noting its spread among Catholic populations in Central Europe whose liturgical tradition is that of Byzantium rather than Rome. At the mesolevel, it places this instance of religious acculturation in the context of long-term economic and political inequalities between East and West. At the macrolevel, implications are outlined for debates concerning civilizational differences and modernity. It is commonly supposed that the latter was initiated when Protestants began a shift toward interior belief based on text, eventually dragging Roman Catholics in their wake, while Eastern Christians have remained largely excluded from both material and ontological progress. The anthropology of Christianity has concentrated on Western-influenced “moderns,” in their many guises, outside the religion’s heartlands. But the take-up of Sacred Heart religiosity among the Greek Catholics of Central Europe suggests that there are no deep ontological barriers within Christianity. Similarly, there are no grounds for dismissing Eastern Christian institutional patterns as premodern; they should be drawn into the comparative framework as a distinctive crystallization of Christian civilization.

Introduction

Joel Robbins (2007) has defended a (neo-)Protestant bias in recent studies of Christians by sociocultural anthropologists on the grounds that these varieties of Christianity pose the most serious challenge to the “continuity thinking” of the discipline. In this paper I suggest that the present focus on “conversion-led movements” (Lehmann 2013) reflects continuity in the history of anthropology ever since anthropologists followed closely on the heels of missionaries in the nineteenth century and the fieldwork revolution of the early twentieth century. Even when they started to study Christians in literate, industrialized societies such as their own, Western anthropologists have paid more attention to conversion-led phenomena than to what Lehmann (2013) terms “religion as heritage,” which usually means “low-intensity religion, in which clergy do the hard work and the followers follow” (658).

I propose that it is time for some discontinuity in the anthropological tradition, though I have no wish to abandon microlevel ethnographic detail, and moreover my overall approach to the history of Christianity and to religion in general is one that emphasizes continuity. First, building on earlier papers, I problematize large populations of Eastern Christians

hitherto neglected in the Anglophone literature (Hann 2007, 2011).¹ Second, I argue that the attention paid to individual transcendence and what I term “micromaterialities” needs to be supplemented by more attention to the “macromaterialities” of ecclesiastical and secular power relations if the anthropologists of Christianity are to reconnect with scholars in other disciplines to debate large themes such as ritualization and secularization. I thus propose complementing the insights we have gleaned from recent explorations of the language and materiality of Christian belief with more attention to the materiality of political economy. We shall then be better placed to draw on other methods, including those of history and comparison, in order to grasp the place of religion and ritual in human evolution (Bellah 2011; Rappaport 1999).

Comparative methods require justification of the units of analysis. I shall argue that there are good reasons for analyzing Christianity as a civilization and comparing it with other civilizations issuing from the Axial Age. If this usage is allowed, it is instructive to compare such civilizations based on “world religions,” both in their historic territories and when they interact and compete for followers in new spaces (e.g., Peel 2011). Comparisons within a civilization can be just as useful. No one has yet attempted to replicate for Christianity what Clifford Geertz (1968) undertook for Islam, the “observation” of two varieties of an Abrahamic religion that had evolved to

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1. Space limitations prevent any exploration of the diversity within the category “Eastern Christians.” An extended treatment would in a first step distinguish between the large Orthodox churches of the Byzantine tradition and the many communities of Oriental Christians (see Hann and Goltz 2010; Parry 2007). I focus on the former in this paper.

form distinctive patterns at a great geographical distance. I shall proceed for Christianity by taking the established distinctions between East and West, and within the latter between Protestants and Catholics. I shall argue that the undoubted differences should not be described in terms of modernity or ontology but understood as multiple crystallizations of a single civilization.

How should one ground an enquiry with these large ambitions? My focus is on Eastern Christians, whose neglect and distorted representations I review in the following section. My concession to the long-standing microethnographic bias of sociocultural anthropology is then to take one well-studied symbol and examine it in one historical space. I review accounts of how the cult of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary emerged as a Roman Catholic response to an increasingly rationalized and secularized Western Europe. Sacred Heart religiosity is not found among Protestants, nor has it spread to Orthodox Christians. Can such *prima facie* evidence for the “modernity” of the former be adduced to serve the opposite interpretation in the case of the latter? Empirical evidence of the ready take-up of devotion to the Sacred Heart among Greek Catholics in Central Europe suggests that we are not dealing here with deep ontological differences. The consolidation and dissemination of this instance of micro-materiality have been conditioned at different levels by doctrinal debate and even by ultimate dilemmas of the human condition, but they have been more directly determined by mundane power relations within and between churches, which depend in turn on wider secular macromaterialities.

Can Eastern Christians Be Modern?

My main criticism when reviewing an early sample of the new “anthropology of Christianity” was the failure to engage with Eastern Christianity (Hann 2007). To present the anthropology of Christianity as a miraculous conception of the last two decades disguises continuity in the way that anthropologists have defined their territory in the age of North Atlantic domination of the planet. Given their penchant for the remote and the exotic, it was only to be expected that when Anglophone anthropologists came to engage more closely with Christianity, Melanesia would have stronger claims on their attention than Russia. When large postcolonial populations adopt and modify the religion of the powerful, it makes perfect sense (moral as well as scientific) to recognize these newcomers as authentic members of a global Christian community. It is hard to resist the view that this must be the direction of history, epitomized in the idea of “modern.” It is obvious, at least to social scientists schooled in Western social theory, that puritanical Protestants led the way, spreading an immaterial ideology of signs and self-transformation that came to be valued more highly than earlier collective, more ritualized forms of religion.² Concerns with text-based

truths and inner states of belief detach religion from territory, ethnicity, and nation. In the terms of David Lehmann, this is the shift from “heritage” to “belief.” Faith everywhere becomes a matter of personal, voluntary association. Economic models of choice in the guise of “religious human rights” are the icing on the cake of this liberal modernity.

But is it not possible for anthropology to transcend the circumstances of its birth in an era of European imperialism to embrace other populations and other narratives in a more balanced world history? Christianity surely demands such a move. It originates in what we still quaintly call the “Middle East,” derives a great deal from ancient Judaism, and shares much with a later prophetic faith, that of Islam. To focus on the later expansionary Western strands of Christianity occludes not only Eastern Christians but also these common histories at the heart of Eurasia.

Eastern Christianity has long been mired in negative stereotypes. Images of stagnant Byzantium date back to the era of the Crusades (Parry 2009). Of course there is more to it than negatively charged discourses. The greater degree of doctrinal continuity and conservatism in the Eastern churches seems irrefutable. There is no equivalent to the Jesuit engagement with science around the world. Closer inspection reveals that Orthodox churches have also expanded in recent centuries, notably across Siberia and into North America, but they have not become truly global in the way that Catholicism and Protestantism compete on the world market for souls. Orthodoxy has remained to a much greater extent a matter of birthright. Its presence in settler societies such as the United States and Australia tends to be national (Greek, Serb, Russian, etc.) rather than transnational. Moreover, it is frequently alleged that Eastern Christian churches have failed to develop modern social welfare policies in the manner of their counterparts in the West (Agadjanian 2003). They are said to have a bad record in acknowledging human rights, in particular the freedom to proselytize. For political scientist Samuel Huntington (1996) at the end of the Cold War, as for most historical sociologists from Max Weber onward, the Orthodox constitute a distinct civilization (see Hann 2011).

These representations can be critiqued at several levels. Some of the stereotypes resemble those of classical “Orientalism” (Said 1978), although these debates have paid little explicit attention to Eastern Christians (perhaps because many of them have their homes in Europe). This problem deserves further attention, as does the phenomenon of self-Orientalizing. But in this paper I am more interested in the political economy and geopolitical relations that shape the rise and fall of religions regionally and globally.

After being a major player for a millennium, Byzantium was conquered by the Turks. The Great Church survived, but it declined into relative obscurity in the centuries in which the Jesuits flourished in Latin America and China while assorted Protestants spread their gospel everywhere in between. The protracted demise of the Ottoman Empire was primarily a Muslim history, but the success of Eastern Christians in

2. The most influential work in this vein is Keane (2007). See Hann (2011:11) for a critique.

throwing off the “Turkish yoke” in the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did not lead to a favorable reassessment in the eyes of the West (at any rate outside small circles of intellectuals). Greece had peerless symbolic resources for the West, but this usually meant the obliteration or at any rate demotion of the Byzantine heritage in favor of the Hellenic. As with other Eastern Christian nations of eastern and southeastern Europe, political independence brought no solution to the problems of economic backwardness and patriarchal social structures.

In the twentieth century, the encounter with Marxist-Leninist socialism threatened the very existence of the world’s largest Orthodox churches. However, most seem to have survived the repression of their heritage with extraordinary resilience, including the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC). Tobias Köllner (2012) has shown that this church is again vigorously present in many domains of the public sphere from which it was excluded in the socialist decades. These include business activities (many churches have been reconstructed thanks to the sponsorship of successful entrepreneurs, some of whom, however, prefer to patronize private confessors rather than participate in the life of a parish) and political ritual (tight alliances with secular power holders have become central to new modes of legitimation). Other projects at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology have documented a complex picture at parish level throughout the former Soviet Bloc (see Hann 2010). The majority of ROC followers do not attend churches regularly but nonetheless consider acknowledgment of an Orthodox identity to be an integral part of being Russian. This identification is fostered in myriad ways. The formal separation of church and state is undermined through the teaching of “Orthodox culture” in schools and financial subsidies for the preservation of national heritage. Other religions with a long history on Russian soil are recognized and eligible for certain supports. However, as many neo-Protestant missionaries have found, in the Russia of President (or Prime Minister) Vladimir Putin, there can be no question of a “level playing field” for all religious communities.

As in other fields of postsocialist studies, scholars of religion have complicated simple narratives of repression and revival. Douglas Rogers’s study of the Old Believers in the Urals reveals complex continuities dating back to the Czarist era (Rogers 2009). Sonja Luehrmann (2011) traces the contemporary interplay between Orthodoxy, local “shamanic” religious forms, Western influences (including Protestantism), and finally Soviet styles of secularization, the didactic effect of which is still considerable in Marij El. Luehrmann suggests that Soviet secularism shows a greater “modern” affinity with Protestantism, while other ethnographic studies have demonstrated its continuing influence over Orthodox teachers (Ładykowska and Tocheva 2013). Agadjanian and Rousselet (2010) call for careful distinctions between various “sediments” of the past, Soviet and pre-Soviet, in understanding contemporary religious life. It may be necessary to modify

David Lehmann’s (2013) notion of “low-intensity religion” in cases where, following the demise of scientific atheism, some of those who rediscover their religious traditions become reflexive enthusiasts for their faith. Such “revitalized Orthodox” at the activist core of the parish might have much in common with compatriots who have converted to some other, nontraditional religion or even with Melanesian Pentecostals (Pelkmans 2009).

The above themes, emerging from recent ethnographic studies, have also been addressed by sociologists and other social scientists. They are commonly theorized with reference to “modernity.” For example, Alexander Agadjanian (2003) applauded the efforts made by Patriarch Alexius II to modernize the ROC in the fields of social policy and human rights, with which the church had never previously considered it necessary to engage. But he and others have pointed to limitations in this engagement. According to Vasilios Makrides (2005), despite some positive signs of change in everyday practice, the Russian hierarchy remains strongly resistant to change. Russia and other Orthodox countries are held to lack modernity. Such external opinions have resonance within Russia, where feelings of inferiority are accentuated by the fact that people perceive a loss of power vis-à-vis the West compared with the socialist era.

However, scholars also report pride in specifically Orthodox traditions and a questioning of the telos of the West. Perhaps it is Western liberal modernity that Russians reject rather than modernity per se? Of course, theologians may uphold views not widely shared in the society. After the 1917 revolution, Orthodox elites continued to develop a range of religious and secular discourses in the diaspora, some of which have been resumed within Russia in the postsocialist decades. In a stimulating analysis of these contributions, the philosopher and historian of ideas Kristina Stöckl (2006) has highlighted the revival of neopatristic theology. She argues that this recourse to a distant Christian past has more to offer than the embellishing of more recent, specifically Russian intellectual currents. Pragmatic adaptations on the part of the ROC in domains such as human rights show that at least some of its members are sincerely trying to become as modern as their Western counterparts. However, rather than represent the ROC as a pitiful latecomer struggling to meet the standards set by the West, Stöckl is impressed by an “ontological” critique of Enlightenment rationalism put forward in the 1930s by Georgii Florovskij and continued in recent decades by philosopher-theologians such as Sergej Khoružij. Like the Greek theologian Christos Yannaras, these Orthodox scholars have propagated a personalist ethics with affinities to the philosophy of Martin Heidegger (Stöckl 2006:260–263). Stöckl concludes that this “philosophical-ontological critique of modernism” is not antimodern but rather part, even a necessary part, of “an ambiguity and tension that is inherent in the modern project” (264).

The Sacred Heart: A Reactionary Devotion

The cult of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and his mother Mary among Roman Catholics began in seventeenth-century France and has spread throughout the world over the last three centuries. Notwithstanding affinities with the medieval veneration of Christ's wounds, this devotion has specific origins in the era of the Catholic Reformation. The ground was prepared in the writings (and sketches) of male clerics, notably Frances de Sales and Jean Eudes, but the breakthrough came with the apparitions experienced in 1673 and 1675 by Margaret Mary Alacoque, a mystic nun of the Order of the Visitation (Morgan 2008). As usual, recognition by the hierarchy of the Church was a protracted process. Vatican approval was delayed until 1765, and the feast (on the Friday following Corpus Christi) was not proclaimed to be "universal" until 1856. Pope Pius IX went on to beatify Margaret Mary in 1864. The cult received its most spectacular architectural expression in Montmartre with the opening of the *Sacré Coeur* basilica in 1891. In 1899 Pope Leo XIII consecrated the entire human race to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The continued prominence of the cult in popular Catholicism in the twentieth century was ensured by the apparitions at Fátima in 1917. The Virgin Mary drew the children's attention to Her loving Heart in the "second secret," as related later by Lúcia de Jesus dos Santos. As with Margaret Mary in the seventeenth century, the Roman Catholic hierarchy struggled to control the narratives ("secrets") of a female mystic. Sister Lúcia (as she became) had a vivid vision of a heart pierced with thorns, a common representation since the seventeenth century. She made a nuisance of herself in the Vatican by insisting over many decades that Mary had demanded the consecration of Russia (at the time under a Marxist-Leninist regime) to her Immaculate Heart (fig. 1).³

One of the first social anthropologists to take an interest in this cult was Raymond Firth (1973), for whom it provided an example of how the "private symbol" of an individual's ecstatic experience can be transformed to function as a "public symbol" with quite different meanings (230–237). The cult of the Sacred Heart was publicly supported most emphatically by the Jesuits as a self-confident riposte to the Protestant rejection of the visual (Morgan 2008). David Morgan relates changes in the iconography, his prime interest, to theological and political controversy as well as to more general changes

3. Sister Lúcia was reputedly dissatisfied that this consecration was not implemented by male pontiffs in quite the way specified by the Virgin via her own mediation. Pope John Paul II sought to accommodate Lúcia's wishes after meeting her and becoming profoundly devoted to Our Lady of Fátima in the wake of the failed attempt on his life on May 13, 1981, which coincided with the day of Our Lady's first appearance to the children in Fátima in 1917. Benedict XVI, when still Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, was the key figure in the Vatican's attempts to defuse controversy over Lúcia's alleged further secrets. This defensive action culminated in a publication in 2000; but because of a lack of transparency in the handling of Lúcia's estate following her death in 2005, apocalyptic rumors continue to circulate on the Internet.



Figure 1. Sacred Heart of Mary depicted on a postcard souvenir of the shrine at Fátima. A color version of this figure is available in the online edition of *Current Anthropology*.

in society and popular piety. The representation of the physiological matter of the Saviour, the second element of the Trinity, was heretical to Bishop Scipio de Ricci in Italy and contemporary French Jansenists. Nonetheless, eighteenth-century artists came to abandon earlier emblematic representations in order to emphasize the materiality of the heart and the blood it pumped. The figure of Jesus came to dominate over that of Mary. Yet this Jesus gradually changed in character. From all-powerful Pantocrator, he became gentler, more effeminate, or at any rate androgenous: "Jesus tenderly offers himself, gazing softly but steadily into the eyes of viewers" (Morgan 2008:23). The twentieth century brought plenty of cognoscenti condemnation of the proliferation of "kitsch" in this iconography, which nowadays tends to be more restrained. It is no longer necessary to represent the organ corporeally in order to convey the symbolic messages. It seems that representation of the heart is unnecessary and even unintelligible for African Catholics (Morgan 2008:39–40). However, the personal appeal and pastoral efficacy of the Sacred Heart remains strong for millions of Euro-American Cath-

olics, many of whom “enthroned” a more or less gaudy image in the intimacy of their homes.

The basic idea of dedicating (consecrating) oneself, one’s family, one’s nation, or the entire human race to God as reparation for human sins was hardly new to Christianity in the seventeenth century. The accompanying practices of indulgences were essentially the same as those condemned by Luther, which had provoked the Reformation. But the extraction of the heart and its representation as flesh constituted an innovation. It seems clear that, well before the visions of Margaret Mary, the heart was increasingly considered by Western Europeans to be the seat of the emotions. Descartes and the philosophers of the age prioritized reason, with its seat in the brain. Pascal’s insistence that the heart, too, had its reasons, was a reminder of an earlier era, before St. Augustine, in which the heart itself was still taken to be a vehicle of intelligence (as it was also in classical China). It was the organ for prayer and knowledge of the divine. Thus, the frequent references to *lev* (Greek *kardia*) in the Bible have a broader reference than contemporary understandings that prioritize sentiment and sensibility. Seventeenth-century “theology of the heart” was still far removed from romantic love and the commercialization of St. Valentine’s Day.⁴ Yet the theme of love appears to have been central to the enthusiastic adoption of the Sacred Heart by Roman Catholics in both elite theological and popular pastoral discourses. The burning, sexually charged furnace that inspired the visions of Margaret Mary gradually yielded to the reassurance that both Jesus and Mary could be approached as compassionate, comforting figures whose love could be won by each and every follower.

From this perspective, the cult of the Sacred Heart is a reaction not merely to puritanical Protestantism but to the rise of secular thinking and the scientific revolution in the West that preceded industrial transformation. Devotion to the Sacred Heart can be seen as a distinctive Catholic contribution to the democratizing and personalizing of religion in the direction of what Lehmann (2013) terms “religion as belief” (distinct from both individual rational knowledge and civilizational spiritual heritage). At the same time, unsurprisingly, this cult has been strongly associated with political reaction. It was a symbol of royalist sympathies in postrevolutionary France and again during the Spanish Civil War. Ewa Klekot (2012) concludes her study of Spanish *detentebalas* (badges with the protective emblem of the Sacred Heart) by arguing that the Sacred Heart nonetheless belongs in an “ontologically

modern” world: “the cult gained importance when the Heart of Jesus could embody not only God’s love towards humankind but also some basic dichotomies of modernity: heart/reason, religion/science, autocracy/democracy etc. . . . Modern ontology changed the whole concept of the human being, including the notion of the heart” (180).

In closing this section, as the previous one, with a reference to ontology, let me point out how the analysis of Ewa Klekot diverges from that of Kristina Stöckl. For Stöckl, neopatristic Orthodoxy with Heideggerian inflections is a key ingredient within the modernist ontology, not a nonmodernist alternative. According to her account, at least by the latter half of the twentieth century, Orthodox Christians are in the same ontological condition as the others. They have accomplished this in two different ways: first, by seeking to emulate the West “institutionally” in domains such as social policy, and second, by promoting a metaphysics that, though going against the grain of the Enlightenment, nonetheless qualifies them as distinctively modern. However, for Klekot, Eastern Christians remain excluded from an ontology that develops uniquely in Western Christianity, where it expresses itself in different forms in Catholicism and Protestantism.

Religious Borderlands in the Heart of Europe

I have noted that devotion to the Sacred Heart was initially disputed within the Roman Catholic Church, notably between Jesuits and more austere, Protestant-like Jansenists in the eighteenth century. Tensions persist down to the present day. If we follow the argument of Klekot, Catholics participate in the same “modern ontology” as Protestants; it is just that, on balance, their hierarchies have been more generous in extending the boundaries for the materialization of religious faith. Of course, as David Morgan (2005) and Webb Keane (2007) both point out, not even the strictest Protestants can avoid the material altogether. Some Lutherans and High Anglicans have found ways to accommodate the Sacred Heart. The Sacred Heart has not been taken up by Calvinists, who approach transcendence very strictly through the Word, but its absence among the Orthodox can hardly be explained as a modernist rejection of the material. These Eastern Christians appear to be trapped in a pre-Augustinian theology, which views the heart as a seat of intelligence for grasping the divine.

Do Eastern Christians constitute a distinct civilization, ontology, or modernity? I seek answers by turning now to empirical evidence concerning the liminal Christians of Central Europe known since the middle of the eighteenth century as Greek Catholics (though they are overwhelmingly Slav and not ethnically Greek). These Christians are Catholics who, though they acknowledge the Pope, remain in terms of their liturgy far closer to Orthodox Byzantine than to Western forms of Christianity (Mahieu and Naumescu 2008). Consideration of how they have dealt with the Sacred Heart may help us formulate more appropriate anthropological responses

4. See Pelikan 1989 on the consolidation of this theology in Christian doctrine in this era. More recently, Joseph Ratzinger took his inspiration directly from the Bible: “According to Matthew (5, 8), the ‘immaculate heart’ is a heart which, with God’s grace, may come to perfect interior unity and therefore ‘see God.’ To be devoted to the Immaculate Heart of Mary means therefore to embrace this attitude of heart, which makes the fiat—‘Your will be done’—the defining center of one’s whole life” (Theological Commentary to the Secret of Fatima, 2000; quoted in the brochure accompanying the exhibition “To Be, the Secret of the Heart”; see note 2 above).

to the claims about modernity advanced by political scientists, sociologists, and philosopher-theologians.

Since the drawing of new state boundaries and significant population transfers in the wake of the Second World War ("ethnic cleansing"), southeast Poland has been populated predominantly by Roman Catholic Poles. Before the middle of the twentieth century, however, this region was home to large populations of Eastern as well as Western Christians. The city of Przemyśl was a diocesan center for both, the two cathedral churches located almost next door to each other on a hill in the city center, overlooking the River San. The differences were not just religious. Western Christians spoke western Slav dialects, which were later standardized as Polish. Eastern Christians spoke eastern Slav dialects, which eventually gave rise in these districts to Ukrainian.⁵ Most villages were either Eastern or Western; some were mixed, but these had separate sacred buildings and cemeteries. All countrymen met in the market towns, where they also interacted with Jews, Germans, Armenians, and others. Eastern and Western Slavic-speaking peasants could communicate with ease. Inter marriage was commonplace, the inmarrying partner adopting the religion of his/her new community. In larger settlements where choice was possible, it was common to raise children in the faith of the same-sex parent. Eastern and Western calendars differed, but each side respected the holy days of the other.

If all this sounds too good to be true, in the end, it was. Material disparities between East and West had deep historical roots and ramifying consequences. In the late Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic Church in Przemyśl was part of a powerful international institution and intimately linked to a strong state, the Kingdom of Poland (from 1569 the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth). The Eastern bishops lacked such institutionalized supports. In contrast to the Roman Catholic clergy, Eastern priests were expected to marry and to work their own plots of land alongside their fellow villagers (marriage at least rendered them less susceptible to the anticlerical jibes directed against their celibate Western counterparts). From the Reformation onward, both Eastern and Western churches in these parts were concerned to raise their standards, in effect to "modernize." The emergence of the Greek Catholic Church in 1596 intensified the pressures.⁶ Monastic

orders played a key role, above all the Basilians, who in certain ways resembled the Jesuits and were among the first to adopt and disseminate the cult of the Sacred Heart in the East. The Greek Catholic Church in Przemyśl became a significant center of scholarly activities and of Ukrainian nationalism in its formative phase. From 1772, the vast, economically backward province of Galicia belonged to the Habsburgs. The rulers in Vienna took considerable trouble to strengthen the position of the Greek Catholic Church (not altruistically, but in order to counter the power of the Roman Catholics and the intensifying Polish national movement).

Habsburg policies shaped religious and secular identities down to the present day, but they did little to alter the basic inequalities of power between West and East. These were evident in contexts of micromateriality of the kind studied intensively in the recent anthropology of Christianity. Wooden churches have a different feel and smell from stone churches, but the latter were more prestigious and were increasingly adopted by Eastern parishes; architectural styles became increasingly hybrid. Pews traditionally had no place in the Eastern churches, but they too were introduced, along with organs and new hymns and styles of singing. Latinization (or Occidentalization) was also apparent in visual art (fig. 2). When devotion to the Sacred Heart reached its peak in Western Europe in the late nineteenth century, reproductions of Italianate (sometimes described as "Ultramontane," although the epicenter of their production was Paris) images were readily adopted, subverting older iconic styles in Greek Catholic churches and eventually in private homes throughout Habsburg Galicia (Hann 2006). All over Galicia, Brotherhoods of the Sacred Heart of Jesus were formed at parish level. A Greek Catholic priest and seminary professor composed new devotional prayers, which were widely adopted.

In the twentieth century the cult of the Sacred Heart continued to spread. Some priests and bishops of the Greek Catholic Church took pains to prove that although the prayers and iconography might be new, they were consistent with the theology of the Byzantine tradition and not a simple emulation of the West. Metropolitan Andrei Sheptyts'kyi insisted in 1906 that it was entirely legitimate to renew the liturgy in this way. He was careful at the same time to give the innovations a distinctive Eastern character by tying the symbol of the heart and its feast to the Byzantine tradition of Christ the Lover of Mankind. Sheptyts'kyi's balancing act also meant giving the cult a strongly national character, as he repeatedly dedicated the Ukrainian nation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It tilted toward the East after his Lemberg diocese was occupied by the Red Army in 1939 and the help of the Sacred Heart was sorely needed (Stępień 2000:95–97).

These tensions were largely suspended when the Greek Catholic Church was suppressed in the socialist decades. Conditions in the "catacomb Church" favored the persistence of hybrid forms, but the reestablishment of ecclesiastical hierarchy in the 1990s revived the old concerns with "matter out of place" (Naumescu 2007). Greek Catholic bishops have been

5. In addition, in complex political circumstances, a distinct "Lemko" or "Rusyn" (Ruthenian) minority has consolidated itself in recent decades in the most westerly sections of east Slav settlement. See Rusinko (2009).

6. For a historical overview of Greek Catholic Churches, which still comprise several million followers, see Magocsi 2008. They are commonly termed "Uniate," but this name is felt by many of their members to be pejorative and is therefore avoided here. The term "Greek Catholic" was bestowed by the Empress Maria Theresa in 1774, and this remains the most common designation on the ground. The church unions of this era were the clearest demonstration of the greater power of the West in both ecclesiastical and secular domains. According to the documents signed (under pressure from the Polish crown) by a cluster of Orthodox bishops at Brest in 1596 (and later ratified by others, including the Bishop of Przemyśl in 1623), affiliation to the universal Catholic Church and to the Pope as its leader had no implications for practical religion (the liturgy), though several theological issues quickly became contentious.



Figure 2. The Sacred Heart of Jesus depicted on a side altar in the Greek Catholic Church of the Transfiguration, Zarudci, Western Ukraine, early twentieth century. Reproduction courtesy of Ewa Klekot. A color version of this figure is available in the online edition of *Current Anthropology*.

enjoined by their superiors in Rome to purify their liturgy of Western accretions. As in numerous Orthodox churches through the ages, the urge toward a clear differentiation from the West in the spirit of “anti-syncretism” (Shaw and Stewart 1994) has led to distortions and misleading accounts of their own histories (e.g., in discourse concerning the iconoclastic controversies). The reassertion of Eastern forms in church architecture and icons is not welcomed by many ordinary “followers,” who have formed attachments to prayers, tunes, and gestures originating in the West. It is sometimes alleged that, if forced to abandon the consequences of centuries of Latinization, a significant proportion of Eastern Christians would opt to attend Roman Catholic services.⁷ The tensions thus persist on the ground in southeast Poland and adjacent states. Although the hierarchy puts the stress on Eastern

7. In Przemyśl there is no evidence to support such allegations. Hann and Stępień (2000) found that, if hypothetically obliged to choose between attending Roman Catholic and Orthodox services, most Greek Catholics in this city in the 1990s declared a strong preference for the latter.

forms, details vary significantly from parish to parish according to the preferences of priest and followers. Some individuals practice a personalized “everyday syncretism” in which devotion to the Sacred Heart features prominently (Buzalka 2008:196–203).

We may conclude that the religious sensorium in these borderlands has been significantly modified over the centuries and that the dominant direction of influence has been from West to East. Micromaterialities, such as images of the Sacred Heart, were shaped by the inequalities at higher levels. The West was better organized, wealthier, and more powerful politically. This superiority had direct as well as indirect implications for the flow of goods, services, and even aesthetic styles. The East was poor, and its priests were badly educated. Greek Catholic villagers, the most numerous population group in eastern Galicia, had lower literacy rates and higher mortality rates than their Roman Catholic counterparts in the west of the province. The political dilemmas of religious and national identity were shaped by perceptions of backwardness that were largely shared by those in the east, including those who sought to solve the problem with Eastern solutions, by opposing religious acculturation.

Although these Western and Eastern communities interacted over many centuries, they never merged. Efforts to establish a coherent Greek Catholic liturgical identity, separate from both Orthodox and Roman Catholic, were undermined by changing political constellations and were ultimately unsuccessful. Eastern parishes, like individuals, sometimes transferred allegiance (there were many defections from Greek Catholicism to Orthodoxy in the presocialist decades, partly under the influence of returnees from North America). Yet the most basic differences were not effaced. Even when a sacred building had to be shared by Roman and Greek Catholics, as was common during the socialist era, a casual visitor was never in doubt as to which service he or she had stumbled on. For one thing, the eastern services lasted much longer. For another, the Greek Catholics kissed their sacred images demonstratively. At Easter they manipulated them further, returning home with sore knees at the end of their lengthy rituals. Local people commented on these contrasting forms of ritualization, but I do not think anyone considered them to be a matter of essential difference let alone inferiority, an indication that the Greek Catholics were somehow more primitive than their Roman Catholic neighbors.⁸

8. These observations derive from my fieldwork in the *gmina* of Komańcza in 1979–1981 (Hann 1985). I also draw on research cooperation in the 1990s with Stanisław Stępień, director of the South-East Scientific Institute in Przemyśl. Most Greek Catholics were expelled in the ethnic cleansing of the 1940s, but some remained, and others were eventually able to return surreptitiously to their former homes. With the demise of socialism, they made a dramatic return to the public sphere, although even the authority of a Polish Pope was not enough to persuade Polish nationalists to restore their old cathedral to the minority (Hann 1998). Some antagonism remains in both religious and secular domains, but in the third decade of postsocialism, a complex constellation has become more stable. Contemporary Poland is ethnically one of Europe's more

Civilization, Ontology, Modernity

I return now to the larger goals of this paper, which are to suggest how anthropological work on Christians might contribute to the discipline in general and to interdisciplinary debates. Do Eastern Christians differ from Western Christians in civilizational and ontological terms? Do they represent a distinctive variant of modernity?

First, let us consider the question of civilizational difference. Samuel Huntington (1996) included the Greek Catholics with the West on the grounds that four centuries of integration into the institutions of Western states and the universal Catholic Church must have weaned these Byzantine Christians away from the illiberal nexus of Orthodoxy. This classification does not coincide with local views. In southeast Poland, Poles and Ukrainians of all religious orientations tend to place the Greek Catholics on the Eastern side of a civilizational divide.⁹ However, in a context in which the main population groups understand each other well, intermarry, and practice essentially the same rituals, though at slightly different times and in slightly different ways, it makes more sense to speak here of an intracivilizational encounter (Hann 2012). The emergence of Greek Catholics as an interstitial group complicates the East-West boundary, but all boundaries remain highly permeable: Christianity can therefore remain a robust singular.

The second question concerns “ontology,” a term that has become exceedingly popular in anthropology in recent years. “Ontology” refers to notions of identity, of the self (or personhood) and of the world, that impinge on all aspects of cognition. In strong versions, the meanings endorsed by culturally defined groups are ultimately incommensurable. Unlike the institutional variables of civilizational analysis, ontologies are scarcely amenable to comparative sociological analysis but only to relativist hermeneutics. I have emphasized power inequalities and macromaterialities among Christians in Central Europe, but ordinary priests and parishioners on both sides exercised agency, and the micromaterialities that entered Eastern Christian practices did so as a result of enthusiastic popular appropriations. This need not be inconsistent with a diagnosis of ontological difference if the materialities of Latinization were then interpreted and used differently. But did villagers pray differently and reach a different sense of their being in the world when gazing at an image of Mary holding her heart (perhaps derived from the

Saint Sulpice School) rather than a *Hodegetria* (the Orthodox type in which a solemn Mary holds the God child)? Theologians and art historians distinguish between “image-as-presence” and “image-as-representation” (Luehrmann 2011:161). But in reality, both forms were found on both sides of the East-West boundaries. Besides, replacement was probably rare: in the more common scenario, the new images took their place alongside the old. The cult of the Sacred Heart evidently appealed to Greek Catholics for the same reasons that it spread in the West. It did not spread among those who remained Orthodox because the hierarchies were successful in preventing its intrusion. Orthodox bishops could support their stance with reference to their theological traditions. But the ready acceptance of Latin innovation among the Greek Catholics (and the difficulty in eradicating some of these evolved habits when elites later attempted to do so) suggests to me that it is misleading to speak of ontological differences. The positions taken by bishops and theologians fluctuated over time in the West, the East, and among the Greek Catholics in between. But even if we focus on ideal-typical differences between West and East on issues such as the representation of Jesus’s heart as matter, these sophisticated debates between experts take place within a common doctrinal tradition. They do not signify “deep” differences between populations of the kind implied by Ewa Klekot when she distinguishes a modern ontology in the West from that of the East.

If neither civilization nor ontology has much traction, how then are we to theorize and compare the main strands of Christianity? One possibility is to propose that Christianity is compatible with different styles or models of modernity, as discussed above. Kristina Stöckl has followed up her argument that the ROC is ontologically modern when perceived through the prism of its Heideggerian theologians with an article in which she engages with the “multiple modernities” debates in historical sociology (Eisenstadt 2002; Stöckl 2011). While the ROC is not quite in the same boat as the others, she argues that it is best viewed as a distinct vessel in the same ontological sea of modernity.

The metaphor might be elaborated: is the Orthodox ship of modernity sailing in the same direction as the other ships? The problem that has dogged the “multiple modernities” debates is how to define modernity as an analytic category. Eisenstadt himself is arguably close to the tradition of Max Weber in the sense that he never quite relinquishes a Protestant model of the core referents of modernity. If, for example, rationalized disenchantment is supposed to replace ritualization, and if liberal individualism is to replace ceasarpapism, then the modernity of Putin’s Russia can be called into question. On the other hand, numerous Western states still have their established churches, which Russia formally does not, so it might be safer to focus on social issues such as abortion and the treatment of homosexuals. In practice, this is what most of the world does, experts and wider publics alike. They sometimes overlook the fact that similar illiberal sentiments are equally strong in numerous Western countries

homogenous states. Given the postwar dominance of the Roman Catholic Church, it can now afford to tolerate exotic pockets. Church attendance figures remain generally high in this part of the country. Eastern Christian churches (both Orthodox and Greek Catholic) and their rituals are attractive to tourists; they are no longer perceived as a threat to the integrity of the Roman Catholic nation (Buzalka 2007).

9. I do not deny the significance of the boundary that divides the western regions of Ukraine (ex-Galicia) from eastern regions where Greek Catholicism is unknown; but to the best of my knowledge even Russian-speaking Ukrainians in the east of the country do not locate, Greek Catholics in the same civilization as Roman Catholics and Protestants.

(e.g., Poland) and continue to see Orthodoxy as different, backward, and inferior to the West. Sociologist David Martin, for example, continues to endorse a primary dichotomy between East and West and refuses to recognize them as equivalent varieties of modernity. Martin (2011) has recently argued that “the future of Christianity” depends on its success as a force in global civil society. Although unsympathetic to rational choice approaches, he ends up partially endorsing such models while emphasizing historical factors in shaping local outcomes. On his account, the current global market game was pioneered by Protestants, but Roman Catholics have become effective rivals, and nowadays the main traditions of Western Christianity resemble each other in the ways they compete for followers. By contrast, argues Martin, Orthodoxy has not moved with the times: this religion remains conservative and ritualistic and thus definitely not modern.

I have argued above that this alterity has deep roots in Orientalizing discourses, but also in real differences in doctrines and practices, and above all in material conditions, that is, the economic backwardness of Eastern Christians for most of the last millennium. The West has come to be conflated with the modern, with the future of the whole of humanity, because of the power of North Atlantic capitalism in recent centuries. As a result, sophisticated sociologists such as Martin view the emergence of Protestantism and Catholicism as “global sects” to be the ultimate sign of modernity. Orthodoxy is inevitably judged wanting. But as economic power shifts away from the West toward other civilizations of Eurasia, these criteria seem increasingly questionable. Close ties to the homeland and to the polity may turn out to have a future after all. For all the variety that exists within the Byzantine tradition, this strand of Christianity can potentially provide the basis of a general type that differs from both the centralized structures of the Catholics and the decentralized Protestants.¹⁰ Not a different civilization, not a different ontology, this general type warrants recognition as a pattern for institutionalizing religion in the contemporary world. Is this sufficient to justify classification as a variant of modernity? Until the analytic criteria are more carefully specified, this concept seems vacuous and unhelpful in comparative historical analysis. It seems preferable to speak of a distinct style, pattern, crystallization, or coagulation within a singular Christian civilization.¹¹

The recent anthropological literature on Christians has not engaged to any significant degree with civilizational analysis or with the mainstream sociology of religion or with historical and evolutionist approaches in religious studies and the anthropology of religion. It has paid less attention to institutional variables than it has to ideas, language ideologies, and

ontologies. However, there have been some notable attempts to relate the astonishing expansion of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity to global political economy, including that of Joel Robbins for the Urapmin of New Guinea (Robbins 2009). The example of this small community suggests that religions that offer a strong notion of transcendence (salvation in another world) have a natural appeal to geographically remote peoples marginalized by secular development trends.¹² But Robbins goes further. Setting out from the revolution of the Axial Age, he postulates Protestant notions of the Godhead as the pinnacle of Christian notions of the transcendent while Catholicism retains a hankering for the immanent (Jesus lived as a man on this earth). According to this argument, the Holy Spirit is the element that allows Pentecostals to mediate the two poles: the Spirit enters the individual’s heart (*aget tem*), which for the Urapmin is “the seat of all thought, feeling and motivation” (Robbins 2009:66; cf. Robbins 2004:230–231). It is not clear whether the Urapmin had similar notions of cultivating a peaceful inner state in their heart in their traditional religion before the recent arrival of Pentecostal Christianity. But in any case, there is no reason to suppose that equally well-organized Roman Catholic or Orthodox missionaries would have enjoyed less success in this marginalized environment. All draw on the same basic repertoire of belief, symbols, and rituals. No doubt the assertive materialism (“prosperity gospel”) of so many conversion-led movements gives them an advantage vis-à-vis all three major strands of the evolved faith in many parts of the contemporary world, but this does not seem pertinent in the Urapmin case. My point is that evangelical doctrines of the Holy Spirit are but a continuation of the general “affectional transposition” (Pelikan 1989) of Christianity that flourished in the seventeenth century and was epitomized by the cult of the Sacred Heart, a symbol readily taken up by Eastern Christians whenever they were exposed to it.

Conclusion

The project of an “anthropology of Christianity” is tremendously exciting and has far-reaching implications for the future of the discipline. Training the anthropological gaze on the major religion of the West, the civilization that gave birth to the discipline of anthropology as now practiced all over the world, can be viewed as a triumphant realization of the discipline’s ultimate aspirations, a completion and even a transcendence of its origins. But the privileging of this one religion—or rather, specific strands within it—as the harbinger of “modernity” may equally risk an ethnocentric betrayal of that aspiration. At a time when neither new cognitive approaches nor the many competing variants of postmodern,

10. Whether David Martin is right to merge Roman Catholics and Protestants in this way is not an issue I can explore further here. The recent flourishing of charismatic forms of Catholicism tends to support the case for convergence.

11. All of these terms figure in the writings of Alfred Kroeber (Wolf 1967).

12. Denial of this congruence can be viewed as a key failure of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist socialism, which attempted to persuade subaltern populations that salvation could be built in the mundane world. Postsocialist religious revival in contexts of economic decline have gone some way to restoring the consistency of the transnational with the transcendent.

post-Durkheimian approaches to religion have brought the yields anticipated, my hope is that renewal of the anthropology of Christianity will give a decisive impulse to comparative historical enquiry. But this has not happened so far, and it is instructive to ask why.

I have argued that the anthropological coverage of Christianity has been weakened by the received Anglophone definition of the people anthropologists should study, skewed by the imperialism of recent centuries. Moreover, much of our literature remains in thrall to Max Weber's thesis of the links between the "Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism," with its implication that interiorized individual faith based on a sacred book is a major distinguishing feature of the transition to "modernity." Weber himself was more cautious, but scholarship does not bear out even looser diagnoses of "affinity" let alone the idea that religious dogmas are the ultimate causes of epochal shifts. I have stressed the contingent macromaterialities of world history in drawing out the implications of my empirical materials from Central Europe. Christianity deserves our attention as a civilization, but the concepts of ontology and modernity appear unhelpful and misleading. If the prioritizing of texts and interiorized belief are taken to be the decisive criteria for modernity, then other traditions, notably Islam, have equally strong claims. Theological disputation should not be confused with ontological differences between populations. Different strands of Christianity have given rise to distinct institutional crystallizations, but nothing is gained by referring to these as contrasting varieties of modernity.

Some parts of the contemporary world and some strands of Christianity have evidently been more dynamic than other parts in these recent centuries. I argue that this dynamism is independent of the ideas and micromaterialities of the strands I have discussed. Certainly there is a difference between the Calvinists of Geneva, with their texts and asceticism, and Orthodox peasants in eastern Europe who continue to perform strange rituals with icons. But this kind of distinction must be kept in perspective. The popular religion of Greece in the era of Eurozone crisis, or postsocialist Russia, may have much in common with the immanent, inspirited cosmologies that anthropologists have documented everywhere in the world, but not even the Calvinists can dispense with materiality. Rather than build our theory on these kinds of differences within Christianity, I suggest we pay more attention to the institutional crystallizations. David Martin (2011) argues for a convergence between Protestant and Catholic versions of modernity based on competition on the religious market place. Pentecostal and charismatic Christians can readily be integrated into this approach, but this "religion as belief" is far removed from "religion as heritage" as theorized by Lehmann (2013). As a type, Orthodox Christianity has come to exemplify the latter for reasons that are not difficult to explain historically. Perhaps one day Orthodoxy will follow the path pioneered by Protestants and later followed by Roman Catholics, the path that Martin describes as global civil

society. But it is also conceivable that eastern European countries will demonstrate the viability of a different path by consolidating the adaptation of religion to national heritage. It is not impossible to imagine some variants of Western Christianity and other vessels of "modernity" changing direction to follow an Eastern fleet in this respect.

At another level, we may still wish to pay attention to what makes Christianity as a civilization distinctive in comparison with the stories of Judaism and Islam and its Axial Age cousins. Axial Age theory is still the most compelling proposition for world-historical discontinuity in the evolution of religion (Bellah 2011). It has more plausibility than theories that postulate ontological rupture with the rise of Pentecostalism or with Calvin or Luther or Jesus of Nazareth. But the significance of the heart in the theology of the ancient Egyptians, long before the Axial Age, suggests caution.¹³

Ultimately, work on Christianity might lead us to push "continuity thinking" to its limits and to question any notion of "major transitions" in the evolution of what we unsatisfactorily term "religion." Perhaps the tension between the transcendent and the immanent was not a product of the Axial Age but is omnipresent in the "habits of the heart" (Bellah 1996) of all human societies.¹⁴ Be that as it may, the patterns that have emerged through combinations of the ideas and practices that form the repertoire of Christianity should be explored historically with reference to both micro- and macromaterialities. There is no reason to suppose that the future of humanity must lie with the representational economy of the Protestant individualists or with the deterritorialized market competition model of "global sects." A more expansive anthropology of Christianity could be an antidote to these two models (which are, of course, intimately related). It might also be a spur to the rediscovery of older evolutionist agendas; if our comparisons take sufficient note of historical context, we can avoid repeating the errors of our predecessors.

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13. So does its present significance for the Urapmin studied by Robbins (2004, 2009). The range of meanings associated with this organ needs to be examined case by case; there is no general association with the emotions or with mind-body dualism. Encounters between symbolic clusters of different origins may nonetheless be instructive: the ready adaptation of native Aztec or Inca concepts of the heart into Spanish Catholic devotional practices is further evidence against exaggerated notions of ontological difference.

14. The authors in Bellah (1996) take this expression from Alexis de Tocqueville. They suggest he drew on Pascal in arguing that, while utilitarian calculating reason was central to American individualism, the privatizing dangers of the modern commercial economy were averted through *moeurs* (for which "habits of the heart" is a synonym) and the ensuing forms of civic participation (Bellah 1996:37, 312).

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