Hope and Religion

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Hope, like its twin, despair, is obviously an enduring and pervasive human emotion, and one common feature of religion in its innumerable forms is surely that it is sought by people in search of hope and of relief from despair. But religion changes, and I will argue in the following pages that by examining some of the ways in which religion responds to despair and provides hope we can learn about how religion is changing in quite fundamental ways.

Despite the apparently enormous variation of what goes, somewhat intuitively, by the name of religion, and despite the statement by Maurice Bloch that anthropologists have found it impossible ' to ... isolate or define... religion' (Bloch 2008). I think that cognitive anthropologists and psychologists have given us good reason to believe that a common core does exist. The cognitivists are dealing not with institutionalized religion but rather with how we invoke, mobilize and relate to the supernatural or how the supernatural is built into our evolution. This is manifested in popular religion, not in institutionalized religion. Popular religion does have common features across cultures and through time, because of its deep involvement with curing or preventing illness, with warning of and warding off rumour and gossip, with divining and controlling the future and with life after death and how survivors deal with the loss of their kin.

Cognitive psychology , as applied to religion in the work of Boyer and Atran (Boyer 2001; Atran 2003; Boyer 2004; Lehmann 2005) tells us that these accounts rely on several evolved modes of operation of the brain: one is the inclination to search for agency in explaining obscure and disconcerting phenomena: this is essential to enable us to survive but it can also be excessive, as in paranoia. Another is alertness to danger/risk which leads us to associate strange or threatening noises and visions with agents like ghosts or with a warning from a supernatural godlike agent. The need to know what is going on in other people's minds – as in the 'theory of mind' which to varying degrees is lacking in autistic individuals (Baron-Cohen 1995) - is also an essential feature of human interaction which leads us to look for all-knowing entities like an omniscient God or, in more everyday terms, to consult a shaman or witch who has privileged knowledge and offers to diagnose plots against us and to provide

weapons to counter them. (The shaman is powerful because since everyone consults him he has privileged information and may provide the right advice. The trouble is that one cannot always trust the shaman to be impartial.) Risk plus uncertainty plus information combine with plausible advice especially in areas where certainty is not an option.

These essential features of human existence have not necessarily evolved to satisfy the functions we intuitively describe and package as 'religion': rather in Atran's words, religion as we know it encompasses 'a variety of cognitive and affective systems, some with separate evolutionary histories, and some with no evolutionary history to speak of. Of those with an evolutionary history, some parts plausibly have an adaptive story, while others are more likely by-products.' (Atran 2003: 265). The line between features with an 'original' adaptive function and others which are 'exaptations', by-products, is somewhat notional, but for our purposes the point is that they have come to form a common underlying feature of the popular religion which is at the heart of all religion, despite the diversity of its institutional forms across time and space.

Ritual and uncertainty

Dealing with the uncertainties of gossip, illness and death requires experts and specialists, so individuals carve out or inherit or gain access to expert roles with esoteric knowledge and access to the supernatural realm. There has to be some sort of 'system' for building trust, however fragile, in individuals who help us to cope with uncertainty, who cure illness and who manage the transition from life to death and communication with the dead. And so we must add ritual and exchange. to these psychological propensities to look for solutions. Ritual institutionalizes or essentializes a practice, marking it as standard procedure but also introducing extensive elements which are not present for any practical reason related to the context, but fix social roles in relation to the procedure: ritual should induce trust and it also should confer privileged knowledge on the part of the person performing it. Exchange is deeply embedded in our evolved psychology from the exchange of glances in recognition, to sex, to economics, and above all guilt – the guilt we experience when we do not fulfil the obligations of reciprocity. In our relationship with the supernatural the exchange is also ritualized so that the successes of the past can be repeated and the failures explained. In explaining how religion – which has ritual as an indispensable component - manages hope and hopelessness, ritual and exchange are intimately connected. Such ritual exchanges depend on the meticulous fulfilment of esoteric procedures, yet they remain bedevilled by uncertainty – and the word 'bedevilled' is probably appropriate in this context. In Dan Sperber's words: 'only misfortune always begs for an explanation': if things go fine then questions are not asked. But 'when failure to adhere to the practice is followed by misfortune, it may appear to have caused it' (Sperber 1996: 51-52). Sperber's formulation includes the words '*strict* adherence' (my emphasis) reflecting the

ritual character of these procedures, and that is in turn related to the belief in their efficacy. They do not claim to be one hundred per cent successful, but that is not the point: the point is that (a) if you haven't performed the ritual and the misfortune arises you could be held responsible; (b) that it ties people in to a social network of responsibility who might hold you responsible or, alternatively, forgive you – or indeed might be grateful if the ritual is perceived to have had the desired effect, and (c) it allows for mistakes to explain failure. So long as you have done what had to be done – i.e. performed the ritual, which may be very simple and perfunctory – the system is set up so that even if it does not achieve the desired or anticipated outcome you will not be held to account.

The ritual distributes roles, thus evoking reciprocity in others, be they those who suffer the misfortune directly or those who are linked to the sufferers. It also creates a set of idealized, 'essentialized' (Bloch 2008) figures who act on behalf or in the name of supernatural powers and incur costs on their own behalf (the accoutrements of ritual, renunciation of their daily needs) but attract donations, reciprocity, from those who stand to benefit from their renunciation. The stricter the requirements of the ritual the higher the cost, but as the ritual becomes more costly so more participants are required and more people can join in support. If the central figure is a celebrity , enjoys a cult of personality, then people may be prepared to pay a higher cost, even pay with their lives, but more usually the cost is low because of the uncertain outcome, balanced by the comfort of shared reciprocity.

In a ritual involving exchange with a supernatural agent there is always an intermediary: a medium, or an institution like the Church. These exchanges have to be public: just as a Pentecostal cannot claim to have received the Holy Spirit in private, a vision of the Virgin Mary is of no value if it is not recognised, and an exorcism, for example has to be witnessed. Ruth Harris has described how the vision of Bernadette near Lourdes replicated quite a commonplace occurrence in an impoverished mountain culture , but became what it became because of a concatenation of circumstances and interests which led the Church to make it into a vision of the Virgin (Harris 1999). Although millions of Christians make offerings of their own, they do so with the blessing of the institution and usually in a church.

In non-institutionalized religious cultures the intermediary wields real, sometimes frightening power. Geschiere (Geschiere 1995) describes the

sorcerers and witch-hunters who are indispensable associates of West African politicians: the mystery surrounding them is whether they are themselves responsible for the possession which they diagnose. Likewise Brazilian neo-Pentecostal churches practice exorcism to help their followers recapture a lover or expel drugs from their households: if it doesn't work then the sufferer is told that the procedure had a defect or the exorcist him/herself was possessed or was an agent of diabolical forces, or the sufferer has not tried hard enough. There is always an answer and reassessments go round and round in a never-ending circle. So paranoia is fed, but so also social actors have an incentive to try to create trust and institutions.

It is precisely the uncertain efficacy of these procedures that cultivates their ritual character – the 'strict adherence' in Sperber's formulation. The managers of the supernatural in non-institutionalized religious possession cults, manage a relationship of exchange between their devotees and the supernatural and between themselves and their adepts, keeping initiation for themselves, thanks again to elaborate esoteric rituals. And so this sort of religion handles, manipulates and perpetuates the hope and hopelessness of individuals. It was classically described by Evans-Pritchard for the Zande, though he studiously avoids mentioning emotions such as hopelessness at all: for the Zande, in his account, witchcraft is an everyday matter of social and physical explanation. But the ambiguity is patently present, as when he describes how oracles may lie – and how everyone knows that they are lying – in circumstances when to do otherwise would require them to reveal that someone has broken a taboo and thus provoked a crisis in interpersonal relations (Evans-Pritchard 1965: 77). Or, in another example which displays both Evans-Pritchard's gift for pellucid description and the laberynthine perversity of the system he is describing, he first says that Zande princes' claims that 'they did not allow a man to be avenged if they knew he had died from vengeance-magic' was simply a lie, but then goes on to explain that

> even if a prince were to tell the kin of a dead man that he had died from vengeance-magic and might not be avenged he would tell them in secret and they would keep his words a secret. They would pretend to their neighbours that they were avenging their kinsmen and after some months would hang up the barkcloth of mourning as a sign that vengeance was accomplished, for they would not wish people to know that their kinsman was a witch. (Evans-Pritchard 1976: 7)

So not only is it not known whether the prince or the witch are telling the truth – the victims themselves are possibly witches and even the prince is complicit in keeping that secret.

One way of coping with these uncertainties is to raise the stakes in the exchange with supernatural entities, proffering ever more gifts to propitiate

them and gain their favour. On the other hand, maybe there is simply a shared desire not to publicize acute conflicts until they have been resolved, as in Joel Robbins' account of the conversion and subsequent religious life of a tiny community in Papua New Guinea – the Urapmin. The Urapmin made a major ritual performance out of confession – which for them was a public statement of transgressions, but the innumerable sins they recited in extended and very frequent public meetings in their church building, these were mostly trivialities. When a transgression – a sin as they called it – was serious and affected the stability of their own social relationships, for example an extra-marital affair, then they waited for it to pass or to be resolved before confessing it (Robbins 2004: 276). So although witchcraft and supernatural punishment can be frightening, they do not obviate the need for collective institutional management of social relations.

The Hereafter and its rewards

Up to this point I have spoken of what I have called, somewhat circumspectly, 'non-institutionalized' religions. The implicit contrast is with the Abrahamic religious traditions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. They provide a soteriology, an eschatology, a narrative about life and death in general, a set of abstract principles for living one's life, and an ethos, as well as elaborate institutions of social order: laws, judges, councils etc.. This is especially true of transcendent religion, above all Christianity, which, in the conception of Charles Taylor for example, involves belief in some agency or power transcending the immanent order 'and the sense that there is some good higher than, beyond human flourishing' (Taylor 2007: 20). These religions offer hope to the hopeless in different ways, and on a far, far grander scale than shamans and possession cults. Instead of a cure for your stomach pains or revenge on your enemies, they offer unlimited happiness and prosperity for generation after generation, and for eternity. And how does one earn this bounty? Not by making ever greater donations, nor by upping the stakes in reciprocity, but just by obeying commands, and following laws. Not only is none of this claimed to benefit the supernatural source of this authority, but even the benefits for the faithful and the followers are only for a distant future – for future generations in 'the land that I have given you' when the 'you' will long be dead (like Moses) or, once Jesus and St Paul had made their revolution, in a completely unknowable place – the life hereafter when we will be saved.

And what of the punishments for the disobedience of a stiff-necked people?

In the Book of Deuteronomy Chapter 28 has 68 verses, of which 14 tell of the wonderful blessings which will come upon the people if they diligently observe all God's commandments. But the rest of the chapter lists curses

and misfortunes so shocking and frightening that when they are reached in the annual cycle of Torah readings in the synagogue they are not chanted but hurriedly recited in a low voice.

In the works of the Old Testament Prophets, when the children of Israel suffer, it is *their* fault, *they* have brought it upon themselves by abandoning the laws, as in the Book of Lamentations, written after the Babylonians had laid waste to Jerusalem, but in which the theme is the punishment by God of the people who disobeyed or forsook his laws, ending with the hope that the Lord will turn his people 'back to thyself', that they will return to him. The Babylonians are not mentioned: they are the mere instruments of God's wrath against his disobedient people.

Neither the Prophet Jeremiah, presumed author of Lamentations, nor the other Old Testament Prophets, needed a magician to convince themselves, or to convince their followers. When misfortune struck the explanation was not individual and the remedy did not lie in ritual or charms or esoteric remedies, or in casting of a curse on an enemy. The explanation was moral: the people had transgressed and God was punishing them. The remedy was in God's hands alone.

But this is not of course the whole story, for there can hardly be a supernatural agency without supernatural intervention in human interaction – that is, without magic, and one should not forget that Israel's austere lawgiving God was not above proving his superiority by performing very earthly miracles, especially in enabling his people to triumph over their enemies and discrediting the priests who served rival gods[1]. But the idea of a covenant, a contract, with a whole people, to ensure their future, rather than ongoing endless wheeling and dealing on an individual basis, does set the God of the Old Testament apart. And the curious thing is that, in exchange for these long term unknowable benefits this tradition demands much more costly sacrifice than the shaman or the divinities of *candomblé* – not donations, not trinkets or offerings, but moral sacrifices, obedience and ritual sacrifices of animals. The only immediate benefit was a negative and uncertain one: they mght be spared the punishments.

Old Testament Judaism lays down a legal system for a people as a whole, underpinned by the contract/covenant, and the formal modern institutions of Judaism are in some ways the descendants of that system. Christianity, in contrast, provides individual salvation in the next world, so that we can never know for sure if we will be rewarded for good behaviour. This, again, is not a God who can be appeased by offering sacrifices and exchanges, at least not officially. It is a God who died so we might all be saved, whose grace is free and unconditional, yet whose followers established a vast apparatus which has lasted

2000 years, which has regulated the lives of millions, which developed elaborate visions of hell and eternal damnation and role models of self-sacrifice in monks, and martyrs, in people who abstain from sex, from normal social intercourse and so on. Far from exchanges with supernatural entities, certain strands of Christianity seem to be telling us 'the more you sacrifice the less you will be rewarded in this life' – sacrifices embodied in a hierarchy of abstinences from 'no sex before marriage' for lay people to total silence and withdrawal from the world for Trappist monks.

The dialectic of the popular and the erudite

That, however, is far from the whole story, for side by side with the ethos of abnegation and sacrifice Christianity exhibits an intricate dialectic of popular and official religious practices. If the exchanges managed in official rituals, involving notions such as transsubstantation and the Trinitarian conception of a divine being are extremely opaque for individuals, popular religion amply compensates. The promise of salvation is hard to sell to individuals, but the rites which are attached to it (viz. Holy Communion, baptism, fiestas, saying the rosary etc.) and communal activities like maintenance of church buildings and servicing its many activities and charitable works both create multiple mechanisms of common identity among the faithful and also reward contributions of time and energy with status, respect and indeed the pleasure and pride of collaborating with a great institution.

To define popular religion in any strict way is a quixotic enterprise because different approaches and problematics will define it in different ways. For the present purpose, which focuses on the Abrahamic religions in a global perspective, one central defining feature of popular religion is exchange both within the community of practititioners or followers and between them and the supernatural. This is incorporated into or attached to official rituals: for example godparents are brought to baptism in the expectation that they will take on some obligations to the young child. In another example Corpus Christi becomes the occasion for an elaborate fable on the history of a small Castilian town (Molinié 2004). Popular religion also provides the low-risk engagement with the supernatural already mentioned: the 'just-in-case' motivation, which perpetuates official but usually harmless gestures and rituals; the practices embodied in it are not formally codified yet can endure for generations, as is the case for an infinity of Jewish customs.

Thanks to popular religion the Church has been able to go well beyond the austere mission of saving souls and focusing on the after-life. It sponsors, maybe oversees, but tends not to directly manage pilgrimages and local fiestas (except the high profile ones like Padre Pio and Lourdes) , while prayer groups, cults of local saints, and the like, are self-managed by the lay organizations which sometimes have large memberships and substantial resources – like the fraternities (*cofradias* in Spanish) which manage fiestas (Brandão 2007: 55).

Of particular interest to us are activities and rituals which are a response to hopelessness or which provide hope. In Catholicism these follow the pattern of exchange: votos and ex-votos, and pilgrimages. But there is sometimes a complicated negotiation with the hierarchy, as at Lourdes where a young girl's story about 'that thing' (*acqueyro* in the local dialect) she had seen in a grotto in the Pyrenees developed into a worldwide cult. On the one hand the French bishops and the opponents of anti-clericalism seized upon the incident to transform this obscure village into a world centre for divine healing. But on the other the hierarchy has gone to great lengths to maintain control during the 150 years since Bernadette's vision, establishing an office to certify miracles and setting such a high standard that a few years ago a bishop called for it to be relaxed in the light of competition from Pentecostals and their healing industry (*Le Monde*, 25-3-2006). [2]

A similar pattern developed around Padre Pio, a Franciscan friar in a tiny convent in the Southern Italian village of San Giovanni Rotondo (Puglia): after he received the stigmata in 1918 a cult grew up around him attracting pilgrims from all over Southern Italy who came to attend his celebrations of Mass, which tended to last for many hours. But for decades the Vatican remained sceptical, sending inquisitorial missions to the monastery and subjecting the friar to periods of withdrawal when he could neither say Mass nor preach nor hear confession – the two activities for which he was most sought after (Luzzatto 2007; Luzzatto 2010). All sorts of political and even financial scandals arose in the little village, especially during and after World War II when it became the beneficiary of the combined support of the Christian Democratic party and Marshall Plan assistance – both interested in countering the strong influence of the Communist Party in Southern Italy at that time (Tarrow 1967). Like Bernadette the friar was meticulously obedient and orthodox: he never said anything controversial apart from the claim to have received the stigmata – whose lesions have indeed been documented, though of course their cause remains forever a matter of controversy. He simply 'stood there' and allowed the cult to develop. Eventually John Paul II, well known for having multiplied beatifications and canonizations on an unprecedented scale, and himself a devotee of Padre Pio, beatified him and then elevated him to sainthood in 2002 .

The case of Padre Pio shows the hierarchy grasping for control over a cult which might get out of hand: control over the shrine in San Giovanni Rotondo was first transferred from the Franciscans to the local bishop and later the renowned architect Renzo Piano was commissioned to design a vast, imposing

sanctuary in austere concrete which, while perhaps better adapted to receive pilgrims in large numbers, is utterly out of keeping with the needs of visitors who continue to prefer the older church where the saint had been buried and which offers the niches and intimacy which they seek (Mesaritou 2009). In 2008 Padre Pio's body was exhumed and his hands and chest were found to be intact.

> In short, as Daniel Levine wrote twenty-five years ago, ''popular and institutional religion are not well understood if considered apart. Popular religion… draws on the stock of resources (material and symbolic) which religious institutions provide to build a coherent explanation of everyday life' (Levine 1986: x).

Exchange with the supernatural involves a dose of ambiguity, manipulating the balance between hope and despair and insuring against failure. But with institutionalization the ambiguity becomes less threatening, more routinized, more consolation than cure, more discipline or doctrine than manipulation of an individual's state of mind. We see this in accounts of pilgrimage sites where a routine is established for visitors who are inclined to believe that visiting is a matter of following a routine, of participating in notionally set rituals of touching certain objects or places, of doing what they assume has to be done – assumptions which may have the most obscure origins. In Bax's account of Medjugorje, for example (Bax 1995), he describes pilgrims being taken off by a tour company on a preset route, making confession and attending mass. Medjugorje, located in a particularly contested part of Croatia, is the site of several instances of visions of the Virgin Mary by seers in 1981 who have remained there and continue to receive messages from her which they convey to the public in daily sessions. The content of the messages, at least as filtered by the Franciscan friars who manage the site, is inoffensive and in conformity with Church doctrine. By touching objects in the vicinity of the site, by taking home stones, rosaries and the like, and by physical contact with the seers, to whom they attribute quasi-medical powers (p. 39), pilgrims return home armed with the power of the site. Visitors have – inevitably – introduced curing into their routine, while the persons responsible try to strike a balance between that pressure and the risks of sanctions by the state authorities for illegal practice of medicine. Unlike Lourdes, the Medjugorje claims of visions, ongoing ever since 1981, have not been endorsed by the Vatican, so there is no certification procedure. On the other hand, the Franciscans have not been punished for their involvement. The visits incorporate much standard Catholic ritual – Mass, confession – thus adding to the routinization effect and tempering hopes of instant solutions.

The difficulty represented for modernism by the exchanges which lie at the heart of popular religion is well illustrated by Olivia Harris's account of a young

Spanish priest schooled in post-conciliar (i.e. post-Vatican II) modernism and social commitment trying to perform his duties properly in a highland Bolivian parish: he drives away in his overloaded jeep after unwillingly accepting the gifts of corn and potatoes and much else and enduring an interminable Mass - interminable no doubt because of the votive offerings, promises and exchanges which had to be dealt with individually (Harris 2006: 56). He is embarrassed by what he sees as gifts - gifts pressed upon him despite his insistence that the Communion is offered freely – and that all that is required is for a person to be in a state of grace. But for the faithful these are not precisely gifts because they form part of the reciprocity which is essential to their relationship with the supernatural. They, after all, are heirs to 500 years of coexistence between Catholic divinity and their 'own' mountain spirits.

The substratum of popular religion is evident in Catholicism worldwide, but it is also present in Judaism and in Islam. There is not the space here for examples, and since neither of these religious traditions possesses a centralized source of doctrine the model of the dialectic between the erudite and the popular is not so patently applicable to them. But in both we observe tensions between those who seek to create an elite of learners or erudite authorities and others who look to popular religion, to thaumaturgies, to corporal expressions of devotion and to exchanges with the supernatural. It is particularly important to stress this point in the case of Judaism because of the widespread practice of Torah study in yshivas which has become something of a mass activity. But this mass study is punctuated by rituls governing the cycle of reading, the incorporation into daily prayer rituals, by esoteric story-telling, and the marginalization of modern secular scholarship.   Fr young men in search of a bride performance and status in the yeshiva can also be important for their chances of making a good match (Lehmann and Siebzehner 2009). (Lehmann and Siebzehner 2006: 60; Sharot 2011: 77)

For ultra-Orthodox, Jews religion is to a large extent popular religion: a commitment to a life suffused with habits and rituals which are not part of any exchange, and consist of automatic, almost compulsive, practices based on esoteric interpretations: touching the scroll on a doorpost as you enter a room; washing left and right hands before a meal in a specified order, pouring water three times over each hand using a two-handled jug; keeping one's head covered at all times; maximizing the number of children… the list is endless but not codified. These norms have been 'written in stone' for centuries but they acquire constant additional refinements not because of a Rabbinic ordinance but as a result of innovations which 'catch on'. Rulings may sometimes be written down by individual Rabbis but there is no system for ensuring their mutual compatibility. Sometimes also even a prestigious Rabbi may find his rulings ignored.

Peddler of religious items in front of the Basilica of Our Lady of Aparecida.

Many practices which are standard in the ultra-Orthodox world fit well with the model of relating to the supernatural or fending off misfortune described earlier. In case of illness, people may say 'check the *mezuzah*': this refers to small devices attached to doors in many Jewish houses, for these contain tiny scrolls on which a prayer is written: the sick person or their kin are advised to check that the prayer does not contain a mistake. If a child misbehaves parents or others concerned are advised to check into the background and see whether perhaps there is not a mixed marriage in the genealogy somewhere, or a marriage to a non-Jewish employee. People consult rabbis on these matters, but not always, and they may also consult several rabbis if the opinion or ruling they hear is not congenial or otherwise satisfactory[3]. Jewish This law may be grounded in revered ancient written texts, but it is inherently uncertain, subject to multiple interpretations and Rabbinic pronouncements, thus further accentuating fear of error – and its obedience is enforced by gossip rather than from on high. Not for nothing did Bashevis Singer once write: 'the first words I can remember hearing were "It is forbidden"…'.

Codified rules do have a place in the Jewish system, but this is only with reference to personal law: marriage, the settlement of disputes about Jewish identity and kosher certification. But in these spheres there is still not a centralized authority save in Israel where Rabbinic courts have the backing of the state. Much the same applies in Suni Islam.

The dialectic transcended in a time of both religious revival and secularization

We noted that John Paul II undertook a campaign of beatifications and canonizations with the intention – presumably – of encouraging a revival of popular religion. But if we look more carefully at the sort of revival which Catholicism is currently experiencing, can it be called 'popular religion'? It is most visible in the Charismatic Renewal and its multiple offshoots and loosely connected branches, in the massive Youth Festivals which Popes have attracted in Paris, in Sydney and soon Rio de Janeiro (2013) and in the mediatic success of celebrity priests like Brazil's Marcelo Rossi whose little book of moralisms entitled 'Agape' ('Hope') (Rossi 2010) has been at the top of the country's best-seller lists for as long as anyone can remember (it sold 2 million copies in its first six months in 2010-11), and in local charismatic groups in parishes across the world whose practices are often largely indistinguishable from those of Pentecostal churches, except that they only meet in Catholic churches, and do have the blessing of the local priest and bishop. They also may be providing a glimpse of how the Catholic Church will operate in the future: in the light of collapsing vocations increasing reliance is being placed on lay officiants but also more and more space has been taken up by communities of the most varied kind,

such as those documented by Brenda Carranza and her colleagues (Carranza, Mariz et al. 2009). Despite their advertised mysticism, their direct receipt of Gifts of the Spirit and their inclination towards corporeal expressiveness, these groups, organizations and movements are developing a religious culture which is distinguished by its this-worldly orientation in contrast to the traditional themes of the eternal, the Kingdom, the transcendent. Marcelo Rossi's little book consists of a series of moralisms and exhortations to love and do good with little reference if any to salvation and few exhortations to sacrifice: the themes include 'love', 'light - which brings lies and vice out of the shadows' - and persistence, more even than faith. In other words the book is a guide to a well ordered life. The chapters in the Carranza book describe this-worldly ventures like the creation of abstemious alternative communities, charitable works, self-realization programmes, evangelizing radio stations – but the common factor is their vocation to change people and to make them live better lives in accordance with traditional morality and approved Catholic values. In addition a common agenda encourages followers to live their lives in accordance with their own inner selves. The management of emotions, the application of popular psychology, figures quite prominently in what Carranza calls 'a new religious genre oriented by emotion' (Carranza 2009: 50) like a religious version of the vast culture of self-realization and self-knowledge described by Eva Illouz as a pervasive feature of modernity (Illouz 2008; Illouz 2012; Illouz 2012). Rather than fleeing from the world of sin, they call on their adepts to abandon a world of superficiality and consumerism by for example embracing the opportunity to serve (looking after street children among many other possibilities), or to retreat from the world and take a vow of poverty or chastity and so on. In the interpretation offered of several case studies by Carranza and Mariz, this 'utopia of a profane neo-Christendom' (Carranza, Mariz et al. 2009: 143) offers options, choices, a chance of self-examination and self-realization which is in tune with the characteristic anxieties of contemporary modernity. Indeed, choice seems to be a keynote, distinguishing these movements from the limited set of paths towards salvation decreed by classic Catholicism. Taken together they reveal how a space has opened up within Catholicism for multiple entrepreneurial possibilities offering alternative ways of living the life of a good Catholic.

This can be interpreted as a secular ethos which propagates hope as the building of a new world on earth and in this life: the element of exchange with the supernatural is out of the picture. The charismatics invoke gifts of the spirit which are bestowed upon them for the sake of achievements in this world – for example that they can preach, that they can heal or be healed. Although these movements recognize priests and bishops, they need them mainly as safeguards or guarantors of the acceptability of their practices, and like evangelicals they tend to invent routines and ways of expressing their religiosity 'on the hop'. The

classic Christian soteriology involves monks and others sacrificing themselves on earth and praying so that the rest of us could be saved, renouncing sex and earthly wealth. In the image of the original sacrifice of Christ, this involves a complex exchange with mortals and immortals. But these modern movements emphasize the relationship with the group, with society and with oneself.

Conclusions

The purpose of this paper has been to show the importance, in the understanding of religious habits or *ethoi*, or maybe *habituses* (*habití?*) of exchanges with the supernatural and of the interdependence of popular and institutionalized religion. On this basis I have sought to describe the fundamental change in the religious field, that is in the very meaning of the word 'religion',. The examples are restricted to Catholicism, but the argument can be further illustrated in abundance by Pentecostalism and neo-Pentecostalism in the relationship between the popular and the institutional and also in the exchange with the supernatural – a change which Ican be included within the broader notion of the secularization of religious reason. The argument is intended to apply to countries with a Christian heritage including those in Africa where that heritage gained a dominant position, and it could also be applied to countries with an Islamic heritage and to Islamic diasporas in Europe, but not to the United States.

Although some of these ideas may sound rather academic and recondite, their implications are serious. Religion is not, as they say, 'what it used to be'. The much-decried hegemonic religions which have held sway for centuries in Europe and Latin America and under colonialism in many parts of Africa provided a kind of service for all: you do not have to be a good Catholic or a good Lutheran to be baptized, married or buried in or by the Church, or indeed to look to the Church for help in personal and political crises. But now secularization has allowed the religious ethos of strong commitment to gain political and cultural influence at the expense of those soft, more- and less - liberal and open religious traditions. So much so that even the Catholic Church is increasingly characterized by sectarian ideas, narrow focus and an inward-looking culture. There are acute crises of authority in Judaism and in Islam, both of which have undergone massive demographic, geographic and political changes and challenges, so that now any bearded rabble-rouser seems able to set himself up (and it is invariably a man) as a spokesman for the will of God or the true interpretation of sacred texts – which would not matter save that there seem to be people prepared to follow them.

In Pentecostalism, which has been excluded from this analysis because of limitations of space, there are for the most part few such political issues of concern, despite the efforts of some churches, but what we observe is a total transformation of the relationship with the supernatural: the world of symbols,

of complex narratives, of mystery and eternal salvation has given way to a concretization of the supernatural which social scientists have yet to fully understand. It is useless applying long-accepted ideas of ritual and symbolism to churches and movements who have little sense of tradition or heritage and switch symbols and interpretations in short order. This is what I call ritual promiscuity, and it is very disconcerting for people who, however irreligious they may themselves be, still instinctively think of religion as a matter of heritage and tradition, as a cultural and institutional complex which only changes slowly – in short as a set of stable and conservative institutions and beliefs. That world is disappearing in Latin America, in Africa and in Europe.

Notes

1 Cf. among innumerable examples 1 Kings 18. Not only did the Prophet Elijah demonstrate that his God could burn an offering without setting fire underneath it while Baal's priests could not: he also immediately slew all 450 of them at the brook Kishon.

2 68 miraculous cures have been recognized by the 'Bureau des Constatations Médicales' whose rulings must themselves be confirmed by the Comité Médical International de Lourdes. The last miraculous cure took place in 2002 but was only officially declared in 2011. See http://fr.lourdes-france.org/approfondir/guerisons-et-miracles/serge--francois-guerison-remarquable

3 I have heard that in Pakistani and Bangladeshi circles in England people speak of 'sharia-shopping', which is the same thing: consulting different mullahs until one gets the ruling one seeks.

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ABSTRACT – This article develops three models of humans' relationship with the supernatural. First that of ritual as a kind of protection through which the individual ensures that whatever had to be done to avoid a danger was done. The detailed nature of the ritual procedures are essential to it as is the social network which is woven around the rite. Secondly, the article focuses on the exchange relationship with the supernatural, mediated by a shaman who holds the secrets of the procedure and also the trust of his 'clients'. Thirdly, it deals with the exchange relationships represented by Catholic popular religion and explains that all world religions' (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) are built on the basis of a dialectic of the erudite and the popular. This exposition acts as an introduction to the analysis of Pentecostalism and neo-Pentecostalism, which represent unprecedented forms of religiosity in which the supernatural is present. But here the exchange is with the church itself and not with supernatural entities. The church operates more as a 'Spiritual First Aid Centre' than as the foundation of a moral order or the place where human beings can make their peace with God. Pentecostalism is part of a tendency throughout the Western world which has left inclusive religions (like Catholicism and Anglicanism) stagnating, while the more exclusionary, those which demand substantial sacrifice of their followers, are gaining ground.

KEYWORDS: Ritual, Pentecostalism, Popular religion, shamanism, Catholicism.

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