CULTURE AND HISTORY: ESSENTIAL PARTNERS IN THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN RELIGION AND SCIENCE

by Norbert M. Samuelson

Abstract. In this essay I respond to John Caiazza's claim for the primacy of what he calls *techno-secularism* for understanding twentieth-century history. Using the examples of the Taiping Rebellion in nineteenth-century China and Zionism in twentieth-century Europe, I argue that the range of Caiazza's schema is confined solely to the Protestant West with little applicability to other national histories. I argue further for the lack of clarity and therefore the uselessness of the dichotomy of the secular and the religious for understanding human history. I claim instead that, while the category of technology and the institutions of religion are important determiners in human history, they need to be subsumed, without special status, within a broader set of interrelated factors called "culture." I appeal for the academic study of science and religion to give primacy for the near future to the history of science and religion over both theology and science.

Keywords: John Caiazza; China; Christianity; conservative; culture; elite; Hong Xiu; Israel; liberal; Neo-Confucianism; Reform Judaism; religious; secular; Taiping; technology; techno-secularism; values; Zionism.

CRITIQUE OF JOHN CAIAZZA'S TECHNO-SECULAR MODEL OF INTELLECTUAL HISTORY

In 1932 the academic leaders of New York University held a party at the swank Waldorf-Astoria Hotel for a group of the leading intellectuals of the period. Included among the guests were representatives of the University of Chicago, Columbia University, Yale University, Harvard University, the

Norbert M. Samuelson is the Harold and Jean Grossman Chair of Jewish Studies in the Religious Studies Department at Arizona State University, P.O. Box 873104, Tempe, AZ 85287-3104.

University of California, Union Theological Seminary, the Brookings Institute, the Carnegie Institute, *The New Republic*, and *The New York Herald Tribune*. The theme for the event was "The Obligation of Universities to the Social Order." The time was in the heart of the worst economic depression in the history of the nation, and the location was in the heart of the tenements of the largest single migration of poor Europeans (notably Italians, Poles, and Jews, among others), forcibly ended less than a decade before by discriminatory immigration acts intended to guarantee that the United States would continue to be governed at every level by the white male Anglo-Saxon Protestant elite that were represented at this party.

The opening address was by Elmer Ellsworth Brown, the chancellor of NYU. He modeled his appeal for the future of America on the pioneering farmland of his ancestors, so ably illustrated by the pseudo-agrarian landscape of this inner-city elite university. There were political and valuative disagreements among the various speakers and guests, but all of them reflected the model and value of a world that existed in a city like New York only if you fixed your gaze on the outlying countryside and totally ignored the immigrant, nonwhite, non-Protestant masses (whose name NYU fixed on a statue as "wretched refuse"—European trash) surrounding the idyllic, neo-medieval-European setting of the schools in which these "intellectuals" taught their own kind. In general, what was projected was an image of a future America with the values and social-political structure of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* ([1938] 1960).

But *Our Town* is fantasy, because by gazing on an already idealized America in the past, constructed from what they wanted America to become in the future, they closed their eyes to the America that already was real all around them in both time and space. This is how I respond to the description given by David A. Hollinger in a chapter titled "Two NYUs and 'The Obligation of Universities to the Social Order' in the Great Depression" (Hollinger 1996, 60–79).[1]

It is this report about the 1930s by Hollinger that I thought of as I read John Caiazza's "Athens, Jerusalem, and the Arrival of Techno-secularism" (2005). Like the American elite intellectual visionaries of some seventy years ago, Caiazza presents from his academic location an armchair vision of a world in which the dominant forces for good and evil are members of a new intellectual elite made up of masters of scientific technology rather than academic humanist professors, and the use of this (in my judgment) equally myopic vision of the present is dominated by the same establishment Protestant values that were preached at NYU. In this sense nothing has changed. The universalist, possibly imperialist, now called "global," values of Christian America continue to dictate our intellectual visions of the future. Seventy years ago the voices excluded Jews and southern and central European Roman Catholics. Today these new voices project an idealized future that excludes nonliberal Christians and post-Christians

(who I think are the people Caiazza thinks are "secular") and, most important, non-Christians, especially Muslims and traditional Jews. Certainly such a model strikes me as myopic, especially in my location in the Southwest United States, where the fastest growing forms of spiritual identity are not among secularized Christians or even buddhized and hinduized Christians but among Mormons and Muslims.

Intellectual Myopia and Frederick Copleston. What bothers me even more than Caiazza's distorted vision of the present is his distortion of the past. It is a past presented by a Roman Catholic vision of a medievalist scholar, Frederick C. Copleston, whose totally Eurocentered and Western-Christian understanding of intellectual history was justifiable, even if wrong, at the time that he published his history ([1950] 1961). Such tolerance is no longer justifiable in the light of the expansion of our knowledge about world civilizations and world religions in the past fifty years.

Caiazza believes that the social-historical categories of the religious and the secular are operative in all of history, that the relationship has always been one of conflict, and that modern technology makes a religious response to the secular challenge more difficult in the present than it was in the past. Furthermore, in presenting this picture he introduces a new, for him critical, technical term—"techno-secularism"—whose meaning depends on the distinctive way Caiazza uses the otherwise conventional terms of "secular," "religious," "revelation," and "technology." (I suspect that he uses the term "science" as well in a distinctive way, but he offers no explicit definition for it in his essay.) He identifies the opposite of "secular" as "the revealed," the "source of revelation" as "the Gospels and the authority of the Western and Eastern bishops of the Christian church," and the source of "secular knowledge" as neo-Platonism and Aristotelianism (p. 10). He calls Stephen J. Gould's understanding of religion "completely secular," by which he means "that religion is . . . something that should be kept within rigid social boundaries" (p. 11). Discussing William James, he suggests that secularism has to do with materialism and religion has to do with the mind when he says that James saw reality as a "duality of mind and matter," by which he says he means "as a competition of religion versus secularism" (p. 16), which suggests that for Caiazza religion is somehow identical with seeing reality as mental, and secularism is somehow identical with seeing reality as material. Now, I am not at all sure that the way Caiazza uses these terms is internally coherent, but, whatever he means, it seems clear to me that it is not historically correct.

The distinction between the religious and the secular is political. Its intention is to express what in medieval Western Europe was the political domain of the Roman Catholic Church (religion) and the political domain of the ruling nobility (the secular). However, the church, like every other religious institution, was secular in that it did the same sorts of things

that the nobility did, including fighting wars, and, conversely, Christian states, like all other political states, were religious in that they did the same sorts of things that clerics did, including staging communal worship services on national historical events such as memorials for historic battles or the coronations of kings. (Certainly any contemporary student of religion has no difficulty understanding that events such as Christmas and the Super Bowl are part of an American "civil religion.")

Consequently, the distinction between the religious and the secular makes little sense when applied to any period of history before the rise of medieval feudalism. Even then the application of the distinction is limited to Central and Western Europe, and even then the temporal frame for its application makes little sense before the Reformation. In actuality, the categories of the secular and the religious are only political, not conceptual, and make sense only for Protestants and members of other religions (notably Roman Catholics and Jews) who had to make sense out of their identity living in Protestant countries like England and the United States.

Life in nineteenth-century Western Europe and twentieth-century North America forced Jews to adapt their understanding of being Jewish to these Christian categories so that they could manage to integrate their lives as Jews in these polities, but the fit has never been easy. At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, leading European Jewish intellectuals advocated two then radically new understandings of being Jewish as a way for Jews to survive as Jews in the modern Christian-secular world: Reform Judaism and Zionism. According to the first, Judaism became a religion, and according to the second, Judaism became a secular nationality. However, both forms of accommodation were distortions of what Judaism and the Jewish people always were. Reform reduced Judaism to a mere religion and rooted out every other aspect of Jewish thought that constituted it as a complete philosophy and every other aspect of action that constituted it as a nation. Zionism reduced the Jewish people to a mere nationality, where it became merely a set of people who shared a common history with mores rather than a collective, closely bound to each other not only by a common past but by a common, deeply spiritual program whose raison d'être was the salvation of the universe. From this perspective, what the twentieth century was about was not a conflict between the religious and the secular but about discovering whether or not a reconstruction of being Jewish into an otherwise false secular/religious dichotomy could enable Jews to live and even prosper in this peculiar kind of universe that the Christians and post-Christians, in their intellectual innocence, projected on everyone else who was not Christian.

The other problematic terms in Caiazza's distorted picture of history need not concern us here. How he understands the past is relevant only to the way he uses it to project what the problems of the future will be, and it is to his vision of the future that I now turn my attention.

Unclear Terms Feed False Prophecies.   For Caiazza the danger of the future is what he calls *techno-secularism*, which he says is the "displacement of religion from our civic life" on account of "technological ubiquity and power" rather than because of "direct cultural and intellectual causes" (pp. 18–19). I have almost no idea what this means. However, I assume that it has something to do with his claim that the use of technology will enable the political state to extend its power over the citizens of the state, and that extension is not good. Now, I can imagine why it is not good, but Caiazza's own explanation confuses me. Discussing "The Ethics of Techno-secularism" (pp. 19–20) he tells us that these ethics are "utilitarian," understood "in relentlessly material terms," and "eudaimonian rather than hedonist," where utilitarianism means "opting for the greatest good for the greatest number," eudaimonian means being "concerned with bodily well-being," and hedonist means "asserting the moral value of maximizing pleasure."

I see nothing wrong with these values, at least from my religious perspective, primarily because I know the history of Jewish (as well as Muslim and Christian) ethics. Caiazza seems to identify religious, meaning Christian, values with some form of Kantian deontology, which he believes to be inherently in conflict with utilitarianism, which he believes to be essentially secular. However, the very kinds of characteristics of secularism that Caiazza identifies have been part of the philosophical ethics of all three Abrahamic faiths since they adopted the schemata of the synthesized Platonists and Aristotelians to explain their Jewish/Christian/Muslim teachings about morality. Critically, all forms of philosophical/theological ethics appeal to a generalization principle that calculates the maximum good for the maximum number of people in at least its political philosophy. Similarly, all forms of these religious ethics presuppose that pleasure in itself is a good, and good moral thinking involves thinking about the well-being of the body. For example, in the "Laws of the foundations of the Torah" (*hilchot yesodei ha-Torah*), which is the first book of Maimonides' all-encompassing code of Jewish law, the *Mishneh Torah*, we are told that the purpose of human existence is to love and fear God, that the love of God is not possible without the fear of God, that the fear is not possible without an adequate (for a human) understanding of how God governs creation, how this understanding of creation is identical with an understanding of the physical sciences, how it is not possible to succeed in any of this study when the body is not healthy, that to be healthy requires careful attention to the welfare of the body, and that the principles of this welfare (primarily known from Galen) are governed by natural principles of pleasure and pain. So once again Caiazza sets up oppositions that betray the inadequacy of his intellectual history.

The Moral: More History and Less Theology.   What lesson can we readers of *Zygon* draw from this critique? Let me suggest one. The field of

science-and-religion has for too long ignored the history of science and religion. It is not that there are no first-rate studies. On the contrary, there are notable books and notable academic centers where such study is possible. Let the names of modern scholars such as Geoffrey Cantor, John Efron, Amos Funkenstein, David Lindberg, Ronald Numbers, and Richard Westfall (among many others) suffice.

In general, the financial movers of studies in our field have for too long privileged scientists in reflecting on the value of science in relationship to religion, but in many ways the scientists are the least equipped of all the people interested in the field to discuss religion with any degree of sophistication. Similarly, next to scientists, the field has favored the academic voices of theologians, whose sophistication about religion is certainly superior to that of the scientists but whose knowledge of science is almost as primitive as the scientists' knowledge of religion. The only category of individuals who avoid professionally both of these pitfalls are people like the historians named above, who, while neither especially gifted as scientists or theologians, have of necessity a sophisticated and intelligent grasp of both, for without that sophistication they could not excel in their craft. All of this is not to say that there is not a place for scientists and theologians in discussions of science and religion. But perhaps, at least for the immediate future, they ought not to occupy the dominant place that they have in our many international meetings and our few international publications. I believe that if theologians had a better knowledge of the histories of both the sciences and the religions, they would be better equipped than they are at present to be theologians; and I suspect that, while scientists exposed to this same learning might not be better scientists (because, depending on the science, I do not know how much the experimenter needs to know about lived reality to do science), they certainly would have a richer and deeper understanding of what it is that they as scientists are doing.

CASE STUDIES

So far I have criticized Caiazza's view of what in the present relationship between science and religion constitutes our greatest challenge for the future. It is clear that I do not accept, primarily on historical and sociological grounds, Caiazza's way of framing the question.

How would I frame the issues, and how would I respond to them? As for the question, I would ask what the distinct factors are that guide the course of human history at the level of nations and how these factors interact with each other. Certainly technology would be on my list, but it would not be especially dominant, even in the present. Certainly technology is not more important than economic considerations. In fact, I think it would be hard to understand the history of technology outside the context of economics. But the development of technology depends on far more than finances, and human history is guided, contrary to the Marx-

ists, by more than social class, and social class is determined by more than economics. Even geography can be just as, if not more, important than any other factor as a distinct determiner of how organized collectives of human beings interact with other organized collectives (see, for example, Diamond 1997). However, if I must (and I would rather not) single out a single factor or set of factors that dominates historic change most of the time, I would have to answer culture—the complex accumulative living record of a people's thoughts, skills, arts, customs, habits, and so on, and their interaction.

Of course, nothing that I have said (or that Caiazza has said) can be demonstrated. The claim is just too broad to be historically verifiable. However, I can illustrate my critique of Caiazza and my counterclaim through a single example: the decline of Chinese political and cultural power in the face of European modernity.[2] The interpretation of history that I present is mine only in the sense that I have focused what historians of modern China have said on Caiazza's emphasis on techno-secularism as a dominant historical determiner. In my narrative technology is not insignificant, but in no sense can it be said to have the exaggerated (in my view) centrality that Caiazza assigns to it in cultural history. Furthermore, enough should be said about the categories of the religious and the secular to show their inappropriateness even if we could conceptually clarify what these terms mean.

China and the Taiping. By almost any standard, one of the greatest empires in the history of the world was the neo-Confucian Ching dynasty, which Manchus created and governed for more than 260 years (1644–1912).[3] This judgment of the greatness of this empire is not made lightly. It is based on considering total area governed,[4] the number of peoples subject to its authority,[5] and the advancement of the national culture of these peoples in every discipline of learning—philosophy, literature, scientific and religious thought, secular and religious poetry, even technology.[6]

It is of interest to note, with reference to Caiazza, that the terms *secular* and *religious* make little sense in describing this empire. I have called it neo-Confucian, which means that the government, at every level below the emperor, was run by bureaucrats who trained in and passed government tests on Confucian texts. Confucianism is not a religion, although many rituals are associated with it. It is a philosophy whose sources go back to the fifth century B.C.E. and remained throughout the next 2,300 years a competitor for the hearts and minds of both the rulers and citizens of China with the philosophy of Taoism and the religions of Buddhism (introduced into China from India in the third century C.E.) and Islam (introduced with the Mongol invasions in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries). However, these lines of demarcation are too strict to accurately describe their role in China. In fact, they blended together with earlier,

more ancient local family religions. Hence, they all (at least in the Chinese contexts) can be called religions, and they all can be called (even secular) philosophies, depending on what aspect of them one is emphasizing (both ritualistic and conceptual)—but such characterizations are always a distortion.

In 1912 China became an imitation of a European-style secular nationalist state. Its transformation reflected two historical developments, going back at least to the Treaty of Nanking that ended the Opium war of 1839–1842. First, the government of China had become impotent in the face of the aggression of Western countries (Russia, Great Britain, France, and Germany). Second, traditional Chinese culture ceased to be competitive with the culture of these same nations, including the religion that missionaries introduced into China from the United States. With reference to Caiazza, it is important to emphasize that the collapse of China in the presence of these Western nations had more to do with the weakness of Chinese culture, which includes the elements of what we would call religion, than with any purported Western superiority in technology. In other words, Caiazza's claim that technology dictates changes in culture does not fit the fall of China and the ascendancy of the West in Asia. Technology does play a role, for all of the dominating nations of Asia (especially China, Korea, and Japan) were acquiring superior Western military technology, but this acquisition does not play the kind of dominant causal role in transforming the culture that Caiazza claims for European-American civilization. Hence, if technology does have the dominant place Caiazza assigns to it in the West (which remains to be seen), clearly the claim is limited to the West. It cannot be generalized into the kind of universal claim that Caiazza wants to suggest for human civilization.

Let me give another example from the case of nineteenth-century China against Caiazza's overgeneralized conception of human civilization. The collapse of China was determined primarily by internal factors in the politics and culture of the Ching dynasty that had little to do with any form of Western superiority. The European nations that invaded China merely picked up the pieces of an empire in disarray.

A clear example of the weakness of the Ching dynasty was the Taiping revolt. In 1836, Hong Huoxiu—from the small rural district of Hua county, in the lower region of the Yangtze River, whose extended family, the Hongs, dated back in this region to the Manchu overthrow of the Ming dynasty in the 1630s—went to Canton to take Confucian state examinations in the hope of qualifying for a middle-level position in the Ching bureaucracy. While there he picked up (but did not read) a Christian missionary booklet[7] written by Liang Afa, who was converted by members of the London Missionary Society. Hong Huoxiu returned to Canton in 1837 to retake the exams, again failed, and, upon returning home, became ill and had a series of dreams. The dreams lead him to change his name to Hong Xiu and take on the title "Heavenly King, Lord of the Kingly Way, Quan." Six

years later, in 1843, he read Afa's pamphlet, which enabled him to interpret his earlier dream experiences in the light of the biblical story of creation—as he understood it on his own from reading Afa's Christian conversion pamphlet. He rejected Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism and declared himself to be the Chinese son of God and younger brother of Jesus. He gathered around him as followers members of his own extended family, who provided the base for what became a major military force in Eastern Central China that was able to defeat in battle all regular troops sent in by the emperor.

In the end the Taiping rebels were defeated, but it took eleven years to do so (1853–1864) at the cost of more than twenty million people. The rebellion was important for many reasons besides the sheer number of lives wasted, but it occupies a particular place of importance in contemporary Chinese history because the People's Republic of China sees this rebellion as a precursor of their own revolution and as such treats it with appropriate reverence.

If we look for reasons for the rebellion's failure, it has to do in part with technology. In the end the superiority of imperial weapons won over the less sophisticated weapons of the rebels. But that is too narrow a view. Representatives of the United States, England, France, and Germany were wooed by rebels in search of military support who based their appeal on the claim that they were all united as Christians against the pagan Ching Empire, and certainly this argument appealed to the Christian missionaries who spoke for the Western governments. However, the more they learned about this peculiarly Chinese form of Christianity the less they wanted anything to do with it, for the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom believed that God is corporeal, that Yang Xiuquan is the living voice of God, that Xiao Chaogui is the living voice of Jesus, and that the authority of their interpretation as such transcends that of any written scriptures or traditions of Western Christians. The Western Christian governments saw the Taiping as Christian heretics and, in the end, decided that it was better to deal with heathen than heretics. (American political authorities had similar feelings about the Church of the Latter Day Saints.) Hence, with reference to Caiazza's thesis, religion was more a determiner of the history than the technology was.

I want to mention one final example of the importance of culture over technology in the case of the Taiping. There are cultural differences between the West and China on how to play games and fight wars. Western games are like chess: to win is to capture the king. The mental set involved in this way of playing suggests that a body is ruled by its head (brain), so that if one destroys the brain (head) one destroys the ability of the enemy to fight. (Some thought, wrongly, that to eliminate Saddam Hussein would be to defeat the Iraqi enemy.) The Chinese play games like Go, where to win you need to encircle your enemy—somewhat like the American game

of Othello. The focus of the defensive strategy of the Ching government was to keep all of its frontiers free from external enemies. However, with borders as extraordinarily large as China's, the strategy meant a constant deployment of such a large number of forces, mostly mercenary, that the empire ultimately squandered all of its financial reserves and, more important, ignored its responsibility to govern the interior of the nation. This cultural strategy for game play, more than technology in and of itself, led to the self-destruction of China.[8]

In my judgment, the inadequacy of Caiazza's emphasis on both the dichotomy of the religious and the secular and the primacy of technology to account for political and cultural change is equally flawed when applied to Western civilization. First, the terms *religious* and *secular* are conceptually vague terms that serve one clear, but relatively narrow, purpose in Western European history: they play a key political role in explaining how the military rulers of feudal states used the protest theology of Martin Luther and those who followed him to justify their political power over the parallel political power of the Roman Catholic Church, whose ultimate political impotence was realized in revolutionary France in the eighteenth century and in the Soviet Union in the twentieth century. The application of these terms beyond this context to political and cultural life should be severely constrained.

Second, while developments in technology play an important role in all political and cultural lives of people, it is never a sole determiner and is most often not a dominant determiner, as the case of the rebellion of the Taiping against the Ching illustrates. Western weaponry was more available to the empire than it was to the rebels, and that explains why the rebels could not win decisive battles. However, the reason why the rebels could not acquire those weapons had to do with religion (they were viewed by the Christian representatives of the Western powers as religious heretics) and with culture (it was the peculiar wedding of the rebels' inadequate knowledge of Western Christian texts and traditions combined with their indigenous Chinese cultural traditions for understanding religious texts that made them heretics).

Reformed Judaism and Modern Zionism.   My primary interest in the history of religion is in the history of Jewish philosophy, from its origins in the Hebrew Scriptures and the Ancient Near East to the present (see Samuelson 2003). The narrative of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Jewish history reinforces the claims made in connection with the history of modern China.

I used the example of the Taiping rebellion to concretize my objections to Caiazza's conceptualization of history because it is for me objective (I have no personal investment in Chinese culture and history) and because it emphasizes what I believe to be a source for the weakness of Caiazza's

vision: it is too narrowly Christian and Western. The Taiping rebellion does have a Christian element and does involve Western nations, but neither is primary; the real cultural sources of the religion of Hong Huoxiu are Chinese (a synthesis of ancestral religion with medieval Taoism, Confucianism, and even Islam as it was transformed in China), and the political-cultural way that events occurred are distinctively Chinese.

A parallel case can be made in terms of Jewish history. Here again the key to understanding what is happening, while it involves both technology and secularization, is in no sense really about either. As internal decay and foreign enemies seriously threatened the survival of Chinese civilization at the beginning of the twentieth century, so internal decay and foreign enemies seriously threaten the survival of Jewish civilization at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and Caiazza's model of techno-secularism sheds little light on understanding the danger and no light on solving it.

At the end of the nineteenth century Europe increasingly became a "liberal" society[9] and decreasingly remained "conservative."[10] Excluding their rabbis, Jews sided with the liberals and struggled to integrate themselves into liberal societies such as France, Germany, and the United States. The rabbis were conservative because the integration of the Jewish people into modern Western European society threatened to end Jewish civilization. This was a price for acceptance that the majority of educated Jews were willing to pay.[11]

Of those members of the Jewish minority who wanted to become modern and Jewish, two strategies of survival emerged in the twentieth century. One was liberal religious Judaism—Reform in Germany and then in the United States; then its less reformist sibling, Conservative Judaism; then Conservative's more reformist sibling, Reconstructionist Judaism; then, at the end of the century, a series of small neo-populist Jewish communities that go by a variety of names, including both the culturally conservative *Havurot* and the culturally more radical "New Age" neo-synagogues. In these cases Jews attempted to transform Judaism from a conservative (in the European cultural sense) Aristotelian/Platonic practical and theoretic philosophy (which is what classical rabbinic Judaism was in the Middle Ages) into a new philosophy based on German enlightenment Romanticism that acculturated its external expressions first to an upper-middle-class German society and then to an upper-middle-class American society. The other survival strategy was Zionism, which attempted to transform Judaism from a religious, conservative landless polity into a secular, liberal land-owning modern ethnicity.

The Reformist strategy was positive about both religion and humanity. It believed that there was a good kind of religion, the liberal/reformist kind; that within Judaism there were the resources to become good; and that there was sufficient good will among liberal, European, educated Christians to accept Jews when they transformed themselves. Conversely, the

Zionist strategy was negative about religion and humanity. Like the radicals of both the French and the Russian revolutions, these Jewish intellectuals had no faith in anything that could be called a "good" religion and believed that the hatred of Jews was so deep in European consciousness that no Jewish self-transformation would ever enable Jews to belong. Rather than seeking to join the Christian and post-Christian nations, the Zionists sought to develop a nation of their own that was in every respect as liberal as the Christian nations. They thought that in this way, while never being accepted as individuals, the Jewish people collectively could be accepted into the club of modern nation-states.

By the end of the first half of the twentieth century it was clear that religious reform was not a successful strategy of survival, for, whatever internal value Jewish religious reform had, it failed to appeal to the majority of Jews, who still preferred a strategy of assimilation into the dominant culture over a self-transformation into a kind of Jewish religious liberalism. However, by the beginning of the second half of the century it looked like a strategy of self-transformation into a secular Jewish nationalist identity would work. Jews who would never want to be seen as Jews in the old stereotypes, who considered it a compliment to be told that they didn't look Jewish, became increasingly proud to be identified as Jews in the new stereotype of the Israeli—an image significantly manufactured (or at least popularized) by the book and movie of Leon Uris's *Exodus*. The new Jews looked like a youthful Paul Newman, with a strong, healthy physique, skill in both farming and warfare, little if any use for public prayer, and no place for rabbis. New Jews looked like the John Wayne of World War II movies when this particular film stereotype was still considered to be morally positive.

However, by the end of the century, largely because of Israel's response to the continuous threats of the nation's neighbors since the 1950s, this new stereotype turned increasingly negative. More and more one heard Israelis described as persons who would use any means to pursue their ends, and for that reason Israelis were judged to be not really moral—an accusation that was used during the Second World War to explain why the otherwise civilized Germans could become uncivilized (immoral) Nazis.

Of course, these are stereotypes, but that is what public images are, and therefore they are not unimportant either politically or intellectually. It is primarily in this sense that I find some truth in Caiazza's claim about the primacy of technology. Image is a primary concern of any government, be it in order to have internal power or to be able to succeed against foreign threats; image is what advertising/propaganda creates, and the effectiveness of advertising/propaganda is dependent on both the excellence of one's grasp of the practical applications of psychology and the excellence of one's development of the technology to transmit those psychological lessons to a general public.

Hence, the creation of a Jewish political state at the middle of the twentieth century supported the efforts of the leadership of world Jewry to enable the Jewish people to survive as a Jewish people in the light of the hegemony of Western European liberalism. However, increasingly the continued political and military struggle of that state and society to survive has been proving counterproductive for a world Jewish leadership for whom the welfare of a Jewish political state of Israel is primarily a tactic to promote the welfare of the entire Jewish people.[12]

For my purposes here, no more need be said about this Jewish problem. It is sufficient to show that, while technology is not irrelevant to the political-historical-religious question, it is far from a dominant principle under which all other principles are subsumed. It is beyond question that Jewish religious reform and Jewish nationalism have not succeeded as public relations strategies to enhance survival in the midst of seriously anti-Jewish Christian or post-Christian European/North American society and increasingly anti-Semitic Muslim Middle Eastern polities.

The failure of both survival strategies is no less intellectual than historical. Whatever the virtues of Reformed as opposed to traditional religious rabbinic Judaism, its philosophical foundations are eighteenth-century German, which is hardly the best foundation for a Jewish rationalism in a twenty-first–century culture whose philosophy is English and whose science is positivist. Similarly, whatever the virtues of Jewish nationalism, and there are many, it is not easy to defend a rigorous theory of nationalism whose origins go back even earlier, to the seventeenth century. The political doctrine of nationalism developed in a world of Protestant liberal natural science with minimal technology in a mercantile economy. Jewish nationalism grew up in a more or less socialist world of post-Newtonian science with highly sophisticated technology, in a global industrial economy. Nationalism is based on a tribal desire to grant economic and cultural independence to a relatively small collection of people who share common language, customs, and history. In our world, however, such independence is a chimera. So, once again, there is a sense in which technology can be seen to be at the center of religious, humanist problems of our times. However, these terms for the centrality of modern technology are radically different from those of Caiazza. Whatever is the best way to understand our contemporary world and to come to terms with its traumas, it is not the way he suggests.

CONCLUSION: THE PRIMACY OF CULTURE
AND THE COMPLEXITY OF REALITY

We are presented at the beginning of the twenty-first century with an armchair vision of the future where science and religion play a central role, the science is technology, and the religion is secularism (which is itself a form of Christian commitment). Those left out of the vision are (once again)

political and cultural (conservatives and other nonliberals), religious and ethnic (Jewish, Muslim, Asian, and other non-Christian) minorities. A social scientist from the new elite prophesies the future as the continued success of his new caste, whom he calls techno-secularists. However, from outside this elite both the immediate past and the immanent future seem very different. There is something called secularism, but its significance is waning with the growth of increasing neotraditional (that is, thinking driven by the desire to actualize a conception of a more idyllic communal past) and nonrationalist (thinking that emphasizes the role of the emotions and imagination more than reasoning in forming life plans) voluntary communal organizations throughout the world—especially in Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. The current dominant direction in social religious life in Western civilization (or, more accurately, in the worlds of the three Abrahamic faiths) is a return to the very kinds of religious-communal world and life views that the nineteenth century overthrew, which means, more specifically in the case of world Jewry, an attempted transcendence of the kinds of modern Jewish polity introduced in the twentieth century by liberal Jewish religious institutions (such as Reform) and secular Zionism.

Modern China.   The case taken from nineteenth-century China shows that all of the problems that I would see in Caiazza's schema for modern cultural history as a schema for modeling (that is, rendering an intelligible picture of) the future are problems because it is equally inadequate for modeling the past. Forces such as traditional family religions, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism all play a role in Chinese political and cultural history, and, under Western influence, their role was significantly reduced in the twentieth century, but in no way is this dynamic adequately characterized as an overcoming of something called the religious by something peculiarly modern called the secular.

Similarly, technology certainly plays an important role in telling the story of China, but that story has not yet been told adequately. Why is it the case that a civilization (Western) that at the beginning of the eighteenth century was relatively primitive with respect to technology, especially military technology, should emerge in the twentieth century relatively sophisticated, at least in the case of the tools of war? The desire for Western weaponry certainly is one reason why the West dominated Asia both militarily and culturally in the early twentieth century. But the technological explanation is not the sole causal factor, and it is not even the dominant one, for, as explained, China collapses internally, not because of external threat, from the pressures of a traditional culture that could not adequately cope in the nineteenth century with the problems created by its unparalleled political growth in the eighteenth century.

Modern Israel.   A similar story could be told about Jewish history in these same two centuries. When the Jews under the rule of the rabbis

entered Europe in the Middle Ages, theirs was a culture far more sophisticated than that of their new neighbors, but Jewish culture froze while the neighbors' cultural grew, so that by the nineteenth century Jews in large numbers sought to assimilate out of their stagnant rabbinic civil-religious polity into citizenship in the new, dynamic Christian-secular nation state. The enlightened leadership of Western Jewry developed two ways to bring about an accommodation between these two civilizations that guided the struggle for the survival of a Jewish community with a distinct self-identity in the twentieth century: the Reformed Jewish religion and the Zionist Jewish political state, both of which seem to have failed. Whatever the inherent intelligibility of Reform Judaism in comparison to the other major expressions of Jewish religion in Europe and North America, Reform has failed to become the way for the overwhelming majority of Jews to be Jewish. Similarly, whatever the success that the state of Israel has had materially and culturally since its creation in the middle of the twentieth century, the state has failed to erect what secularism wanted most for it to accomplish—a place where Jews can live as Jews without feeling the hatred of their neighbors and, even more basically, without fearing the threats to their physical lives by their neighbors.

Fantasy and Reality.   What has been the central concern for the Jewish people for more than a century and what continues to be the central problem of Jewish thinking in this new century has no place in Caiazza's scheme of things to come. It has no place because of the schema's myopia. It assumes a reality that is too simple because it is a reality that recognizes only its author's Western, Christian elite. As such, as in the prophecy of Elmer Ellsworth Brown before him, John Caiazza's future is only a fantasy. Human reality is far too complex to fit so neatly into his little box.

NOTES

1. Hollinger says about NYU's leadership that they "sometimes celebrated the colonial mansion as the ideal setting for a university. The NYU campus in the Bronx, 'University Heights,' was praised by the dean of its principal unit, University College of Arts and Pure Science, as a form of country life: 'a retired hill-top,' 'quiet' and 'secluded.' There was explicit talk of 'walling in' this campus in order to 'shut out the city.' The history of 'the heights' throughout the 1910s and 1920s had been . . . largely an effort to protect this stately cloister 'from the overwhelming forces of the new city.'" Of course, at the forefront of these "forces" were the immigrant Jews, whom the elite called "aliens," who threatened to "overrun" NYU and all the other citadels of power in the nation (1996, 67).

2. Almost everything I say here about China is based on Gernet 1996. What I say about the Taiping Revolt is based on Spence 1996.

3. I thank my colleagues in Religious Studies at Arizona State University, James A. Benn and James Foard, for reading an earlier version of this section and saving me from several historical confusions.

4. It reached its maximum spatial extension in 1759, when it included all of the Russian and Manchurian steppes, all of modern-day China and Tibet, parts of India, Burma, Laos, and Vietnam, and the Pacific coast islands of Hainan and Taiwan. From "the middle of the eighteenth century on the Sino-Manchu empire covered nearly twelve million square kilometres and its

influence extended far beyond its borders. At that time China was the richest and biggest state in the world" (Gernet 1996, 464).

5.   Because of almost consistent success in both agriculture (in the interior of China) and manufacturing and commerce (at the empire's oceanic periphery) for many centuries, the population of China grew from 70 million at the beginning of the Ming dynasty to 130 million at its end (Gernet 1996, 429) to 144 million in 1750 to more than 360 million by 1812. On the political and technological superiority of China in comparison to Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century, see Gernet 1996, 484.

6.   Notable examples of Chinese technology from the period include: With respect to military technology, gunpowder was first used for military purposes by the Sung dynasty (960–1279). Far more important, during this same period the machinery of moveable type for modern printing was introduced. (Europe would not have moveable type until the fifteenth century.) With respect to other sciences, theoretical and practical, it is worth noting that a Muslim astronomical office was established in Nanking, the Ming capital, in 1368. The first use of maize to be recorded was in 1573. Li Shih-chen published his treatise on pharmacopoeia, the *Pen-ts'ao kang-mu*, in 1578, and M. Ricci published a respectable world atlas in 1602.

7.   *Quanshi liangyan* (Good Words for Exhorting the Age).

8.   The argument about the relationship between game theory and warfare is mine. The data for the argument are taken from Gernet 1996, 532–33. He notes, for example, that in the early eighteenth century the Ching emperors had state reserves of 60 million liang, which were reduced by the beginning of the Taiping rebellion in 1850 to 9 million.

9.   By this I mean a society that ideally brought together in harmony a commercial economy in a republican system of government whose philosophical and scientific foundations were more or less materialist and mechanistic (which could be what Caiazza means by "secular").

10.   By this I mean a society that ideally brought together in harmony an agrarian economy in a monarchal system of government whose philosophical and scientific foundations were more or less Aristotelian (which could be what Caiazza means by "religious").

11.   When Krusty the Clown on the television show "The Simpsons" is told that because he never had a bar mitzvah he is not really Jewish, he laments, "I used to be a self-hating Jew, and now I'm only an anti-semite." Alas, Krusty is not unrepresentative of the modern Jew, especially at the beginning of the twentieth century.

12.   In part the state of Israel was created to enable Jews to live in a world without a ghetto that separated the Jewish people from those who hate them. However, the Jewish state is increasingly becoming just that, a European state ghetto transported into the Middle East, where the wall that Israel is building to keep out Arab terrorists increasingly looks like a wall to keep the Jews in, separate from their neighbors. I do not say this in order to object to the wall. On the contrary, given the current politics of the Middle East and independent of any questions about opportunities lost in the past, I think Israel has no viable alternative if it is to offer its citizens some measure of physical safety. However, the judgment that the Jewish state as a Jewish state has no other options contains in itself a serious critique of Zionism, because in terms of its original goals at the beginning of the twentieth century (that is, to gain for Jews the possibility of normalized life on a Western European model), Zionism has, so far at least, failed.

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