

Politics, Experience, and the Languages of Holiness

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Abstract

During the last half century, the category of holiness fell into disrepair although there are recent signs of its revitalization with the Pope's apostolic exhortation on holiness, *Gaudete et Exultate* and attention being paid to the category in political philosophy (the work of Agamben and Esposito) and sociology (the work of Hans Joas). In this context, this article argues for the philosophical justification of linking holiness with prepredicative experience as it shows itself through hermeneutical phenomenology, grounded in bio-sociology, but which cannot be isolated from the particular languages of its articulation. Holiness comes into view through the languages of holiness, which in the broadest sense, include human acts and comportment toward world. This involves a discussion about holiness itself being located either in prepolitical experience or being inseparable from political and legal discourse. Of relevance here is also a philosophical discussion of holiness in relation to metaphysical realism.

Keywords

holiness – sacred – experience – politics – phenomenology – sociology – metaphysical realism

During the last half century, the category of holiness fell into disrepair although there are recent signs of its revitalization with the Pope's apostolic exhortation on holiness, *Gaudete et Exultate* in April 2018 (Francis 2018), attention being paid to the category in political philosophy (especially Agamben 1995, 2013), in sociology (Joas 2014), in Jewish studies (Mittleman 2018), and in religious studies (Stausberg 2017).¹ This burgeoning interest is arguably linked to the

¹ For a recent history of the concepts of the sacred and the holy, see Stausberg 2017: 557–590. I would like to thank the anonymous readers of this article for highlighting and drawing my

ambient cultural disenchantment in the West along with the philosophical emergence of new kinds of thinking.² In philosophy (in the analytic tradition) we have discussion about metaphysical and ontological realism (Chalmers *et al.* 2009), a recent phenomenology that wishes to uncover prelinguistic experience (Romano 2015), and speculative materialism (exemplified by the work of Meillassoux 2009) that wishes to move away from modes of conceptualizing world that, in this view, have stymied thought, namely a problematic correlation between mind and world. While I cannot address this here, there is an overlap of intellectual concern with realism that raises questions about the limits of constructivism and anti-essentialism that have dominated the human sciences for almost a century.³ This backdrop is relevant to understanding holiness along with the pressure of scientific developments in expositing the nature of the human in terms of pro-sociality and social neuroscience (Davies 2016; Flood 2019). Inevitably, a contemporary discussion about holiness will need to draw on a number of disciplines and cannot be wholly located within any single discourse; this, I hope, is to succeed in locating the discussion within the discourse of the academic study of religions.⁴

attention to a number of themes in this history, including Bataille's sacred sociology and remarks about the pre-ethical nature of Otto's holy and his reaction against over-rationalization.

- 2 Weber's famous concept of disenchantment (Weber 1991: 155, see below) and Taylor's "disembedding" (Taylor 2003: 50) are arguably features of contemporary cultural life in the West in which societies have been removed from a notion of religious cosmology, with an emphasis on the values of individualism, equality, and progress. This is complex in that religion in the West has resisted complete eradication by secularism and some have argued that contemporary Western societies might better be described as "post-secular" (Labuschagne 2013). The reassertion of the category "holiness" in the Pope's encyclical needs to be seen in this context.
- 3 Anti-essentialism, the view that phenomena do not have properties independent of the formation of classification and definition, has been an important feature of discourse about social constructivism, relativism, and postmodernism. The literature is vast, but includes philosophy, linguistics, sociology, literary studies, religious studies, and so on. On anti-essentialism in philosophy see the essay by Robert C. Stalnaker that discusses "bare particular essentialism," the view that for every individual and property there are possible worlds where the individual has that property and worlds where it does not (2003: 71–83); on linguistic relativism see the survey article of recent research by John Lucy (2016); on the limits of rationality and the rationality debate, see the still relevant collection of essays edited by Bryan Wilson (1970) and further responses in the volume edited by Martin Hollis and Steven Lukes (1982; also Margolis *et al.* 1986); on postmodern theory see the survey by Best and Kellner (1991). For a recent survey of social constructivism see Pfadenhauer and Knoblauch (2018). Critical realism instigated by Roy Bhaskar has also been influential in recent debate as a reaction against postmodern discourse in its insistence on the objectivity of both natural and human worlds (see Archer *et al.* 1998), a position that is proximate to speculative materialism's rejection of correlation between mind and world (Meillassoux 2009).
- 4 I am drawing on a number of discourses including social constructivism, neuroscience, phenomenology, and philosophy not only because all have a stake in presenting accounts of

With these discussions in the background, what I wish to present is an argument that links the category holiness with prepredicative experience, especially as it shows itself through hermeneutical phenomenology, but grounded in what might be termed bio-sociology. But this will not be a reductionist argument because it recognizes the particular languages of holiness, how holiness comes into view through human acts and comportment toward world, and it recognizes the irreducibility of human complexity (see Davies 2016). I hope to present a philosophical justification for linking holiness with prepredicative experience. This is a complex issue that involves a discussion about holiness itself being located either in prepolitical experience or being inseparable from political and legal discourse, which also relates to the linguistic construction or otherwise of human experience. Lastly the issue must draw on a discussion about metaphysical and ontological realism. While I would wish to defend the category of holiness, this is not a reprising of Otto's thesis that removes the category of the holy from any political discourse or analysis, but it is to claim that holiness might be rooted in a prepolitical, somatic bio-sociology; stated positively rather than negatively, the question is can Otto's idea be integrated into a bio-sociological field? I would argue that it can, and that this necessitates a move to a hermeneutical phenomenology to understand it, and furthermore, that this in turn entails a metaphysical realism.

Arguments against understanding "the holy" and "the sacred" in terms of phenomenology are well known and the phenomenological approach has been generally rejected by scholars from a critical perspective (Fitzgerald 2007; Masuzawa 2005; McCutcheon 2003) including my own dialogical perspective (Flood 1999).⁵ This is, of course, a large issue, so rather than rehearsing the

holiness, but because holiness resists being accounted for within a particular kind of terminology, as I hope will be evident here.

- 5 Rehearsing these arguments is beyond the scope of this article, but briefly they are as follows. There was a general rejection of the phenomenology of religion from the perspective of what we might call "critical religion," to use Fitzgerald's phrase. First, the phenomenology of religion, especially as articulated by Mircea Eliade, has been critiqued on the grounds that it claims a descriptive neutrality but in fact hides a covert politics of repressing the voice of the other, with Fitzgerald claiming that this discourse is part of a colonial enterprise implicitly and explicitly concerned with the occlusion of the other, the third world, and in fact religious studies, in spite of its claim to neutrality, is an implicitly theological enterprise. Second, as Chidester has argued, comparative religion developed in colonial regimes of oppression, as he illustrates with the example of South Africa (Chidester 1996). Finally, the critique of the sacred is linked to the critique of the category of religion that, critical religion claims, is not universal in human experience but imposed: religion is a category indigenous to the West (linked to the sacred/secular divide) and projected onto humanity as a whole. There is, in

arguments of critical scholarship, I wish to address the problem of holiness in terms of linguistic construction versus a somaticity, a grounding of holiness in body and materiality. This is simultaneously to discuss holiness in relation to the category of the person and to make a claim about holiness being revealed within the structure of world and so established within a metaphysical realism. In sum, holiness itself only comes into view in the particular instances of its articulation and we can recognize particular experiences of persons and cultural forms as instances of it. Such a view of holiness entails a metaphysical realism that constrains its instantiations while never becoming articulate itself. But first we need to set up the contrast.

1 The Experience View of Holiness

According to the experience view, holiness is a kind of perception of transcendence, as famously articulated by Rudolf Otto, and according to the politics view, holiness is inseparable from legal discourse, as articulated in the philosophies of both Giorgio Agamben and Roberto Esposito. I wish to argue for the problematic nature of both: the experience view is inadequate in ignoring the political, institutional, and legal nature of holiness in history, the politics view is inadequate in its minimizing experience and the reduction of holiness to pure immanence, thereby presenting a far too denuded view of human reality. But a third alternative might be offered through hermeneutical phenomenology that draws from the politics view a link between holiness and life itself but reconfigured in a move away from its negative evaluation and draws from the experience view the necessity of understanding holiness in terms of a prelinguistic order of life itself. This necessitates a bio-sociological view of holiness, on the one hand, and a phenomenology of holiness on the other. This approach also implies that holiness is constrained by what we might call a metaphysical realism, that the real exists beyond language and human interaction.⁶

fact, no religion because it has no essence (like the sacred) and is a category constructed through history in the service of power. Scholars of religion are therefore implicated in this political endeavor (see, among others, McCutcheon 2007). In many ways, critical religion has become a new orthodoxy in the study of religion.

- 6 I will develop these ideas in the course of this article, but briefly the discourse of metaphysical realism in recent philosophy is close to Bhaskar's critical realism in maintaining that the world and the objects we perceive are independent of human beings' perceptions and conceptualizations. On metaphysical realism see the volume of essays edited by David Chalmers (2009). On critical realism a good introductory volume is Archer *et al.* 1998.

The category of holiness was, of course, made famous by Rudolf Otto in his very influential *Das Heilige* (The Holy) (1917).⁷ In its English translation (1923), it became a bedrock text of religious studies (Stausberg 2017: 558), thereby establishing, perhaps, the influence of a Protestant understanding of religion and experience on that discourse.⁸ Otto's argument in a nutshell is that the category of the holy is found across religions and is therefore rooted in individual human experience or apprehension of something that is wholly other, the essence of which is characterized as a sense of mystery, fear, and fascination (*mysterium tremendum et fascinans*) that Otto termed "the numinous" (*numinosum*). This apprehension of the holy is prior to language, and, according to Douglas Hedley's fine study, "attempts to convey or evoke the prelinguistic experience of the holy that he proposes as a generic and transcultural feature of humanity" (Hedley 2017: 35). This central idea has its origins in German Romanticism and in particular Friedrich Schleiermacher's location of religion in feeling (rather than willing or thinking), although Otto's numinous is not in itself a psychological category but rather something objective that provokes a particular psychological reaction of surprise in those who encounter it. Otto had earlier re-edited Schleiermacher's *Über die Religion* (Stausberg 2017: 558), and while being deeply influenced by him, he is nevertheless critical, as Hedley reminds us, of Schleiermacher's "feeling of dependence" (*Gefühl der Abhängigkeit*); Otto transforms this into "creature feeling" (*das Gefühl der Kreatur*), the human apprehension of its insignificance (Hedley 2017: 37). For Otto, such experience has the somatic symptoms of horripilation and is not dissimilar to Freud's uncanny (*Unheimlich*) (Freud 1919).⁹ Otto offers evidence for his view from a range of textual sources including the Hebrew Bible and chapter eleven of the *Bhagavad Gītā* where Krishna reveals his universal form to a trembling (and horripilated) Arjuna (Otto 1917: 211–213). Otto claims

7 There are many studies of Otto. Hedley's analysis of the German text is particularly useful and insightful (2017) and Orsi's essay (2012) provides important, critical commentary on the category of "the holy" and its problematic nature, especially in relation to issues of marginalization. Philip Almond (1984), Melissa Raphael (1997), and Gregory Alles (2013) have written interesting studies.

8 Although Otto was inevitably influenced by Protestantism, he was nevertheless rejected by Protestant theology and, as Hedley observes, regarded as belonging to "a slightly antiquated liberal, Neo-Kantian world, one that has been disrupted and subverted by the force of Dialectical Theology" (2017: 33). Otto was rejected by theology for not being sufficiently Christian and rejected by secular scholarship for being too Christian (Orsi 2012: 97).

9 Interestingly, both Otto's book and Freud's essay were published within two years of each other and five years after Durkheim's *Les Formes Élémentaires* in which the sacred is privileged as a primary religious fact.

universality to numinous experience and he went on to develop a comparativism of his later work on Eckhart and Śaṅkara (Hedley 2017: 39).

Otto identifies an important idea, that there are kinds of human experience that go beyond and challenge the everyday world of transaction. Indeed, in highlighting the out of the ordinary and in identifying holiness with extraordinary experience — that in modern parlance we might even call an altered state of consciousness — Otto is going against the grain of a general trend that has identified holiness with ordinary life in Western discourse. As Taylor has described, since the seventeenth century in Reformed Christianity there was a rejection of the Catholic idea of a higher, religious vocation of the celibate monastic in favor of the view that ordinary family relationships and living a Christian life in the world are worthy of respect (Taylor 2003: 73–74). On this view, religious experience is nothing special but is ordinary life, characterized by economic transaction and the social contract, seen as sanctified. The sanctification of ordinary life means that all human life is holy, and all experience is one of holiness. So, in emphasizing the holy as special, human experience set aside from the ordinary, Otto is on the one hand reverting back to an older idea of religious experience (and so was not a stereotypical Protestant theologian) as the realm of the clerical and monastic, male elites (although with some notable exceptions in female mystics), while on the other adhering to the Reformed Christian idea of the equality of believers; the experience of the holy can happen to anybody, although, in fact, happens to the few, to Weber's virtuosi.

While Otto has highlighted the holy as an important category in the history of religions, in privileging numinous experience as the apprehension of the holy in this way, he sets the holy aside from politics, the economy, and the public sphere, and thereby renders the category as having little relevance in terms of understanding culture, especially in explaining the forces that lead to modernity. Indeed, the subjective dimension of Otto's holy is individualistic (Rappaport 1999: 379–381), even if that individual experience is gained in congregational worship. But we must recognize that he sees his work as a criticism of over-rational modernity in which subjective experience as emotional reaction to the holy is translated into the intellectual clarity of theological discourse. This intellectual clarity entailed a critical loss of affective and immediate evidence. Furthermore, the implication of Otto's holy in emphasizing pure experience outside of social context is that it becomes divorced from ethics. Otto's numinous is pre-ethical and so a shift from the category "the holy" (*das Heilige*) to the numinous is a move away from moralistic associations of the German term. Emphasizing the importance of the holy ironically demotes it to an irrelevance in cultural discourse if understood purely in terms

of experience. The implicit critique of Otto's location of holiness in experience from the politics view of Agamben (Agamben 1995: 86) conversely highlights the cultural and political relevance of the category of the sacred.

2 The Political View of Holiness

The theorists who locate the holy firmly within politics do not render the category irrelevant but, on the contrary, claim its central importance with broad, generally negative implications for the history of the West. Agamben in particular has linked the idea of the sacred man (*Homo sacer*), the figure of the exception, the man in Roman law who can be killed but not sacrificed, to twentieth-century Nazi genocide (Agamben 1995). I have commented on Agamben's interesting thesis elsewhere and the link he makes between the holy and bare life (Flood 2017), but here wish to emphasize his point about the political nature of sacredness. English can differentiate between "the holy" and "the sacred,"¹⁰ and in contrasting Agamben with Otto, perhaps it is relevant that Agamben uses the Italian term *sacralità* and Otto uses the German *Heilige* (Otto 1917: 5) because "sacred" is a conceptually relational term always contrasted, implicitly and explicitly, with its opposite, the "profane" (in a number of Indo-European languages highlighted by Benveniste [1969]), whereas "the holy" does not in itself imply a semantic opposite other than an implicit "unholy," as in the Hebrew Bible where *qādoš*, holy, is contrasted with *ḥol*, profane, and also with *tāmēʿ*, impure.¹¹ Benveniste points out in a passage cited by Esposito, that the holy does have a double aspect in the history of Indo-European languages, usually coming in pairs. Thus, we have *hieros* and *hagios* in Greek, *sacer* and *sanctus* in Latin, and *speta* and *yaozdada* in Avestan (Benveniste 1969: 179–207), in which the first in the pair of terms indicates a condition of fullness, prosperity, and health and the second indicates juridical power that controls the vital power of life, although I can think of no similar pairing of Sanskrit terms (nor, presumably, could Benveniste as he cites none). Commenting on Benveniste's distinction, Esposito observes that the one set of terms refers to what is animated while the other refers to what is forbidden.

10 Roy Rappaport in his important and influential book distinguishes between them. While the sacred denotes "discursive aspects of religion," he uses the term "holy" to refer to "the total religious phenomenon," making the point that the word may be derived from the Old English *halig*, and related to the English words "whole," "healthy," and "heal" (Rappaport 1999: 24).

11 I would like to thank an anonymous reader for this observation.

Benveniste's distinction implicit in the category of holiness maps on to holiness as experience — the fullness of life — and as politics — legal control.

These two dimensions are the sacred's "horizons of meaning" for Esposito, the one primarily organic and the other juridical, an idea that seems contradictory or "difficult to place in the same semantic space." What integrates the two is the concept of immunity (Esposito 2011: 55). Holiness as immunity articulates a function of religion to keep people safe and conveys the notion that the sacred heals life through "the absorption of something that binds it to its opposite, that draws life from death or includes death in life" (53). On this view, what is holy is both the wellspring of life itself and the control of life through prohibition and injunction. Like Agamben, Esposito therefore links the holy with sovereign power as articulated by law and it is this articulation in law that ensures the survival of community and functions like an immune system in the body (21). Holiness here is a kind of reification of the juridical order ensuring immunity within the body of the society, a somatic metaphor that parallels Otto's experiential holy within the physical body. This juridical conception of holiness is furthermore linked to sacrifice in that the ancient Greek libation (*spendo*) is for protection, asking the gods to keep us alive (54) that, incidentally, directly parallels ancient Indic conceptions of sacrifice where death is not its inevitable consequence (Heesterman 1993: 155–156; Flood 2019: 128–129).

Yet even though Esposito claims that immunity harmonizes the two concepts of holiness, there are two distinct orders of analysis here, the one potentially disruptive of the other. If holiness is endemic to the political order, even though the term is not often explicitly used, then it names a binding force within an economy of immunity, within which sacrifice has traditionally functioned as its articulation and which in modern societies, free from explicit sacrifice, appears as metaphorical renunciation. The politico-juridical order is holy in a nation's social imaginaire, to use Taylor's phrase, as the embodiment of a nation, yet the second order of holiness as somatic experience set aside, in Otto's sense, might challenge this because the ecstatic state thereby entailed renders participation in the social order problematic: the politico-juridical order potentially breaks down in the face of overwhelming numinosity, which is perhaps why such experience is temporally restricted in literature (as in chapter eleven of the *Bhagavad Gītā*). What I am trying to get at is that the understanding of holiness purely in terms of the politico-juridical order is insufficient because it ignores the disruptive eruption of holiness into that order, a disruption that is located in human experience and within the body.¹²

12 The paradox of the holy as being constituted within the politico-juridical order as well as disrupting that order, has been treated by many theorists. Durkheim's collective

The politico-juridical view of holiness is within the paradigm of cultural construction in the sense that human societies and polities are historically formed, yet the second sense of holiness attested in religious literature and in ethnographic work (Lewis 1971; McDaniel 1989), bears witness to somatic disruption as surprise and wonder that itself challenges social construction. Yet conversely, somatic experience or encounter in itself does not do justice to the importance of holiness because of its centrality to the body politic as constituting part of the politico-juridical order.

3 The Experience View Re-Visited

The political view that sets holiness historically within a legal framework is important in the identification of the holiness with the state of exception, for Agamben, and with the protection of the body politic as immunity from violent disruption, for Esposito. But viewing holiness within a legal framework is not sufficient in itself because of the somatic experience of holiness, albeit temporarily limited, and the sustained experience of holiness over a lifetime, not so much as overwhelming encounter but as orientation toward what is believed to be transcendence. Such encounter, the life of holiness, might be a selfless moral enactment — the man who dedicates his life to care for the addicted and homeless, for example — or it might be a challenge to the political order, as the life of Socrates or the Buddha challenge that order. We need therefore a different kind of analysis to do justice to the more positive evaluation of holiness not simply as a category in the service of political power, but as a form of apprehension within the human lifeworld located within the particularity

effervescence as an eruption of the sacred can be understood in this light, as can Carl Schmitt's political theology in which the state of exception is a stepping outside the rule of law and so disrupting the politico-juridical order (Schmitt 2005), and the Collège de Sociologie's emphasis on "sacred sociology" in which intense experience of the sacred is found within the profane, thereby intruding into collective transactional life. George Bataille, for example, speaks of the sacred as disruption from the world of intimacy into the world of things (Bataille 1967; Flood 2019: 100–104) and similarly Roger Callois identifies the sacred as the disruption of what is forbidden and taboo into the rationally ordered society (Callois 1959). This idea of disruption is also close to Turner's liminality or *communitas* (Turner 1969: 96–97) and to Girard's violence of the scapegoat mechanism, a cathartic release of socio-cultural violence (Girard 1983; Flood 2019: 100). I cannot review this literature here, but within Italian philosophy apart from Agamben and Esposito addressed in this article, Vattimo has presented a consistent account of the sacred, particularly in relation to Catholicism (Vattimo, 1988, 1999; see Snyder *et al.* 2014). On the destructive eruption of the sacred into a literary order, see Feldt 2012: 250.

of a life, within the timeframe of being born and dying, within the category of the person. Relevant here too is the integration of the holy with ritual and the ways in which ritual evokes or constitutes the holy in human communities throughout history, as Rappaport has highlighted.¹³

The political analysis of holiness does not in itself go far enough because it is the appearance of holiness within the human lifeworld, within the realm of human experience, that is the necessary condition for the politics of holiness. This is not to say that there are necessarily two distinct things here, the politics of holiness and the experience of holiness in the personal realm, but rather that there are at least these two modes of apprehending holiness, two modes of analysis, in terms of the body politic and in terms of the experience of a life well lived, of being born and dying. It is the latter that Otto has highlighted, perhaps to the neglect of the institutional and political analysis, and it is the former that Agamben and Esposito emphasize to the neglect of experience. But it is arguably in the narrative of a particular life where holiness shows itself, a sense that occurs across cultures and has been borne witness to through human history, furthermore a particular life in which the ritual evocation of holiness might be a regular occurrence, in which the ritual language of holiness or “sacred postulates” evoke its apprehension (Rappaport 1999: 277–281). The analysis of this can be gained through at least three modes of inquiry, namely a sociological analysis, a phenomenological analysis, and a bio-sociological analysis, although a literary mode of analysis could be, and has been, applied to texts expressing holiness.¹⁴

3.1 *The Sociology of Holiness*

It was Max Weber who highlighted the importance of charismatic authority in the formation of societies. For Weber charisma is a quality endowed by a particular social situation, a requirement of that situation. In contrast to bureaucracy, charisma “knows nothing of a form or of an ordered procedure of appointment and dismissal” but rather “knows only inner determination and

13 The ritual dimension of holiness or its function in evoking it, is an important theme that I cannot elaborate upon here, but a theme central to Rappaport’s important book (Rappaport 1999).

14 Laura Feldt offers a “fantasy-theoretical” perspective on religious narratives that involve magic, miracles, and a sense of the sacred as dangerous and unpredictable. We can understand these narratives as literary productions and so amenable to literary analysis that has been surprisingly neglected in the study of religions (Feldt 2012: 224), thereby not marginalizing folkloric dimensions but making narrative for its own sake central to understanding (254). I am in sympathy with this perspective because one mode whereby holiness comes into view is indirectly through narrative.

inner restraint,” although the charismatic leader’s authority breaks down “if his mission is not recognized by those to whom he feels he has been sent” (Weber 1991: 246). For Weber charismatic authority is the opposite of bureaucratic authority and eschews rational economic conduct (247) as can be seen in the example of St. Francis and the embracing of poverty as a value. To take a modern example, the Indologist Agehananda Bharati, a German by birth who became a Hindu renouncer during the 1950s, illustrates how at a large religious festival, the Kumbha Mela, when thousands of pilgrims go to bathe in the river Ganges, there was a mass stampede and many hundreds of people killed and injured. Bharati describes how he felt moved to help those crushed people and began to organize the rescue operation with authority and clarity (Bharati 1961: 230–231). He cites this as an example of charisma being endowed by the particular situation. Even if one might have some hesitation in designating the life of Bharati as holy, this act of selfless devotion to enhancing the lives of others in the instance of this occurrence illustrates the appearance of holiness in a life, a quality that appears as charismatic authority. Here the experience of holiness coincides with the relieving of a dire social tragedy that in a sense demanded the emergence of charisma. The sociology of the situation gave rise to the experience of holiness, which in turn contributed to concrete social action in that particular situation. This example falls within Weberian charisma. Bharati’s acts go beyond his personality in responding to the demands of the event and the quality revealed fits the understanding of what holiness is; here selfless action for the sake of others, the authority of Bharati to act in this way is not simply derived from the power of his personality, but also because of his authority derived from his social status as a renouncer, clear for all to see through his ochre robe.

But does holiness necessarily have moral quality? There are clearly instances of charismatic authority that are set aside from everyday transaction and therefore outside the sphere of what we call morality.¹⁵ This is especially true of charismatic leaders who flaunt conventional mores in the service of pure power, examples of which are too numerous through history, although even “moral” charismatic leaders challenge convention. So, the sociology of holiness necessarily entails the idea of charisma in that holy act or the holiness of a life are set within social contexts, but charisma is not coextensive with holiness because of the possibility of negative acts of persons, such as many dictators, that we should not hesitate to call “evil:” a violent dictator could

15 I intend to use “morality” and “ethics” as ethnographical/descriptive categories of standards and values found in human societies rather than normative, Western categories, although these terms, of course, are derived from the latter.

be charismatic, but one would hesitate to attribute holiness to such persons even though their followers might do so. But we cannot completely exclude the attribute of holiness to powerful figures of violence, as this can perhaps be described via Durkheim's "left sacred," the impure sacred, and the work of the Collège de Sociologie (Bataille and Callois), where sacred power is affective force and irrational energy that drives participation in communal life, an analysis particularly pertinent at the time of the Collège in the 1930s.¹⁶ And there are instances of God's destructive holiness in the Hebrew Bible that could be seen as a parallel to charisma in human persons, both being powers on the margins of the ordered and the rationalized.¹⁷ The sociology of charisma shows us that holiness embodies a moral quality and that holiness occurs within concrete social contexts that can develop as processes of rationalization. According to Weber this process in modernity is accompanied by increasing, progressive disenchantment (*Entzauberung*). But for Hans Joas, this is too simple an account that belies sociological data of the contemporary Western world. Although we must understand religion in terms of Weber's "continuing process of functional differentiation" (*fortschreitenden Prozesses funktionaler Differenzierung*) (Joas 2017: 417) in this process, holiness and secularization form a field of tension (*Spannungsfeld*) that shapes our modern world, rather than Weber's unstoppable process of disenchantment. This functional differentiation of spheres of value (*Wertsphären*) along with a progressive process of rationalization that results in contemporary disenchantment goes against the idea of a universal religious ethic (Joas 2017: 406–407).

Thus, on the eve and for the duration of the First World War we see a complexity of ideas — Weber's rationalization and its accompanying disenchantment (Weber 1991: 155), the upwelling of unconscious forces in Freud's uncanny (Freud 1919), and Otto's assertion of emotional apprehension of power as numinous experience (Otto 1917). Within this cluster, the members of which all belong to the German linguasphere,¹⁸ the holy is a reactive force against rationalization through the assertion of the irrational apprehension of the wholly other, but unlike Freud's uncanny, which is a similar kind of eruption of unconscious power against rationalization, Otto's holy is imbued with positive value as a desired experience that brings us face to face with the wholly

16 I do not examine the French sociologists' insight into the impure sacred here, because this would detract from the focus of what I wish to address and because Agamben's political sacred articulates the idea of sacred power as force within the political-cultural field that has borne witness to destructive power in the twentieth century. On the impure sacred and the Collège de Sociologie, see Falasca-Zamponi 2006.

17 Thanks to an anonymous reader for this point.

18 Again, thanks to the anonymous reader for this observation.

other (*Das ganz Andere*). The triangulation of disenchantment, the uncanny, and the holy, encapsulates an early-twentieth-century articulation of historical process in which disenchantment is challenged by both what might be called a secular unconscious and a sacred irrationality, ideas that have roots in Romanticism.

But even given the necessity for a more nuanced approach to rationalization and the recognition of the complex ways in which religion becomes functionally differentiated in modernity, while this provides us with some account of the persistence of holiness, it does not in itself supply sufficient theoretical density to address the appearance of holiness in human life and personal experience.

Although this triangulation of ideas developed at the beginning of the twentieth century, the fundamental processes of disenchantment through rationalization, challenged by deeper, autochthonous social powers such as resurgent nationalism, still has valence, along with the emergence of a sense of the sacred reconfigured in new ways, outside of traditional religious boundaries. While a model of rationalized institutions of power being challenged by unconscious force as the assertion of the holiness of life is perhaps too crude an image, it nevertheless does encapsulate something of the shift occurring in society and discourse. Through an analysis of this shift we see in the idea of holiness, a reassertion of life being imbued with value beyond itself, being made holy or revealed as holy, expressed fundamentally in terms of experience. Yet an analysis of the power of institutions and their histories shows that throughout the troubled history of the last 150 years, a rationalization of irrational drives toward the self-assertion of particular communities over others has occurred, which we see in terms of resurgent nationalisms in contemporary politics. So, these two views of holiness in terms of experience that can challenge rational authority on the one hand, and holiness as inseparably pervading political thinking and institutions, on the other, need to be understood.

3.2 *The Phenomenology of Holiness*

While the sociology of holiness sets it within social structure and situation, and seeks to explain it in sociological terms and mechanisms of its arising, arguably this in itself is insufficient to explain holiness because the third person account inherent within any sociology cannot do justice to the first/second person account that exceeds explanation purely in terms of social structure and interaction determined by social role. The existential experience of holiness necessitates an approach that simultaneously describes it and explains it at one level. In locating holiness in feeling, Otto — and indeed Schleiermacher before him — places the experience of holiness outside of language although

he does wish to analyze its entailments, while regarding the numinous itself as beyond explanation.¹⁹ On this view, language can at best attempt to describe an event that has occurred within the frame of human life. The examples given by Otto from religious literature illustrate the point that the emotional impact of the apprehension of the holy is beyond or prior to language. Yet if language itself is constitutive of human reality rather than merely being descriptive (see Taylor 2016), then we need to question the nonlinguistic claim to holiness. While I do not wish to re-visit the 1970s and 1980s debate about mystical experience being formulated within traditions of mysticism, and so deeply implicated with the languages of their articulation (see Katz 1978, 1983; Proudfoot 1985; Taves 2009: 56–87), if language is constitutive of human reality and not only descriptive of it, then what does it mean to claim that an experience of holiness could be prelinguistic and prior to language?

To address this question, we need to go back to some basic claims of phenomenology and try to build a new understanding sensitive to the constitutive view that has had such profound impact on the humanities while at the same time recognizing prelinguistic, somatic experience as the ground upon which the linguistically constitutive view can be formulated. While I think there is evidence for prelinguistic holiness lying within the ethnographies of human communities, I wish to address this at an abstract, nonempirical level in the first instance. If philosophically there is a case for somatic experience of holiness prior to language, then this is the precondition for the experience of holiness as both disruptive of the everyday and as potentially ordering and influencing the everyday; experience that arguably has its roots in human biosociology. We might therefore argue three points for a phenomenology of holiness as experience and not simply as a politico-juridical category.

- (1) Phenomenology is always experience of: as so many have pointed out, this entails that the subject is an embodied agent in the world (Romano 2015: 31–45). But to understand the implications or force of this view, we need to inquire further into what experience is.
- (2) Experience is (a) a perceptual field and a perceptual field entails encountering the world, as Taylor has argued, as an orientation structure entailing height and depth, a spatial orientation based on up and down (Taylor 1995: 23–25). This in turn entails coherence and what Taylor has called

19 There is a discussion within the field of emotion studies of whether emotions can be fully pre-linguistic (thanks to a reader for bringing this to my attention). For a survey of the field of understanding emotions that includes discussion of the cultural construction of emotion to the universality of facial expression, I found Niedenthal *et al.* (2013) to be an especially useful. For an interesting collection of essays on religious emotion in Judaism, see Reif 2015.

a priori indispensability claims or a chain of claims concerning experience. A series of claims can be made about something that are based on an apodictic claim, the claim that *x* is an experience (for the fact of experience is apodictic). Experience entails (b) that it takes the forms of its objects. This is another way of describing “experience of,” a position with pedigree from Aristotle to Patañjali. The fundamental starting point of phenomenology has been intentionality, that consciousness is always “consciousness of” that can be widened more generally to the category “experience.”²⁰ Of relevance here is the way in which pro-sociality as an inheritance of our hominin past, that we share with other creatures, becomes articulated at the cultural level as “experience,” a theme I have developed elsewhere (Flood 2019: 71–77).

- (3) If experience is always “of” then what is the experience of holiness? If what we have said so far about experience in general is correct, then holiness is an “object” of experience but what it is an experience of, other than itself, we cannot say: holiness is only instantiated in the particularity of its appearance.

Romano’s work is an attempt at understanding and arguing for the idea of pre-linguistic experience, through re-visiting the classical sources of phenomenology and understanding what it really means to attend to the things themselves. His opening question, “does our experience possess immanent structures and if so what is their status?” and his defense of the autonomy of prelinguistic order or prepredicative experience (Romano 2015: xi) is germane to the question of how human experience reveals or engages with holiness.

To begin to develop this idea there are a number of presuppositions that such an analysis must assume, notably the pre-eminence of the lifeworld as the mode in which we have our being as a structurally common human experience (this can, I think, be justified in terms of a shared biological inheritance). Phenomenological analysis assumes the centrality of intentionality as the way in which modes of givenness appear to consciousness as a structural feature that Husserl understood as an act by which an object is intended, its content and that fact that it is an intentional object (Romano 2015: 44). We can clearly take holiness as experience as articulated in the narratives of encounters with extraordinary things and beings, as might be exemplified in medieval vision literature (Flood 2013: 49–63; on sacred narrative see Feldt 2011), but we can

20 I have restricted my discussion in this section to philosophical phenomenology, especially as articulated by Romano, but Taves (2009) has an interesting account of experience “deemed religious,” analyzing the processes whereby people attribute meaning to their experience rather than seeing religious experience as a static and fixed entity.

also take holiness in a more mundane way. If we take holiness not so much as extraordinary experience but rather as the moral quality of a life lived well, as in the example of the man who lives a life caring for the poor, homeless, and addicted on the streets of Cardiff, then a phenomenology of holiness shows us how the intersubjective structure of such a life reveals somatic experience of care prior to language. This is direct encounter with the other through modes of action that are, in one sense, irreducible, yet in another sense open to being read through the lens of human bio-sociology. What this suggests is that a life of compassion and care for the disadvantaged is a deep structure of human experience. This can disrupt and resist the politico-juridical order.

To locate holiness in the temporality of human life, as at least some religions do in the sanctification of the everyday, in the quality of a life well lived and open to care, rather than to extreme ecstasy, necessitates some account of human experience. This has been developed, for a long time now, in the tradition of phenomenology whose starting point in the philosophy of Husserl is intentionality. I need only present a sketch here as it is relevant to the analysis of holiness, guided by Romano's astute reading. Husserl takes intentionality from Brentano but whereas for Brentano intentionality means that consciousness is always "consciousness of," Husserl takes this a step further in that intentionality thereby gives access to a world. For him intentionality refers to a structural feature of consciousness that entails the act of intending (consciousness having an object), the quality of positing something (Romano calls this the doxic qualities of act), the content of such an act, Husserl's *noema*, and the intentional object itself (Husserl 1950: 33; Romano 2015: 44; on the anthropological application of these ideas see also Ingold 2013: 1–15). Husserl's intentionality is therefore a theory of correlation that connects consciousness to objects and modes of givenness, and the task of phenomenology is to describe these modes (Romano 2015: 43).²¹ Furthermore, for Husserl and for Romano, to perceive something is to perceive it as existing; to hallucinate is simply not to perceive. Perception entails accessing a truth of the world, an idea that Heidegger develops in understanding that any description always involves interests, a precomprehension of the phenomena and presuppositions (Romano 2015: 232–33) and therefore entails interpretation: phenomenology always has

21 The idea of correlation has come under sustained philosophical attack from speculative realism arguing rather for direct access to world, "the great outdoors," as revealed, for example, in mathematics and objective world structures such as the "arche fossil" (Meillassoux 2009). I cannot deal with this issue here in relation to the phenomenology of religion but the focus on human life that I propose, does entail an argument for some kind of correlation that needs to be defended against the speculative realist claim. This is beyond the scope of this article.

to be hermeneutical. On this account, to perceive a vase is to perceive how it shows itself through its adumbrations (*Abschattungen*).²² Thus, while the adumbrations change, the vase remains the same with the adumbrations being subjective and the vase being objective, “[t]he former belong to consciousness the latter to reality” (Romano 2015: 234). On this view, phenomenological description gives us access not simply to representation but to world itself.

The implications of this phenomenological approach to the concept of holiness is that if holiness is an object of intentionality, located within the sphere of experience or consciousness, then it must also be part of the structure of world and not mere representation, because perception or experience of world entails access to the structure of world itself.²³ To experience world is not to experience illusion, and so the experience of holiness is a mode of perception that accesses world: in Heideggerian terminology we might say that world shows itself through the mode of holiness. If holiness is an intentional object then it is part of the structure of world and being such is not illusory (on this view, a hallucination is not a perception). Such an argument assumes holiness as a given in human experience, an assumption justified through the history of religions and through witnessing contemporary lives. If holiness is part of the structure of world itself, as much as the experience of perceiving a vase, then this takes it out of merely personal experience and locates it within the politico-juridical life in the public sphere, important in a society’s social imaginaire. Holiness on this view is both experience within the realm of intentionality and objective

22 While perception can be mistaken, Romano’s point is that hallucination is not a perception of world, although we can arguably distinguish between hallucination and misperception. A dog chasing a leaf thinking it to be a squirrel is a misperception and is a mistake about the world. We would probably not wish to describe the dog’s mistake as a hallucination, the dog has access to world clearly but in the mode of error on this occasion.

23 One of the implications of this is that all lifeworlds are “true” in the sense of being part of the structure of world, but while this might entail a soft or weak relativism, it does not mean that particular, indigenous lifeworlds offer equally adequate accounts of world. At a second-level phenomenology we need to specify the most relevant constraints that control an event into its outcome (Bowker 2015) and such constraints might be specified by the natural sciences. That is, there are objective constraints that mean that some descriptions are more adequate to certain purposes or kinds of knowledge than others. We know, for example, that the world is not flat and that the moon is not made of cheese. This question of a second-level phenomenology and the need to go beyond description in the search for explanation has been put well by John Bowker: “Although the answers to the second-level question will be approximate, provisional and corrigible, they must nevertheless be attempted since without them there cannot be any serious appreciation of what religions are and why they matter so much. Husserl glimpsed this long ago and opened the way to a far more profound understanding of how questions of truth can be related to value-free description” (Bowker 2015: 306).

structure of the body politic. On this account, holiness is not just to be viewed negatively as the state of exception in the analysis of bare life that leads to the dark vitalism of the twentieth century, but positively in the analysis of what constitutes a particular life and its influence on the ambient social body (as in the person who dedicates his life to the homeless and addicted). I have argued this alternative view of the sacred elsewhere. Just to recap briefly that argument, two points of Agamben need to be questioned, the skepticism of the power of life as *zoē* having political force and the restriction of the sacred to the legal status of the exception (Flood 2017: 7). For Agamben — against Otto — sovereign power turns life itself (*zoē*) into bare life through its politicization or the imposition of *bios* upon it. But alternatively, firstly the sacred might come into view as resistance to that very sovereign power and secondly become manifest in the cultural field, not only as the exception (and thereby the scapegoat who substitutes for the *homo sacer*) but as participation in life itself, participation in an order that while transcending human life, is only ever instantiated within the particularity of a life. On this account, holiness is the appearance of life itself in the mode of the narrative of a life, a life lived well as intersubjectively agreed within a particular society. On this view, the life of Francis of Assisi, for example, that Agamben has written about (Agamben 2013: 111–158), would be a life of holiness as a life well lived, a life of participation in a trans-human order. Now the language of Francis and the Catholic tradition see this in terms of participation in the cosmic order ordained by God and within the Christian economy of salvation, but a contemporary language that seeks an external account might understand this as Francis accessing the power of life itself through the extension of pro-sociality beyond language to the wider environment (Davies 2016).

But it is clear that experience of holiness is not something complete in itself that is then inadequately described by the languages available to participants within it, rather language is central to the constitution of the experience of holiness. An anecdotal example can illustrate this. In weekly Daoist possession rites in Singapore studied by Stuart Strange, the mediums become possessed by different deities and give advice to those in the community who ask questions of them. The monkey god of the underworld comes to the medium who displays the god's monkey-like qualities, and here we see how language as well as behavior is constitutive of the state of possession.

To be possessed by the monkey god from the underworld is to display this behavior, to speak in this way, and so on, or to be possessed by cigarette-smoking (in an earlier age, opium smoking) underworld god Abé, is to be identified by his behavior certainly, but also by linguistic markers. Whether the experience of possession is an experience of holiness might be raised, but

clearly the gods coming into human form and moving among the congregation, answering their needs, falls within the category although qualitatively different from holiness as an ordinary life well lived. This is clearly an example of Otto's *numinosum*. It is not as if there is something called pure experience that can then be described but rather that particular kinds of experience go hand in hand with particular kinds of description, experience here is inextricably entangled in language, such that there can be intersubjective agreement about the adequacy of certain accounts. The language of the monkey god is judged to be right, appropriate for the occasion. The story of the monkey god becoming human and so being able to greet the other gods in human form, such as the embodiment of a child deity replete with dummy, shows the way in which language is constitutive of the experience itself.

There are a number of implications of such an argument. If holiness is located within human experience, where "experience" means a narrative of a life, then holiness opens out or gives access to a world. Holiness must be understood as part of the structure of world as much as perception or locomotion. On this view, holiness reveals an ethical structure to world, certainly, but cannot simply be identified with ethics. If by analogy, the vase shows itself in distinct adumbrations to the one who observes, so a life of holiness might show itself in distinct adumbrations such as care for the sick, personal comportment, which of themselves point to holiness but holiness itself cannot be reduced simply to those ethical acts or personal comportment because it is also a directionality toward what used to be called "transcendence," a term which we now hesitate to use. Holiness here is an orientation toward what Sloterdijk has called verticality, the vertical attraction attested through history but the reference of which cannot be claimed to be in transcendence, as Otto would have it. Sloterdijk's claim is that verticality is, and has been, recognized by exceptional individuals within human communities throughout history and across civilizations (Sloterdijk 2013: 125–27) although it cannot in itself be identified but only recognized in its adumbrations. Transposing this view to holiness, we can argue that holiness is attested throughout the history of civilizations but that it does not, cannot, come into view by itself but only in the concrete historical instances of its occurrence. Holiness is recognizable when it occurs although in itself resists definition. But we can begin to sketch the contours of holiness, an approach that necessitates phenomenology and shows the inadequacy and paucity of a purely political and social constructivist perspective.

If a first-level phenomenology attests to the adumbrations of holiness, then a second-level phenomenology that seeks explanation can operate within a number of realms. A theological demonstration, such as Otto's, would wish to account for the adumbrations of holiness by reference to an overwhelming

transcendent source, but if we seek nontheological accounts, then we go to the sciences of which we have knowledge. In particular, we might look to the biological sciences that offer accounts of human bio-sociology that posits a universality to pro-sociality, located in the deeper structures of the brain that reaches back into our hominin past. Deeper still, this line of inquiry into the explanation of holiness might lead us into the realm of the quantum effects on biological structures (Al-Khalili and McFadden 2014; Davies 2019). But the point is that holiness, whether restricted to pro-sociality narratives or other kinds of narrative that indicate numinous power (Feldt 2012), is a category within human reality, both as inescapable in its constant appearance within human communities and as focus of analysis for the human sciences.

3.3 *The Bio-Sociology of Holiness*

If what I have argued is so far correct, that the politico-juridical view of holiness by itself is inadequate to account for the richness and complexity of the experience of holiness as attested in human life, as we see through the sociology of holiness, and if a phenomenology of holiness exposes such experience, then can this be grounded in biological human nature? I hesitate to use the word “explained” because of hermeneutical phenomenology’s commitment to nonreductionism, but the universality of human biological inheritance as the necessary condition for human experience lends support to the phenomenological account. I have developed the general position elsewhere (Flood 2017) that also supports Davies’ argument for the neurosociological roots of culture (Davies 2016). The general argument is that human social cognition is prelinguistic with deep roots in the human hominin past; that empathy and compassion are not cultural constructions or located within the linguistic realm but belong to biological and cognitive structures that precede the human. The social cognition system in the brain operates below linguistic consciousness and is activated in all human acts of compassion, especially through face to face interaction where the face triggers such response (Schillbach *et al.* 2013). The social cognition system then filtered through language becomes extended through culture and religion and thematized in terms of “love” and “compassion” as we see in the history of religions. The experience of holiness and its attestations through human life must inevitably draw on human social cognition; it is not that holiness is simply human social cognition, but rather an intensification of that bio-sociological impulse that is integrated into an orientation toward verticality, toward going beyond the very limitation of its origin.

The bio-sociology of human being-in-the-world is the necessary condition for a description of holiness and attributing those qualities to a human life. What characterizes the appearance of social cognition is not simply an

internal cognitive state but rather an interactive mode in which orientation toward others, human interactive behavior, is structured in accordance with compassion and empathy. But while this is the base line, if that is a way of putting it, then the adumbrations of holiness entail a phenomenology to approach a more adequate description because holiness is not simply social cognition as it entails developed or enhanced forms of meaning and understanding; the adumbrations of holiness entail multiple languages of holiness. This is why any reductionist account will always be inadequate to address the complexity of human life and why we need a hermeneutical phenomenology that nevertheless must assume the bio-sociology upon which it is built.

To perceive holiness is to perceive human bio-sociology according to a meaning. It is to attribute transcendent meaning to social cognition. That is, holiness as overwhelming experience (as attested through the history of mysticism for example) along with holiness as a selfless life well lived, entails a meaning and therefore an understanding or insight beyond the biological. Thus, the phenomenology of holiness shows that we need an account that the politico-juridical version does not give, but an account based on human bio-sociology that while being a necessary condition, in itself does not do justice to the phenomenon of holiness because of the necessity of meaning displayed through the languages of holiness. While we might wish to claim that holiness is the intensity of an experience of verticality that cannot in itself be articulated other than in its instantiations, the appearance of holiness can only be identified through the languages of holiness, which are distinct in themselves, but recognizable as languages *of* holiness. To identify a cultural practice, a person, an action, or an object as an example of holiness is to know it in relation to a whole complex of terms that first allows the participants to identify something in this way — say to identify this performance as possession by the monkey god — and second allows the analyst to identify this as an instance of holiness. The diverse languages of holiness show us that the political-juridical reading is by itself inadequate, just as is understanding holiness in terms of a naïve prelinguistic experience; rather holiness is revealed in the articulation of particular languages or particular ways of life that are none the less recognized as appearances *of* holiness.

This is not a Kantian *Ding-an-sich* but a recognition of both the situated nature of knowledge and the radically open nature of intentionality: holiness is a fundamental constituent of human reality but only ever encountered in its instantiations, in its innumerable languages that it is the privilege of the interpreter to re-describe and that evinces the language of recognition that this particular situation is indeed an instance *of* holiness. Different ways of being holy are recognizable as such.

4 Ways of Being Holy

But there is a potential criticism here that this is simply to fudge the ontological question about what such holiness could be if we wish to avoid a theological claim about it. We might not wish to, of course, but I think the disciplinary boundary of a comparative religion needs to be methodologically agnostic at an initial level of inquiry. I can confront this question only as it relates to the problem I have been addressing, namely the problems of the political and experiential views of holiness. It is beneficial here to draw on discussion about metaphysics in philosophy. First, if there is a parallel between ways of speaking about existence and ways of speaking about holiness (and arguably there is) then can we best understand holiness in terms of analogy or in terms of univocity? Second, if the languages of holiness are languages *of* holiness then what kind of metaphysical commitments does this entail? I will address these questions briefly.

Within philosophy the question of being, the question about what is, and Heidegger's meta-ontological question of the meaning of being, have been understood on the one hand in terms of analogy and on the other in terms of univocity (see McDaniel 2009: 305–307). That is, the question of the being of different entities or objects has been understood in terms of ways of being, that the being of each is distinct and similar only by analogy, and in terms of univocity, that all entities share the same being, being is a single voice, as it were. Thus, at one level, a person shares in the same being as the chair, an ontological realism that Heidegger rejects (McDaniel 2009: 307). Introducing this discussion to the notion of holiness, can we claim that different instantiations of holiness and different languages of holiness, are recognizable as holy due to an analogy of ways of being holy or due to a univocity, that they all share in a single holiness but irretrievable in itself? We do not need to settle this issue, and a full discussion is beyond the remit of this essay, but raising the problem is sufficient to question the viability of limiting holiness to the political perspective. The political and juridical understanding of holiness can be linked through either analogy or univocity to the somatic senses of holiness. This is also true of participatory understandings of being (such as in Radical Orthodoxy) which could be either analogous or univocal.

If the languages of holiness are languages *of* holiness, then this entails a metaphysical realism in the sense that holiness (in itself inaccessible) constrains the instances of its occurrence. The overall argument for the instantiations of holiness in human life, that I have argued for here, has the metaphysically realist implication that holiness is only recognized in the particularity of its occurrence, but that cultural forms and personal experiences

might be regarded as instances of holiness creates an ontological pressure, to use John Bowker's phrase, about the source of such instances. Drawing on the language of recent philosophical debate helps, if not to resolve the issue then at least clarify it.

By way of conclusion, we can hesitate about a commitment to whether in ways of being holy, holiness is by analogy or there is a univocity to holiness: some may recognize a life lived caring for the homeless in Cardiff as holy, but we also need to recognize that a community might regard the possessed shaman as holy, or a place as holy. The question of what they share, holiness by analogy or holiness as univocity, can remain open but for either case, this is sufficient to demonstrate the limitation of the political view of holiness as immunity, to recognize the verticality of somatic experience, and to recognize instantiations of holiness as being *of* holiness.

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