Terry Eagleton and the Vicissitudes of Christology

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Che and Jesus

Eagleton has returned to his Roman Catholic roots in order to revitalise Marxism. Or so the rumour had it at the beginning of the new millennium. It is of course consistent with a rediscovered Irishness, a cultural Roman Catholicism that even the most resolutely secular and atheistic of Irish intellectuals cannot excise without the cultural machinery itself puttering to a standstill. A censored version of Eagleton's Irish Roman Catholic background can be found in the tricky terrain of his memoirs, *The Gatekeeper* (2001). Yet my concern is not quite with biography. Here I argue that Eagleton's return to christology as a source of political insights for the Left is deeply problematic.[1] In what follows I offer an outline of Eagleton's recovered christology before turning to the nature of his recovery of theology, his reliance on the notion of (self-)sacrifice, the need for a historical Jesus and the problem of redeemer figures, or rather the cult of the personality.

All of this may come as something of a surprise for those accustomed to the Eagleton of the last three decades of the twentieth century. So let me preface my discussion with a few comments that situate what is in fact happening with Eagleton's return to the Roman Catholicism of which he was so much a part in the days of *Slant* in the 1960s. The hint that the secular Marxist of those years was beginning his long path back from apostasy comes already in *Ideology: An Introduction*, where he eschews what he sees as the moral relativism of his days as a literary critic and theorist. In searching for some form of moral platform, he opts for the moral realism of David Brink, only to leave Brink behind and dust off his old Roman Catholic ethics by the time *The Gatekeeper* appeared in 2001. And this is where I pick up a lesser-known Eagleton, one who draws on both a rich and highly problematic theology, or rather christology, for his more recent political

reflections and critiques. Of course, one of the questions that underlies my discussion -- to which I will return in the conclusion -- is why Eagleton in the end finds that secular morality and secular politics are inadequate for the Left. Why does the Roman Catholicism of his youth seem to provide more resources than any other system of thought and practice?

Radical Christology

With my theological radar switched on, what astounds me in reading Eagleton is the way nearly all of his theological reflections wind towards christology. And this direction arouses within me a whole series of deep suspicions that Eagleton will need to answer. When you have read Eagleton's theological material long enough, the arrival of Christ on the scene, less incarnation than Parousia, or Second Coming, is hardly the surprise the New Testament would have us believe it should be. No matter where he begins, the end run is christology.

Let me take the example of martyrdom. Over against the individuality of suicide, the giving up on life since it has become unbearable, Eagleton stresses the collective side of martyrdom. If the suicide relinquishes what is worthless, the martyr offers up what is most precious -- his or her own life (Eagleton 2003b: 35). It is the most radical expression of the intensity, the all-or-nothing dimension of the Christian life (Eagleton 1966: 6-11). Eagleton invokes Paul, although without explicit reference to any New Testament texts, to make a moral point concerning the way we should live our lives: "It is the martyr's meaning of death-in-life which St Paul has in mind when he comments that we die every moment. . . . True self-abnegation is not a matter of political submissiveness or the heady *jouissance* of sexual pleasure, but of anticipating one's death by living in the service of others" (Eagleton 2003a: 125).

The martyr, then, is the ultimate moral exemplar, although Eagleton neglects to mention that Paul himself urged his readers to imitate his own life; only by living as though one were already dead, that is, in denying the primacy of one's self, is a life fully in service to others possible. In this respect it is less a purely individual act, but "a socialising of one's own death" (Eagleton 2003a: 124).

The political point is not difficult to spot: over against the liberal creed of the sacrosanct private individual, the collectivising of individual life in martyrdom, of living in service to others, offering up one's own life in the hope that something good may come of it, has a distinctly socialist feel to it. The revolutionary who gives her or his life for the end of oppression and a more just society is not far beneath this picture. A little further down, but not too far, is the figure of Jesus Christ himself, whom Eagleton has no qualms in taking as a revolutionary.

> Jesus plainly does not welcome his own impending torture and death, even though he seems impelled by an obscure conviction that such failure will prove the only way in which his mission will succeed. In the carefully staged Gethsemane scene, however, he is clearly presented as panicking, terror-stricken at the thought of what he must undergo and urgently pressing his Father to spare him such torment. He does not sound like a man for whom resurrection is just around the corner. One must be prepared to lay down one's life for others, while praying devoutly that one is never called upon to do anything so thoroughly disagreeable (Eagleton 2003b: 35).

Eagleton relies more on the narratives of the three synoptic gospels rather than that of John, where Jesus seems in complete control, even in the process of his own death. Rather than take the myth of Jesus' death and resurrection as the source of redemption, although he does use it as a political model, Eagleton's christology here begins to show its true colours. Christ is the exemplar, one to follow and imitate in your own life. I will have more to say on this type of christology below, save to mention here that with a venerable tradition of its own (although pilloried in my own Calvinist tradition as moralizing), the notion of *imitatio Christi* operates on the model of leader and disciple.

But I have run on too quickly in my discussion of martyrdom, carried away a little by the importance of the moral exemplar in Eagleton's work. If we take a few steps back then martyrdom turns out to assume the key notion of self-sacrifice, which in the final chapter of *Sweet Violence* becomes the crucial political question that emerges from the issue of tragedy. And tragedy too will find its inevitable focus in christology. In a wholesale effort to wrest the argument that tragedy has much to do with religion away from conservative scholars, Eagleton argues not only that sacrifice is a central category for tragedy, but also that the Left should be very much interested in it. And if this doesn't fly in the face of suspicions from the Left (the problem being the apparent valorisation of myth and nature over against history and reason), then his recovery of christology as a linchpin of sacrifice will make more than a few splutter over their drinks.

Sacrifice or self-sacrifice? I have used the two interchangeably thus far, but Eagleton makes it clear at the beginning of his discussion that he is interested in the transformation of sacrifice, as a mode of appeasing the capricious gods and bargaining for their favour, into self-sacrifice in the person of Jesus Christ. I will return to this problem below, but once he has done this he can align a whole series of (self-)sacrificial figures under this banner: the ancient Greek *pharmakos*, the most deformed and dejected members (for there were two *pharmakoi*) of the community who were ritually degraded and spurned, struck on the genitals while being paraded down the streets, before being sent out of the city-state; the embodiment of such a figure in Oedipus, who rids Colonus of its curse by embodying the curse itself; King Lear, of whom he writes that the only fate that did not befall him was to be eaten; Captain Ahab of *Moby Dick*, embodying the outcast whalers upon whom early capitalist society depended heavily; the polluted yet redemptive figure of Hester Prynne (the only woman in this collection) in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*; and so on. All of them are scapegoats, *pharmoakoi*, Christ figures.

But what of Christ? For Eagleton, the political point of Jesus's death and resurrection is twofold: he is the self-sacrificial model *par excellence*, but he shares the status of scapegoat with a whole list of other tragic victims. Eagleton cannot emphasize enough the sheer dereliction and simultaneously redemptive necessity of such a scapegoat, playing on the ambiguity of the "sacred," that which is both reviled and holy, untouchable yet revered. The catch, however, is that the moment Christ's crucifixion is seen as the necessary step, the prerequisite for his resurrection, when suffering is "the way-station or essential passage to victory, rather as dental surgery is an unpleasant but unavoidable step to towards oral health" (Eagleton 2003b: 36), then it can no longer be redemptive. Crucial to Eagleton's understanding of tragedy, this Adornoesque dialectical move -- pushing at item or term to its limit so that it yields its dialectical other -- will also become important in my criticism of Eagleton's christocentric theology. No human sorcerer this, no conjuring trick, and Eagleton pulls out a string of signals of Christ's failure on the cross: the "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me" (Mark 15: 34; Matthew 27:46) quoted by the Jesus of Matthew and Mark from Psalm 22 (although Eagleton as usual neglects to make the direct references); the failed expectation that he would return before his followers were dead; the descent into hell of the Apostles' Creed; Paul's notion that

Jesus was "made sin" that evokes the pattern of the scapegoat. "Cul-de-sac," "miserable failure," "accepting the worst," "forlorn faith," "bereftness," "the last bitter drop," "destitute," "the hell of meaninglessness and desolation," "monstrous," "outcast" -- all of these terms pepper the discussion of Jesus's tragic death (Eagleton 2003b: 37). But Eagleton is after the political point, which turns out to be the need for going beyond the most wretched and hopeless condition in which human beings can find themselves before any political redemption is possible.

Christ is then the tragic scapegoat, the sinless one who takes on the sins of the community and is expelled in fear and loathing in order to avoid catastrophe. Rather than focus on the community restored, for Eagleton tragedy lies with the scapegoat, wandering beyond humanity in some border zone of loathing, meaninglessness and unresolved trauma: "In Christian terms, this is Christ's descent into hell after his scapegoating on the cross, the solidarity with human despair and destitution by which he 'becomes sin' for our sake" (Eagleton 2001: 114). But in a deft theological turn, the immunized community becomes the arena of liberals and conservatives, where the monsters are either the result of not having quite enough to get by or those outside the community boundaries. The wilderness itself, the wild and hideous territory into which no self-respecting liberal or conservative would go, is where the radicals hang out -- "for the radical, the real monsters are ourselves" (Eagleton 2001: 114). But this is where all the scapegoats seem to end up as well: Christ, Oedipus, Lear, in fact the vast majority of the current world population, "whole sweated, uprooted populations" (Eagleton 2003b: 296), are there, and so should the radicals. They are, in a move that comes straight out of *The Body as Language*, the *anawim*, "the dispossessed or shit of the earth who have no stake in the present set-up, and who thus symbolize the possibility of new life in their very dissolution" (Eagleton 2001: 114).

It seems to me that this is the key to Eagleton's christology, and so I want to stay with it for a while. Boldly put, the political model of Jesus Christ is the thoroughgoing transformation of the lowly and rejected into a world without pain, suffering and oppression. Christ's crucifixion and resurrection become the leitmotif for such a transformation, which in Marxist circles has become known as revolution. A distinctly Hegelian Marx, it would seem, has turned up at the foot of the cross, for Eagleton stresses the connections between Christianity and Marxism at this point. While both are concerned with everyday life, with the life of common people, the transformation envisaged is not a restoration of the status quo, but something qualitatively different. Both point out that things are much worse than they seem, class society on the one side and a world riddled with sin and evil on the other; yet both hold to a much stronger hope that the world can be a whole lot better, that human beings have more potential than anyone -- Eagleton's list swings by liberal idealism, pragmatists, conservatives, reformists and postmodernists (Eagleton 2003b: 40) -- gives them credit. Or, even more strongly, what the New Testament draws from the Hebrew Bible in describing Christ, as the stumbling block or *skandalon* that has become the corner-stone, the early Marx, suggests Eagleton, attributes to the class yet to be formed, the class which dissolves all classes in the process of redressing wrong in general (Eagleton 2003b: 288).

The reason for bringing Christian theology into contact with Marxism once again is that the distinctly political gospel of the former provides an ontological depth to Marxism, an exacerbation of the stakes into the absolute opposition of evil and good, sin and repentance, forgiveness and grace, all of which turn on the notion of *metanoia*, a radical transformation that may be translated from the Greek as revolution. All of Eagleton's various theological reflections, from those on evil and history, through the cluster of terms -- confession, forgiveness, repentance, redemption and *metanoia* -- with

sin as their un-named centre, asceticism, martyrdom, to self-sacrifice and tragedy, turn on the question of christology. He is, if you like, a radically christocentric thinker. But this should come as no surprise for anyone who has read *The New Left Church* and *The Body as Language*, for here the efforts to integrate theology, literature and politics or to incorporate linguistic theory and Marxism into theology hinge on christology, although of a distinctly sacramental or eucharistic form. Thus, in linking the historical movement for liberation to Christianity, Marxism too, it would seem, is complete only in christology:

> Unlike the marxist, however, the christian recognises the risen Christ as the ground of this historical movement. He believes this because Christ, uniquely, *is both a body and a language*: he is an animal, yet an animal with the universal availability of a language, the word of God. In him, we can achieve at the level of physical union a fully human, expressive and universal communication; in him, language and bodiliness finally converge into a single life (Eagleton 1970: 12).[2]

I have a number of questions concerning this nub of his rediscovered radical theological past, and so it is best to list them first before delving into more detail: the nature of that relationship with his earlier theological thought; the favouring of certain christological metaphors, especially that of sacrifice, over against others; the deep desire for a historical Jesus; and the immense difficulties raised by such a resolute focus on a redeemer figure (the problem of the personality cult).

Theology Redidivus?

As for Eagleton's first incarnation as a theologian, let me pause for a while with the question of form, for his earlier arguments follow what was to become an all too familiar path, except that here we have the laying of the first stones. Thus, in his discussion of language and world, or rather sensuous life, in *The Body as Language*[3] he runs through various theoreticians -- Barthes, Mallarmé, Wittgenstein, McLuhan, Merleau-Ponty, Basil Bernstein's research into the differences between middle-class and working-class language, the German idealist Jacobi and Sausssure, all through the filter of Marx[4] -- to argue two distinctions, between the creative and destructive functions of language itself and between the immediate nature of bodily gesture and the mediated universality of other communication (from gifts to television). On the first point, language is not only the gateway into history and the "world," the step away from immediate sensuous life, but also the way human beings escape that world, building distance from such a history. In other words, the very means of history's emergence is also the means by which alienation from it is produced; as signs, language is the medium of human experience, but it is at the same time the transformation and manipulation of signs into fetishes that alienate experience, the world and human relationships; or, as he puts it, sin. As far as the second distinction is concerned, the disjunction of bodily communication and the extended body of other forms of communication folds back into the first distinction, since mediated communication opens up a host of possibilities for both human community and alienation. The culmination of the argument lies in nothing other than christology, although here Eagleton puts it in terms of the eucharist. Stepping through Merleau-Ponty's argument that the body itself is already a type of language, a means of symbolic communication with the world, he argues that in the eucharist one finds the dissolution of the distinction between body and language, and between unmediated and mediated communication. The key here for Eagleton is the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation: in the same way that at the moment one consumes the elements of the eucharist they cease to be bread and wine and become the body of Christ, which they must do for communication to become fully transparent, so also the destructive

disjunction at the heart of language, between sign and reality, the alienation between human beings and between humans and the world, is overcome and reconciliation emerges. Transubstantiation therefore means that the "sensuous immediacy" of Christ's body is at one with the universal media of bread and wine: "Christ's self-giving in the eucharist is globally available, achieved through material products in which all are able to share, but nevertheless bodily direct because what is given in those symbols is nothing less than himself" (Eagleton 1970: 36).

The determined march of Eagleton's argument towards christology is all here in one of his earliest works: as far as the form is concerned, nothing much has changed over three decades later. What has changed, at least on first appearances, is the content of the argument: the strange feeling of reading these earlier works comes, it seems to me, not from an overly pious Eagleton but from his passionate attachment to the Roman Catholic liturgy, understood as a "symbolic re-embodying of the meanings of the revolution" (Eagleton 1970: 114-15).5 His two favourite sacraments are the eucharist and marriage,6 and he often compares the sensuousness of the former with the fleshly euphoria of the latter (I can't help the image of a young randy Eagleton imbibing the bread and wine in the throws of orgasm). Rather than the political christology of his later texts, what we see in the first publications is more of a eucharistic christology and politics. There is nothing of the need for a historical Jesus (see below), for all of the christological reflections must pass through the medium of the Mass itself.

Yet, when we read more closely the terrain becomes all too familiar. Contemporary theory, Marxism, christology are well-worn nodes, but when we peer behind the eucharistic screen, a number of other items tumble out: sacrament as signifier, the importance of sacrifice, the question of evil, the revolutionary implications of Christ's death and resurrection, and the significance of the downtrodden and oppressed. Inevitably, form has given out to content, so let me take but one example of content, that of the *anawim*.

The appearance of the *anawim*, or more properly *'anawim*, in *Sweet Violence* and *The Gatekeeper* are hardly new, for they are integral to the argument of *The Body as Language*. Eagleton is no Hebrew scholar, but he makes significant theological mileage from the term, glossing it as "destitute and dispossessed" (Eagleton 2003b: 277). Let me indulge in a little Hebrew: *'anawim* is the masculine plural of *'anaw*, which has the sense of being bowed down or dejected, and then also humble and pious. However, it appears only once in the singular, referring to Moses (Numbers 12:3); otherwise it is always in the plural. The most common usage, found in the prophetic literature and the Psalms, refers to one's relationship with Yahweh: bowed, humble and pious. Fewer references indicate the proud and mighty who are brought low (Isaiah 32:7; Amos 2:7; 8:4; Proverbs 16:19; Job 24:4).

But Hebrew has a knack of overlapping words, indicated by the practice of *Qere'* (what is read) and *Ketib* (what is written): in the case of a particular word *Ketib* refers to the consonantal text, the original form of written classical Hebrew, while *Qere'* is an alternative vowel structure for the same consonants. By and large, the comprehensive vowel pattern in the Hebrew arrived late, an overlay on a consonantal text. The work of the Masoretic scribes of the ninth century CE, the vowel points were supposed to assist reading a language no longer used. But sometimes the Masoretes preferred an alternative reading, and since one could not alter a text already regarded as sacred, they simply placed the vowels of such an alternative reading against the consonants, obliging one to read another arrangement of consonants that suited the vowels. The most obvious example is the word *Yahweh*, one of the names of God: if the consonants indicate

Yahweh (*Ketib*, what is written), the vowels (*Qere'*, what is read) indicate that one should read *'Adonai*, "my Lord." Pious Jews today will avoid even *'Adonai*, reading instead *Hashem*, "the name," in a step that threatens to become an endless effort to avoid idolatry.

So it is with *'anawim*, whose consonants often appear with the vowels for the much more widely used word *'anayim*, and sometimes vice versa. The plural of *'ani*, *'anayim* means the poor or wretched, those brought low and oppressed. The overlap between *'anawim* and *'anayim* suggests that the poor and oppressed are also, in God's eyes, the humble and pious, in all the best senses of the term.

So what does Eagleton make of the *'anawim*? The couple of references in *The Gatekeeper* become central in the final chapter of *Sweet Violence* and, not surprisingly, *The Body as Language* from 1970. They are, as I noted, for Eagleton the "destitute and dispossessed":

> St Paul refers to them rather colourfully as "the shit of the earth." The *anawim* are the dregs and refuse of society, its tragic scapegoats. They are the flotsam and jetsam of history who do not need to abandon themselves to be remade, since they are lost to themselves already. And it is with them that Yahweh identifies. He will be known for what he is, in the words of Luke 1:53, when you see the mighty cast down and the lower orders exalted, the hungry filled with good things and the rich sent away empty. The true sacrificial figure, the one which like the burnt offering will pass from profane to powerful, loss of life to fullness of it, is the propertyless and oppressed (Eagleton 2003b: 277).

In itself there is nothing wrong with his effort to democratise the notion of the scapegoat by means of the *'anawim*, the poor and the pious, however you want to read the word. Eagleton does precisely that with his closing sentences of *Sweet Violence* (Eagleton 2003b: 296), stressing the point in a welcome moment of Marxist universalism, that it is the majority of today's world that is dispossessed, and not just certain minorities, that in becoming so used to capitalism we have forgotten that it has always been based on the exploitation of whole populations by a relative few. The *'anawim* are, then, in a dizzying sweep, the vast and various working classes and poor scattered throughout the globe for whom the ancient and not so ancient scapegoats and *pharmakoi* and Christs of tragedy and beyond have moved out of their small circle to join the multitude.

As far as this argument is concerned, nothing much has changed from 1970. One sample from *The Body as Language*:

> These men -- the *anawim* of the old testament whom Christ speaks of in the beatitudes -- are the "dirt" which falls outside the carefully wrought political structures of society, those whom society cannot accommodate; as such they stand as a living challenge to its institutions, a potent and sacred revolutionary force. . . . The *anawim* are the embodied negativity of each *status quo*, and as such focus its breaking-point; they are thus, themselves, a kind of contradiction: an expressive sign of human failure and limitation which yet, by pinpointing so exactly the limits of a social order, the points where it tails off into chaos, offers a positive symbol for the future. . . . The *anawim* -- the scum and refuse of society -- have, like all dung, a contradictory status: the more they reveal dissolution and

       decay, the more politically fertile they become ((Eagleton 1970: 67-8);
       (Eagleton 1968a: 21-2).

If there is a difference with the later material, it lies in the ecclesial and sacramental stress of *The Body as Language* -- "the *anawim*, like the ecclesial sacraments, are signs effective only insofar as they tend to their own abolition" (Eagleton 1970: 69) -- but even this focus fades somewhat as Eagleton presses onto the political point. And that is exactly the same as in *Sweet Violence*: the *anawim* are just like Marx's proletariat (the same quotation from *The Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* appears; see (Eagleton 1970: 68), (Eagleton 2003b: 288),7 although Eagleton neglects to note that they are more like the undesirable lumpenproletariat from whom no good can come. As one of the *anawim*, Christ brings out the truth of God's concern with them in the Bible, namely that the lowly will be raised up only through the utmost abjection and desolation. Even the deep contradiction of the *anawim* remains the same, for like the anthropological category of the sacred (Eagleton makes the same argument, using many of the same texts from Mary Douglas) in which dirt is both rejected and valued, Christ and the *anawim* embody the simultaneously destructive and redemptive forces that lie at the heart of political revolution.

The last chapter of *Sweet Violence*, then, is a rewrite of the penultimate chapter, "Politics and the Sacred," from *The Body as Language*. The latter is much sparser, restricted to Mary Douglas's work on dirt from *Purity and Danger* and the *anawim* themselves,8 while *Sweet Violence* fills out the picture with everything from ancient Greek tragedy to *Moby Dick*. But all *Sweet Violence* does is spell out in more detail the same argument from the earlier text: the value of Christ's death and resurrection, along with various other pieces from literature and anthropology, lies in the political implications for revolution.

The Desire for a Historical Jesus

As I pointed out above, another feature that interests me about Eagleton's christological reflections is that they rely on some notion of who Jesus was and how he thought and acted; in short, he has a particular construction of the historical Jesus. Having barely paused for a breath since the nineteenth century, the search for the historical Jesus has provided any number of historical reconstructions: the ethical example of nineteenth-century liberal Protestantism (Adolf von Harnack's "fatherhood of God and brotherhood of Man"), the apocalyptic visionary and wonder-worker of Albert Schweizer, the eschatological prophet of Edward Schillebeecx, the wondering wisdom teacher of Robert Funk, and Jon Dominic Crossan's political peasant, to name but a few.

Even though there is a long history of historical Jesus studies, Eagleton gives no indication that he knows of that history. Instead, he speculates and assumes a particular Jesus, a figure with a political and redemptive mission who sought to overcome pain and suffering, who lived and died as a martyr, in the service of others, and whose death is nothing other than a tragic event with redemptive possibilities. The short-hand for Eagleton's Christ, if its repetition is anything to go by, is the "executed political criminal" or just the political criminal: "It is one of the more grisly ironies of the Christian gospel that when God finally got around to putting in a disgracefully belated appearance in the world he had created, he did so as a political criminal" (Eagleton 2001: 122). Yet there is nothing particularly new here, particularly in light of his own background with the Catholic Left.

However, my question is why such a figure, the executed political criminal, needs to be based in some historical reconstruction. Eagleton doesn't offer any methodological criteria for his reconstruction. Instead, he operates in a way in which anyone who has read enough biblical studies is thoroughly familiar. So we find phrases such as "sounds like" and "seems to regard," along with occasional assertions of certitude: "no doubt," "plainly" or "clearly presented." All of which is based on taking some of the gospel passages, particularly those concerning healing and the passion narratives, as in some way representative of how Jesus actually might have acted, thought and felt.

I want to register my scepticism here not merely concerning Eagleton's historical Jesus, but of any search whatsoever. However, the more interesting question is not whether we can recover any historical kernel concerning the historical Jesus, but why Eagleton in particular would want to do so. What is there to gain by arguing that the political criminal actually has some connection to whoever the person Jesus might have been? Quite a bit, it seems to me. Obviously, there is the force that it gives to his argument, especially for one committed to historical materialism as a method. In the case of Jesus, however, the whole situation becomes much more acute, for the authorial weight of this figure, even on a cultural level, means that what Jesus might have said and felt will be more significant than that of any other figure. I would suggest that this is the case even with Eagleton's assumed readership in these later works, namely the cultural and political Left (although his readership is extremely broad these days), let alone any ecclesial or religious audience.

Eagleton's recourse to a historical Jesus who keeps threatening to disappear into the fog of history and endless biblical scholarship, having always slipped out of the room into which the (biblical) scholar has just entered, must therefore be understood as a rhetorical strategy, one that he uses to increase the force of his arguments irrespective of the historical Jesus himself. Eagleton would have been better off writing that his historical Jesus is but one representation among a host of others, one that is distinctly useful for his own argument, but a representation nonetheless.

Christological Metaphors

In fact, this is precisely what Eagleton does in his christological work more broadly, selecting certain features, metaphors and images, that he can't but help base in some putative historical figure. His preference is for legal, sacrificial, exemplary, political, collective, and earlier on, liturgical motifs that can be found, among others, in the New Testament and subsequent biblical and theological reflection (although the two are not always to be equated so easily). Invariably these motifs run over and through one another, so it is useful to distinguish between them in order to see where Eagleton's focus lies, but also what he avoids. Let me begin with the legal metaphor. Here is Eagleton: "Jesus is God in the shape of human frailty, no longer the judge on the bench but the political criminal who becomes an advocate alongside us in the dock" (Eagleton 2003a: 140). Eagleton contrasts two images of God: Satan and Jesus (Eagleton 2003b: 210). If the one comes through as accuser and judge, who watches our every step and deed and rewards us accordingly, the other is our co-defendant in the dock, the "friend," as he puts it in a favoured phrase drawn from the early theological writings, "of the shit of the earth" (Eagleton 2001: 122). Contrary to Eagleton's sharp distinction between the Judge-Satan (the vengeful God of the Hebrew Bible) to the Defendant-Jesus (the God of love in the New Testament), both images are part of the complex imagery of God. Thus, Jesus acts as defence counsel for us sinners before a God who seeks to punish us for our wrongdoings. Yet, when he gets to this point, in a discussion of the Protestant Milton, it is no longer acceptable: "In a classically Protestant scenario, Christ's love is needed to

shield us from the Father's wrathful justice, as a sympathetic defence attorney might save you from a grilling at the hands of a particularly irascible judge" (Eagleton 2003b: 210). The differences are subtle: instead of God switching from judge to co-defendant in the person of Jesus, here we have Jesus defending us from God. I must confess I can't see that much difference: the legal metaphor has merely switched sides, at one moment used favourably and at another, more Protestant moment, less so. But I suspect that Eagleton wants to avoid the doctrine of substitutionary atonement: in this case Jesus takes the punishment that is rightfully ours. Innocent, he takes on the sins of world so that we may not be punished and die.

Skirting the other side of substitutionary atonement is Eagleton's liking for the scapegoat, the tragic dimension of christology: in this case, the scapegoat, or the red heifer in the Hebrew Bible, has the sins of the community symbolically and ritually placed upon it before being banished to the wilderness where it comes to a slow and painful death. As I indicated above, the notion of the scapegoat comes close the heart of Eagleton's christology in a distinctly political sense. For he stays not with the redeemed community (he will return there), but the scapegoat and all who are like it: the rejected, repressed and banished majority of the earth's population.

Overlapping the notion of the scapegoat but dragged by Eagleton in another direction is sacrifice itself. In his earlier texts he is more concerned with recovering the sacrificial aspect of the Mass, but that was within the context of the ecclesial institution itself (Eagleton 1970: 42-9). Still inside, however uncomfortably, he is much happier with the mystery of the eucharist. The liturgy is the means of transferring Christ's redemptive activity to human beings, through the specific reception of Christ in the elements themselves: "Christ is present in the eucharist, not simply as the risen man who has crossed the frontier of historical reality into heaven, but in the eternal action of his *transitus*; he is present in his sacrificial act of grasping and surpassing the ultimate boundaries of history, submitting to limit in order to transcend it. It is in this that his death is genuinely redemptive" (Eagleton 1970: 44).

But by the early years of the new millennium the question of sacrifice becomes one of self-sacrifice, as I pointed out above. Apart from the obvious political point, the reason Eagleton is keen on self-sacrifice is that it is closely tied up with free will, a willing sacrifice of oneself for others. Although the scapegoat bears with it one aspect of the whole complex of sacrifice, namely the appeasement of the capricious gods, Eagleton is not particularly taken with this idea, for a capricious, wilful God, one whom we find time and again in the Hebrew Bible, has been carefully excised from Christian and Jewish thought. Out of the whole complex of sacrifice -- burnt offerings, sin offerings, thanksgiving, animal, grain and drink offerings, scapegoat and atonement -- Eagleton fixes on a relatively modern notion, namely self-sacrifice, for which the scapegoat can give him a leg-up. In fact, all that seems to be left over in contemporary, Western notions of sacrifice is self-sacrifice: the idea that one of the highest moral acts is to offer oneself up freely, of one's own will, for a higher cause, which most often turns out to be the nation-state in warfare, or perhaps the victims of a bus crash or earth-quake, or the saving of a drowning dog. Gone is any notion of appeasing the gods, of performing the rituals in the correct fashion to avert disaster, of eating the sacrificial victim in a communal meal, even the substitution of a sacrificial victim for the good of the community. But it is a long way from the scapegoat to self-sacrifice, for the scapegoat, sent into the wilderness to die for the community, is hardly a willing victim, one who chooses to do so out of pure altruism.

In this respect the cover illustration of *Sweet Violence* is telling. A detail from Caravaggio's "The Sacrifice of Isaac" from around 1600 CE, it depicts Abraham's knife descending to carve up Isaac's neck. A hand appears from the left, and Abraham's face is averted in the moment that stays the sacrifice itself. I don't want to delve into the intricacies of the narrative of Genesis 22 (see Boer 2000), but the point here is that Isaac is hardly a willing victim. Indeed, Abraham can make no sense of Yahweh's command to go up to Moriah and offer up the son on whom the divine promise of a people rests.

Hardly accidental, then, that when Eagleton does get around to writing of the Akedah (which he doesn't call it), he reads not the Hebrew text, but Kierkegaard's discussion in *Fear and Trembling* (Kierkegaard 1985), and he focuses not on Isaac, the sacrificial victim, but Abraham (Eagleton 2003b: 44-5). Heavily Christianised in a distinctly Lutheran sense, Kierkegaard plays on the paradox of faith: Abraham, the model for any believer, does not retreat from the command to sacrifice his son, knowing full well that once Isaac was dead he would not be restored to him, that the promise of a people from Isaac would come to an end. And yet, precisely because Abraham does not give up on "his desire for the impossible," the desire that Isaac will be restored to him even while he obeys the order to sacrifice, does God come to the rescue, stay the knife on its downward path and point to the ram in the thicket. Unlike many of the critics he cites in *Sweet Violence*, Eagleton is quite taken with this reading of Kierkegaard's, which he lines up with Lacan's interpretation of Antigone and, of course, Christ's crucifixion. Neither Abraham, nor Antigone, nor Christ is socially acceptable or ethically prudent, given to some universal or collective benefit or *telos*. Abraham's faith takes him beyond anything that is acceptable, relinquishing the universal, ethical and rationally political, and even tragedy itself, "abandoning everything, bringing his joy in the world to nothing, without any sure guarantee of a return" (Eagleton 2003b: 45). The hand that desperately grasps the end of the rope finally lets go. This is tragedy at its deepest level for Eagleton, one that he will identify at the core of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

But what has happened here? To begin with, in the "sacrifice of Abraham" the ethical and social coding of self-sacrifice that I identified initially has gone, for in Eagleton's reliance on Kierkegaard ethics and the universal are discarded as so much useless baggage on the way up Mount Moriah. Yet, a profound slippage has taken place in the focus on Abraham: he is not the sacrifice but the one who offers up a sacrifice, Isaac. However, Eagleton insists in taking Abraham as the centre of this story, the one who makes the impossible sacrifice. Eagleton's christocentism is guilty here, for the ease of the connection between Abraham and Christ may work in terms of tragedy, of the absolute dereliction of both before an inscrutable God. But it doesn't work in any sacrificial sense: whereas Christ offers himself, Abraham offers his son. If anything, the type of Christ -- following the long Christian interpretive strategy of typology between the Old and New Testaments -- in Genesis 22 is Isaac, not Abraham, who is not about to roast himself willingly on the altar. Ultimately, the narrative of Genesis 22 is a somewhat different model of sacrifice that ill suits any notion of self-sacrifice. In response to an unfathomable and capricious command from God, Abraham proceeds to offer what is most precious -- his "only" son (forgetting Ishmael) in this particular divine economy -- in order to appease God. The hook at the end, the ram in the bush, hardly provides a model of faith but one of complete subservience to God.

Neither the scapegoat itself, nor even the Akedah in Genesis 22, can be read in terms of self-sacrifice, in terms of Eagleton's favored martyr living a life in negation of the self. Self-sacrifice, then, must be read in a christological fashion, for which Jesus' willing death is crucial. In order to get to this point Eagleton makes some swift moves through the Hebrew Bible and New Testament. Even though sacrifice hinges, he admits, on

appeasing and propitiating the gods, on obsessively doing the right thing in order to curry their favour, this is not what he finds in the Hebrew Bible. Ignoring the vast amount of material on sacrifice as precisely such appeasement, he focuses on a few prophetic texts from Isaiah 1 and Amos 5 where such practices are castigated as mere hypocrisy. Catch-cries of the social justice elements of the Christian churches, they are but one dimension of a multifarious and highly contradictory collection of literature in the Hebrew Bible. But they serve his purpose, since he can then jump to the New Testament, specifically the letters of Paul9 and the letter to the Hebrews that he enlists here. The very high christology of Hebrews (not one that I can see Eagleton being enthused over in its full regalia) comes in use for a supersessionist moment, especially Hebrews 9:1210 where Christ is both sacrificed and sacrificer, victim and high priest, doing one last time what had gone on unendingly in the Hebrew Bible. In his own death, Christ brings to abrupt halt the long line of propitiatory sacrifice, but it allows Eagleton to make his point: "This definitive consigning of ritual sacrifice to the past involves redefining it in ethical rather than cultic terms as a self-giving for others. . . . As a mutual self-giving, it is no longer an esoteric ritual but the structure of sociality" (Eagleton 2003b: 277). Anyone who has been to Mass or the eucharist for the first time might beg to differ, but just in case this argument sounds a little too supersessionist, a little too much a Christian reading, he argues that it is consistent with the Jewish law, as any "pious Jew" (Eagleton 2003b: 277) would agree. The problem is that he quotes a Jewish scribe from, of all places, the gospel of Mark (not, say, the Hebrew Bible or perhaps a rabbinic source) to make his point: that justice, loving one's neighbour, is far more important than sacrifice.

And so we have self-sacrifice as the crucial motif of Eagleton's ethical and political christology. The problem is that as far as the passion narratives of the synoptic gospels are concerned, Jesus is hardly a willing victim, except perhaps in the gospel of John, following the will of a Father whose command he does not understand. The notion of self-sacrifice selects a small element of the metaphors of the Christ's death in the New Testament and elevates it to a key feature. Other metaphors also abound in the New Testament, such as the court scene, the scapegoat, sacrifice itself in terms of sin offering, but also the cosmic battle with the devil, the notion of Christ as warrior and victor in the battle with death, substitutionary atonement (bearing the sins of the world), the guarantor of eternal life, and the martyred political figure.

A major reason, I would suggest, for Eagleton's fondness for self-sacrifice and martyrdom lies in his two major christological categories, the political and the exemplary. Political figures and models work much better if they are willing victims, dying for a cause in a situation where they have at least chosen to be part of the political movement itself. Their deaths then become a consequence of such a political choice, a martyrdom rather than a death that appeases the powers that be. Lenin, or Christ, or Che Guavara would not be so appealing if they had been press-ganged into their respective political movements, if they had been designated for sacrifice as part of a larger political program in which they had no say. Cannon fodder would perhaps be a better term for this type of sacrifice. By contrast, political martyrs function above all as exemplars, and the old christological motif of *Christus exemplum* renders the life and death of Jesus Christ something we can follow, shaping our lives in light of the paradigm itself. So often this has become a private affair, the realm of the sacrosanct individual who gains his or her individuality by offering his allegiance to the state in a Rousseauesque social contract. Thus, the individual believer must seek to avoid sin, pray to the "Father," be prepared for persecution for their faith, live out their moral life in the context of that supreme collective, the family.

Over against such a privatisation, Eagleton, like others on the Christian Left, refuses to break the link between Christ as exemplar and as political figure, and so the exemplary dimensions of Jesus' life and death become those of an asceticism that symbolises a better world, that stands against a socio-economic evil with ontological depth, that offers a radical transformation, a *metanoia* that is as political as it is personal, in which confession, repentance and forgiveness are political and collective acts rather than purely private ones. With the weight so heavily on the exemplary political leader, Eagleton's christology ends up being one with a strong moral code, a political ethics that shows up how Catholic, how Roman Catholic he still is: "The Judaeo-Christian tradition plucks an ethico-political meaning from the cyclical cult of sacrifice and seasonal round of fertility. . . . The natural now becomes a metaphor for the ethical and historical" (Eagleton 2003b: 287).

The Problem of the Personality Cult

In itself there is nothing particularly wrong with Eagleton's focus on certain christological metaphors in order to recover Jesus as a political model or exemplar, apart from the fact that he would like to base such a christology on the historical Jesus. I do, however, have much deeper misgivings about the need for a redeemer figure at all, a mediator that becomes the model for our own political activity. And that problem is one that has bedevilled the Left in terms of the personality cult.

Political paradigm, moral exemplar, executed political criminal, forerunner to a better world -- even in these terms, Jesus is still a redeemer figure for Eagleton. But the problem with redeemer figures is that embarrassing question of the personality cult. Fidel Castro, Lenin, Che Guavara, Mao Zedong, Stalin, Trotsky, Rosa Luxemburg, Emma Goldman, and of course Marx himself, no matter how much part of the collective struggle or effort to establish "actually existing socialism," have ended up iconic figures, sources of hope and targets of vilification. It is not that the personality cult is endemic only to the Left, but Eagleton's christology brings to the surface this crucial problem at another level. Here I want to draw on Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* to explicate this hunch that christology and the personality cult are entwined with each other.

Boldly put, the dialectic of christology enables the personality cult: only through the logic of the God-human, that is Christ, does it become possible to raise another human being to divine status. In other words, precisely because God becomes a human being in Jesus Christ (if we push the divinity far enough we end up with the very human Christ and vice versa), can a human being become god -- not just Christ, but any human being. I will need to spin this out somewhat, especially in the context of the anti-Semitism section of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Adorno 1999).

The role of Judaism would have to be one of the most enigmatic dimensions of Adorno's work, closely tied up with the ethical, metaphysical and even autobiographical absolute of Auschwitz in his later texts. Of course the Jews, along with women and nature, are the necessary underside of a Christian Europe, and it is the anti-Semitism chapter in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* that indicates the central place of the Jews in Adorno's thought. The chapter itself runs through a number of angles in a search for the reasons and nature of anti-Semitism: class analysis in which anti-Semitism is an inseparable feature of bourgeois class identity where "today race is the self-assertion of the bourgeois individual integrated within a barbaric collective" (Adorno 1999: 169; translation modified); a ritual outlet of hatred whose mark is blindness and lack of purpose; an economic argument in terms of the concealment of bourgeois domination of

production by scapegoating the Jews; a psychoanalytic analysis which sees anti-Semitism as a rationalised idiosyncrasy that cannot face its own mimesis of all that is hated in the Jews, and which argues that anti-Semitism is a false projection and the "morbid expression of repressed mimesis" -- "If mimesis imitates the environment, then projection makes the environment like itself" (Adorno 1999: 187; translation modified) -- as well as the expression of paranoia; and the final argument that under the modern capitalist state in which the individual is absorbed into the machinery of production, anti-Semitism becomes not an individual position but a plank in the platform of bourgeois politics. In light of the subsequent development of psychoanalytic theory, these early efforts to understand anti-Semitism by means of a creative encounter between psychoanalytic and Marxist terms look decidedly preliminary. Lacan's constitutive exception would become a much more fruitful way of dealing with anti-Semitism in the hands of Zizek. Yet if we project backwards we can see this in the work of Horkheimer and Adorno: in their theological analysis, the image of the Jew becomes the ever-present outsider, the one who is the necessary reject that enables bourgeois capitalism to function.

Out of all of these items I am of course most interested in the theological analysis. Despite the waning of religious zeal in persecuting the Jews -- the motive for almost two millennia -- and the consequent playing down of religious dimensions for fascist anti-Semitism, Adorno and Horkheimer argue that the vehemence of the denial of religious tradition is one protest too many. Here they make use of a very similar argument to the one Adorno elaborates in his criticism of secularised theology in *The Jargon of Authenticity* (Adorno 1973): anti-Semitism sublates theological factors in favour of cultural ones, but this renders those ideas and positions even more pernicious than when they were more overt. With only the external forms of religion left, with the old authority structures of theology discarded and the truth of religious claims now forlorn, the longing for a better life is transformed into nationalistic fervour, religious fanaticism finds expression in blood, soil and patriotism, and the hatred of unbelievers is unabated: "Anti-Semitism is all that the German Christians have retained of the religion of love" (Adorno 1999: 176).[11]

In the very differences between Christianity and Judaism -- differences that breed hatred of the Father by the followers of the Son -- lie the theological roots of anti-Semitism. The paradox is that although Christianity, in New Testament and Reformation terms that were so influential in Lutheran Germany, marks a shift from the law to a grace that was inherent in the Hebrew covenant, replacing a religion of sin and guilt, of abstract horror and duty, with one of love, it is precisely in Christianity that idolatry comes back with renewed force. And this is where christology becomes the culprit, particularly in its early formulation at the intersection of Hebrew and Greek thought.

To begin with, christology is the "pretense on the part of the finite" (Adorno 1999: 177), the elevation of the tangible, fleshly human Christ to divine status. In Christ, the worship of a human figure receives religious sanction. But this is only the surface of the problem, the first and most obvious step, for the more dialectical point is one that comes straight out of christology itself: to the same degree that the absolute is humanised, so other human figures may be deified like Christ. What we have here is an inverse ratio: only through the humanisation of the divine in Christ does it become possible to divinise other human beings -- dictators, despots, pop-stars and sundry megalomaniacs. The deep dialectic of christology gives us the logic of the personality cult, for only when Christ is most completely God -- as one of the trinity, dwelling in heaven, an all-powerful creator, omniscient, the source of love and so on -- only then does his humanity push its way through all the theological categories, through all of the attributes of God, and claim its presence. So also with his divinity: when the humanity of Christ is dragged to the

remotest and most inaccessible point, when it can travel no further and is nature in all of its senses, then the divinity of Christ begins to show up, finally and way past its last deadline. The first step enables the second, which is where the personality cult picks up the dialectical swing, for only as a human being can Christ become God, which then sets up the possibility for anyone else. The finite stands in for the infinite, the lie for truth, the illusion for knowledge. The dialectic is vicious: only as God could Jesus become a human being, and only as a complete human being can he be God. Thus, in christology itself, the more Christ is humanised, the more he becomes a god, that is, an idol: so also with any other human being.

Let me return now to Eagleton: the absence of traditional christological doctrines such as the two natures of Christ or Trinitarian ponderings pushes his christology of the executed political criminal inexorably into the dialectical logic of the argument of Adorno and Horkheimer. The political Jesus, exemplar of a revolutionary ethics, whose asceticism, healing of the sick and self-denial of the martyr we can follow as fundamental criticisms of this world and symbols of the world to come, is nothing other than the very human Jesus -- hence the need for a historical Jesus, for observations that he "would no doubt have shared the mythological opinion of his age that suffering could be the work of evil spirits" (Eagleton 2003b: 34), for comments on the limits that indicate his humanity. And so it seems that in the act of putting before us a human, political Jesus, Eagleton unwittingly divinises him all the more. For it is through the most human of his traits that he becomes God. The same logic applies to his reading of the truly tragic nature of Christ's death and resurrection. As I noted earlier, Eagleton makes the perfectly orthodox theological point that Christ's death can only be redemptive if he plumbed the depths of despair, turned out to be an abject failure whose mission had come to naught. Only as fully human can he be divine, only as fully abandoned on the cross can redemption take place. According to the logic that Adorno and Horkheimer identify at the heart of traditional christological deliberations, Eagleton could not have taken a better path to rendering Christ an idol. Far more effective that trotting out arguments for the divinity of Christ, the son of God, an equal but distinct person of the Trinity. As long as he is locked into his resolutely christological reflections, this particular doctrinal history will come back to haunt him.

Implicit in the argument of Adorno and Horkheimer is the point that the roots, the initial moment of a logic that would return time and again, of the personality cult lie squarely with the christological reflections of the early Church. And all Eagleton has done is provide us with an excellent example of the workings of that logic. His passion for christology and the inherent problem of idolatry, then, lays bare the Left's proclivity to redeemer figures and the cult of the personality.

Conclusion

In his search to find an answer for the Left's tragic narrative of continual defeat and disarray (something Eagleton invokes time and again), Eagleton finally slips back into the Roman Catholic theology that sustained him in his youth, albeit without the heavy emphasis on sacrament, eucharist and priesthood that we find in his early writings. But why theology, however secular it might now be for Eagleton, and why in particular a full-blown christology that focuses on the suffering and revolutionary figure whom we should imitate? One answer may be the increasing role that religion is playing in the geo-politics of a postmodern, neo-imperial world. With a range of fundamentalisms claiming political clout, the stakes over religion have in fact become much higher, and Eagleton is not about to give up that ground. Another answer may in fact be that Eagleton is still searching for the most deeply emotive narratives and myths available, and for him these

happen to be Christian myths. He would not shy away from the oft-repeated point that Marxism is in fact a form of secularized eschatology: instead, he wants to exploit this element to the full, and to the benefit of Marxism.

For some, this is nothing other than a return to mystification, a dangerous recourse to religion when nothing else will do. And in many respects I agree, especially with the content of Eagleton's recovery, namely christology and its close attendant, the personality cult. But does that mean we should resist the turn to theology that has captured the likes of Eagleton, Zizek, Badiou, Agamben and others? Not quite. Rather than reiterate the problems with Eagleton's effort, let me suggest two, not necessarily exclusive, ways that the long and complex tradition of theology may re-enter debates on the Left. To begin with, theology has become for so many a resource for political reflection, for insights at a time of profound self-examination. But what happens if we go in the other direction, from politics to theology? Yet, this is not merely a reversal, which may manifest itself in identifying the whiff of the theological corpse under Marxist beds, of seeking to expunge the last vestiges of such theological thinking, attributing it to a certain immaturity of thought in the Marxist tradition, or, conversely, of arguing for the inescapable theological core of such social theory or philosophy. My preferred approach is to take up Adorno's strategy and seek the possibility of pushing the move from theology to politics to its dialectical extreme. In this respect, one can engage with theology only through such a move. Or, to gloss Marx, a fully materialist theology can emerge once the process from the criticism of heaven to the criticism of earth, from politics to theology has run its course. But all of this assumes the prior status of theology itself. So here I want to invoke the second way in which theology may become a conversation partner: rather than deal with the problem of how we are to negotiate the theological history of terms now used in political context, might it not be the case that the theological filling of these terms is but a temporary moment. What I mean here is that the terms themselves may in fact have a deeper, non-theological meaning. Theology then becomes a moment in their history, one that does not necessarily claim priority.

Notes

1 I write "return" here quite deliberately, for in what follows I track back and forth between his earlier theological writings and the later recovery of many themes from those texts.

2 One other example: "Socialism . . . is the drive to integrate the global communication which capitalism historically opened up with the sensuous concrete life it needed to negate. Its final significance for the christian thus centres on Christ: on the universal word made animal" (Eagleton 1970: 22).

3 See an earlier version of this argument in *The New Left Church* (Eagleton 1966: 73-84).

4 And this is a pared down list: see the original article he plundered for the first chapter of *The Body as Language*, where we find Ernst Cassirer, Lévi-Strauss, Sartre and others in an intense effort to include just about everybody who counted along with some who didn't (Eagleton 1968b).

5 Here is another: "The liturgy, then, is a political force -- a force constantly working to transform human society into its own, communal image" (Cunningham 1966: 13).

6 "Marriage, of course, is traditionally connected with the imagery of banquet, dance and eucharist because it represents a free communication of *bodies* richly expressive of a fully *personal* community. In this sense it symbolises the transcendence of the estrangements discussed in this book" (Eagleton 1970: 109).

7 "A class must be formed within human society which is the dissolution of all classes, a sphere of society which has a universal character because its sufferings are universal, and which does not claim a *particular redress* because the wrong which is done to it is not a *particular* wrong but wrong in general" (Marx 1963: 58). In *The Body as Language* he quotes the first part of the sentence, in *Sweet Violence* the whole thing, minus "within human society."

8 A major focus of the "Politics and the Sacred" chapter from *The Body as Language*, namely Brian Wicker's *Culture and Theology* (Wicker 1966), has been carefully excised from *Sweet Violence.*

9 Although he favours Paul's letter to the Romans elsewhere, he does not specify which letters of Paul -- the seven letters of New Testament criticism (Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, 1 Thessalonians and Philemon) or the thirteen of the canon and the Church.

10 Eagleton lists it as Hebrew 9:11, but his quotation comes from verse 12: "he entered once for all the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood." Curiously, Eagleton adds "[of sacrifice]" after "Holy Place," when the text seems to be referring to both to the Holy of Holies in the temple and the metaphorical holy place of heaven.

11 So also: 'The New Testament words, 'He who is not for me is against me,' lay bare the heart of anti-Semitism down the centuries" (Adorno 1984: 131).

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