The collected works of Beaumont and Fletcher published in 1647 and dedicated to the surviving recipient of the dedication to the Shakespeare First Folio (the Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery), is signed by ten members of the former King’s Men.7 It can hardly be supposed that all ten were responsible for drafting the epistle and it is made clear by the publisher, Humphrey Moseley, that every aspect of the compilation of the volume had been his responsibility. The similarities with Blount’s role in relation to the collection and publication of Lyly’s work in 1632 is striking, and the two projects may cast light backwards upon the process by which the First Folio came into being. Blount had dedicated his own translation of Ars Aulica to the Herbert brothers in 1607, and Gerardo, the Unfortunat Spaniard, issued from his shop in the year before the First Folio was published, is dedicated (by Digges) to the same patrons. Accustomed to furnishing prefatory material to his own volumes and experienced in the art of presenting literary ventures to the great, Blount may well have appeared to the First Folio syndicate to be the obvious person to act as the players’ representative, the discrepancies between the styles of the two prefatory epistles suggesting that while Jonson was responsible for commending the work to the reading public, it was Blount who shouldered the task of recommending the volume to its patrons. In short, seen in conjunction with the dedication to Hero and Leander, the little duodecimo collection of Lyly’s plays that constitutes Blount’s final endeavour to preserve the products of the Elizabethan-Jacobean stage, may well add to our understanding of the process by which the syndicate fronted by Heminge and Condell ‘sought to keep the memory of so worthy a friend and fellow alive’.

Note 7
See Gere, The Shakespeare First Folios, 10.

CROSSING THE DIVIDE, DIVIDING THE CROSS:
RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR CULTURES IN
SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE

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The concept of a secular culture in pre-Enlightenment Christian societies poses a problem of definition, or quite simply poses a problem. Some form of secular culture, we know, has always existed. We can easily identify values, literary and artistic forms, which are particular to ‘non-religious’ culture, to a life with its own demands, pressures and influences, separate from the world of the Church. But we have to ask ourselves to what extent, in a society characterized by belief in a Christian framework, where belief provides society at large with its ultimate rationale, it is possible to isolate a truly secular culture. In seventeenth-century France, we are quite far from a situation where the world of unbelief, or a world of alternative beliefs or theories, such as they existed, were in any way able to mount a serious challenge to the espousal of religious values as the basis of a world view. At the same time, if we do accept a non-religious culture of some sort, what are the limits of its definition as secular? We should not, however, be tempted to envisage secular culture against the background of a monolithic and universally accepted religious culture. Difficulties of definition are not one-sided. Was there universal agreement within the Church on what properly constituted Christian values? Could the Church ever be certain of excluding the values of a world in which it had to operate? This is especially true if an important part of the global culture includes elements of a pre-Christian culture.

* This article is a slightly amended version of my inaugural lecture delivered on 25 January 1996, in the presence of the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Martin Harris C.B.E., which in itself inaugurated the celebrations marking the centenary of the creation of the Chair of French at Owens College.
A number of the issues I refer to in the pages that follow are more fully discussed in my Church and culture in seventeenth-century France (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
In this context jurisdiction becomes a crucial issue. Who regulates these cultures? Obviously the Church is empowered through its own agencies to control its own domain, even if, in the course of the seventeenth century, the State sometimes lent a helping hand. In general terms, the Church's measure of regulation was, and remains, a definition of orthodoxy. The Church's success in imposing a strict definition of orthodoxy was uneven, especially in view of differences which emerged within the Church over the exact nature of that orthodoxy. It is perhaps more crucial to ask whether the Church could lay any claim at all to control over secular culture, and if it could not, what the consequences were for the Church as an institution.

From within the secular culture, the question of jurisdiction is more difficult to assess. Certainly attempts were made to establish literary and artistic orthodoxies in seventeenth-century France. But overstepping the boundaries of literary and artistic orthodoxies could never entail the same consequences as religious heterodoxy, although Richelieu and Louis XIV came as close as they could to a sort of lay ecclesiastical. A playwright who did not keep strictly to the so-called rules of Aristotelian poetics could not be regarded as someone likely to destroy the social and political edifice. In the case of literary texts, the censorship laws mentioned heresy and libel before loose morals.

Another question arises here. How does the world not in the immediate space of the Church - known in French as 'le monde' with its attendant adjective 'mondain' - define itself, and who defines it? As far as secular culture is concerned, it is not really until the eighteenth century that the world outside the Church brought open dissent into the mainstream of the global culture and began consciously to define itself against the religious world view as represented by the Church. It is worth repeating that, except in the margins, no significant space or grouping of seventeenth-century France defined itself in this way. On the other hand it must be the case that the Church defined itself against the world, certain sections of it with more vehemence and vigour than others. The central teaching of Christian culture must be that a world exists beyond the world we inhabit in the here and now, a world which is superior to it in every respect. Ours is, moreover, a fallen world where, with varying emphases according to one's position on the theological spectrum, man is powerless amid the world, of necessity, lacks autonomy and self-sufficiency. It is a world which requires saving, and saving from itself.

It could be argued that, while few in the seventeenth century in France saw themselves outside the Church, the real question would always be how the Church could cope with the secular world rather than the reverse. And the negative definition of the world turned out consistently to be an awkward part of the answer. Was the consequence of this negative definition of the world that the Church had to exclude itself from the culture which emanated from it? Some took the radical view that it did. Others espoused the contrary view that the distinction between what constituted the Church and what constituted the world could not exclude action in the world, and for that reason they proposed a measure of participation in it. But, precisely, significant differences emerged over the means of dealing with the world. The extent to which the Church crossed the divide between the two cultures was productive of division. Crossing the divide led to dividing the cross.

I wish then to explore here the relation between religious and secular cultures at a key moment for them both in the seventeenth century. Three things must be made clear from the start. First, the subject of discussion is exclusively France. Secondly, I intend for the most part to concentrate on the culture of the social élites. Although popular culture is not absent from what follows, there are interesting differences between the relation of the Church to popular and élite cultures which it is timely to address. Finally, the principal, but not exclusive, emphasis will be on the direction of the religious to the secular.

How, then, is it possible to characterize the specificity of seventeenth-century France in respect of these two cultures? Interestingly, the emergent dynamics of each can be represented by two significant events close in time, the publication in 1699 of the Introduction à la vie éconive, a new form of devotional work written by St François de Sales, and the appearance of the first part of the singularly influential novel, L'Asée, by Honoré d'Urfé in 1607. These two texts in fact allow us to reflect on some points at which the two cultures converge. Each of these texts was born out of a relationship with women, whose contribution to religious and secular cultures was enormous in the course of the century as a whole. The work of St François was the result of his contact with worldly circles through Jeanne de Chantal, for whom St François acted as spiritual adviser. Jeanne de Chantal eventually retired from the world to found a religious order for women (the Visitandines). L'Asée explored and set the tone for feminine influence in a whole range of relations between men and women in society. More generally, what made these women so potent as representatives of religious and secular cultures was that they benefited from the enormous advances made in the printing,
publishing and bookselling industries. The printed word was marketed and available in ways unthought of in previous periods. The ability of the two cultures to reach their respective audiences, among the social elites as well as the lower strata of the urban and rural populations, gave to the seventeenth century a special place in the history of each.

What features can we associate in particular with secular culture in the seventeenth century? To begin with, the secular culture managed to create a powerful and seemingly autonomous space of dissemination and interchange which, while it was not populated exclusively by lay persons, was certainly organized by them according to their own agenda. The emergence of the world of the salons, almost entirely under the aegis of society women, was at one and the same time a consequence of the reconstitution and advancement of public life in a time of peace and relative stability after the turmoil of the wars of religion. The agenda of the secular culture included the discussion and promotion of a certain type of civility, and explored human relations particularly in the domain of profane love, over which the Church could never claim, or never wished to claim, any sort of ownership. The relationship between the demands of civility and profane love, frequently associated with aristocratic ideals, remained strong throughout the century. The most notable form of the ethos of civility—was the promotion of the ‘honnête homme’ and ‘honnêteté’ from which, for the Chevalier de Méré, one of its foremost theorists, religion was not excluded but to which religion was not central.

The advancement of secular culture was aided and abetted by the State in the form of patronage and the formation of academies which, while they lacked any strong form of regulatory powers, none the less set the tone for an officially consecrated culture in the domains of art and literature, and later, in a sense, for science. The tasks set for the Académie française were, among other things, the production of a poetics, rhetoric and a dictionary of the French language. For Vaugelas, author of the celebrated Remarques sur la langue française, the Court offered the best model of usage. Indeed, the Court of Louis XIV took the etiquette and demands of civil society to their highest point in the century, with the King as the greatest impresario of secular forms of culture either before or since, and with the King’s pleasure, at the Louvre and later at Versailles, constituting almost a unique focus.

Perhaps the most symbolic form in the progress of secular culture in our period is theatre, and that symbolism was materially realized in the shape of, remarkably, the only building in seven-
teenth-century Paris originally built for the purposes of performance, the Hôtel de Bourgogne. (Theatres were usually either converted tennis courts or rooms in other buildings, most notably palaces, adapted as auditoria.) The Hôtel was built by the Compagnie de la Passion in the sixteenth century for the performance of the religious repertoire, such an important feature of the theatre of the Middle Ages. In the seventeenth century, it became the first, permanently established theatre for a repertoire of predominantly secular inspiration. Actors and playwrights, Molière representing both professions, were among the foremost cultural servants of the State from the beginning to the end of our period.

What could be the place of a religious culture in the context of such a renewed and flourishing secular counterpart? One answer emerged of course, from the renewed impetus given to the Church by the growing influence in seventeenth-century France of the Counter-Reformation, or, as we more properly know this movement in its entirety, the Catholic Reform. The two central directions given to the Church at the Council of Trent, which sat from 1548 to 1563, were doctrinal and institutional. The Church needed to know, and to articulate precisely, what separated it from the reforming churches of Protestantism, and it needed to ensure that it could produce a clergy able both to disseminate and explain the true Catholic teaching. This, in its emphasis on education and example, implied the need to define a Catholic culture.

Was the Catholic Reform in France a success? Unquestionably the institution of the Church was very different at the end of the century from what it was at the beginning. As in the case of secular culture, the Church was able to profit from the period of internal peace following the eventually triumphant ascent of Henry IV to the throne in order to enhance its reinterpretation in seventeenth-century society. Although progress was slow and not unhampered by institutional divisions, like the problematic relationship of the parish and regular clergy which came to a head after Henry’s death, a serious attempt was made in the direction of reform, from priest to prelate. Not only was there a global improvement in the quality of the parish priest, aided by the albeit tardy and uneven establishment of seminaries, but the century witnessed an enormous growth in the establishment of new types of religious order, the building of new churches and the restoration of the old. This was also the period of great theological development with the shift in emphasis from so-called ‘rational’ theology to positive theology, that is to say a theology founded on Scripture and Tradition, and the great spiritual
systems of Cardinal Rémis, the founder of the French Oratory, and French Jansenism, both of which owe much to the renewal of the thought of St Augustine. Another powerful influence came from Jesuit theories of grace based on their less pessimistic view of man after the Fall. None of this was without controversy within and outside the Church. But the seventeenth century was also a period characterized by its saints, François de Sales, Vincent de Paul, and Jean-Baptiste de la Salle.

What is interesting about each of these men is the degree to which they took the Church into the world. None of them was a great contemplative. St François was heavily engaged in the reform of his diocese and wrote works of piety accessible to the educated but not specialist believers. St Vincent de Paul is noted for founding a missionary order, the Lazarists, and for his charitable work with prisoners and galleys slaves. De la Salle is famous for the establishment of a teaching order, the Brothers of the Christian Schools. But the relation of the Church with the world at the time of the Catholic Reform was founded in one perspective on a paradox. The first part of this paradox was that the Counter-Reformation and the Catholic Reform were movements of reformation and reconquest. This was so in very real terms in respect of the territory lost to Protestantism, but also in respect of what had been ceded to the world, especially to individual conscience and initiative in religious matters, what Ignatius of Loyola and others regarded as the excesses of Humanism and the Renaissance. Nor could the Church remain sanguine in the face of a developing secular culture promoting values centred on creatures in the first instance and which competed with values centred on the Creator. In a sense, then, the period of the Catholic Reform was a competition for souls. For example Bossuet, one of the great reforming bishops of the second half of the century, exhels in his Orationa funebres the "conversion" of such worldly figures as Henriette d'Angleterre, the daughter of Charles I of England, and Anne de Gonzague. In more general terms, the Catholic Reform aimed at nothing less than the wholesale occupation of social space. No activity was meant to escape the influence of the Church. But that meant being "attentive" to the world.

This leads us to the second part of the paradox I have referred to, the Church's attempts to impose a more rigorous definition of orthodoxy and, as a consequence, a more rigorous version of the sacred. This was directly to affect the cultures of the social elites as well as the culture of the lower social strata. The post-Tridentine version of the sacred involved the expulsion from it of all that smacked of the world. This meant the rooting out from popular culture of any form of deviant belief deriving from the immediate concerns of craftsmen and peasants, such as the "magic" properties of therapeutic saints, the expulsion and exclusion from the representations of saints of those aspects which were regarded as undignified, such as the cobblers' dresses and tools in the case of St Crispin, and prohibiting the church building from doubling as a barn or a bank in times of war. The Church was rescued from its communal usefulness. The symbol - and reality - of this separation of the sacred from the world of everyday concerns was the reaffirmation of the special quality attaching to the priesthood. One consequence of the Catholic Reform was that the priest had to distinguish himself radically from his flock in renouncing occupations associated with the world, and differentiate himself through the wearing of the cassock. The priest was in the world but not of it. This situation might be regarded therefore as creating a divide not to be crossed.

Ironically, a similar tension operated in the reform of lay organizations directly associated with the Church, a major feature of the Catholic Reform. In the course of the century certain types of lay society, often those concerned with trades or penitents, were discouraged in favor of lay organizations much more under the control of the reforming clergy. In addition, the Marian sodalities, created by the Jesuits, promoted the exemplary behaviour of individuals, which was in turn intended to play a crucial part in implanting religious values at all levels of civil society. The most famous of the societies which included laymen was the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement. They not only mounted attacks against Molière's plays, or encouraged denunciation of butchers selling meat on Fridays, but also promoted a lay sense of spiritual vocation. There was, however, no way in which the laity in these organizations were ever given any sense of setting their own agenda, despite the attempts on the part of some to come as close to the priesthood as it was possible for a lay person to be. The idea of a receiving rather than a creative laity, the latter sensed as something of a danger, was also at the root of the immense discouragement from the faithful's participation in the liturgy in the vernacular rather than Latin, interestingly encouraged by the 'Jansenists, the status of whose 'solitaires' hovered between the lay and the priesthood.

The wider problem remained: how to reach the inactive laity, at best presumed not to be against religious values (but not seen to be working for them either), and, at worst, tempted to embrace wholeheartedly and exclusively secular values and thus more difficult subsequently to retrieve for the faith? It was clear to some that the head-on and sometimes crude assault on popular values and
beliefs would not work with a more sophisticated public. This distinction of approach is in fact a testament to the strength of the secular culture among the social elites of our period. The world required negotiation, not warfare. But it was precisely the nature of this negotiation which posed the problem, a negotiation whose terms were not free from controversy, nor for some in the Church free of cost. A whole range of attitudes was possible from outright opposition to the nature of secular culture to a very dangerous fluctuation with it. In a sense, the Church not only competed with the secular culture for souls, but sections of the reforming Church competed with each other for souls in the way they regarded the domain of culture. What follows is an attempt to outline in broad terms the two directions that a confrontation of the religious and secular cultures could take in our period. In this confrontation, it was inevitable that the risks would be great, but the stakes were also high.

In this context St François de Sales was at one and the same time an inspiration and a problem. He provided a new model for the relationship with the individual believer (the personally catechized children, something unusual for a prelate of his status), addressing the reader in his *Introduction à la vie devoute* as ‘mon cher lecteur’, and providing a strongly articulated view on the compatibility of religion or devotion with life in the world. St François offered each member of society, of whatever rank or station, a religious life tailored to his or her situation. The form of devotion appropriate to an archbishop was different from that of a woman in society, and that was different again from the religious life of a servant. The significance of this presentation of religion was that, so long as certain rules were followed, activities in society could not only be pursued without anxiety but, indeed, could even be sanctified. It seemed as if the contemplative religious life was now only spatially, but not spiritually, different from other sorts of Christian life, and we know that St François did not endorse monastic vows with the qualifications with which they were previously associated. But the position adopted by St François was also considered problematic. Some believed that he allowed too much to the world, especially in what could be construed as too lenient advice on dancing and theatre-going, that he permitted an accommodation detrimental to a Church which should be seeking to bring the world to religion, not the reverse. They were concerned that religion was not being brought to the world on its own terms, in other words, that the secular world was setting the agenda.

No case was more crucial to the relation of the secular to the religious than that of the Jesuits. The Society of Jesus, re-admitted to France in the beginning of the century, was a militant organization devoted to penetrating society at all levels in order to defend the cause of Catholicism and extending its boundaries. It seemed the perfect example of the more mobile Church required by the demands of the Catholic Reform in reaching out to all levels of society and all sectors of social life. The degree of the Society’s penetration and its manner raise both the issue of crossing the divide and dividing the cross. Marc Fumaroli has described how, geographically, the Jesuits implanted themselves in Paris close to the centre of power, at the same time socially – they often became confessors and spiritual directors of the high born living in the fashionable parts of Paris – and, institutionally, by establishing the Collège de Clermont at the heart of the University of Paris, in such visible rivalry to the schools run by the Sorbonne. Indeed the Jesuits’ educational initiatives constituted the most important means of their influence in French social life, not only during the time their pupils spent with them, but later in their participation in religious societies, both open and secret, lay and clerical. The Jesuits also contributed greatly and courageously to the missionary activities of the Church, as much in the rural areas of France, some of which were regarded as unchristianized, as abroad.

The most celebrated and notorious of the Jesuit missions was the one to China, and it provides an example which we can read back into the relation of the Society to French secular culture, of how their critics saw them as penetrating the world at all costs. The central problem revolved around the exact nature of Confucianism which many theologians deemed to be atheistic. The Jesuits had allowed certain elements of Confucianism to be included in what became known as the Chinese rites, thus allowing for the accusation that the Jesuits had accommodated Catholicism to a culture which was profoundly un-Christian rather than converting the Chinese to orthodox Christianity. The Society’s opponents in France claimed that even if their moral teaching contained too much of a compromise with an already compromised believer, giving the sinner the benefit of the doubt when none was due. This view is encapsulated in Pascal’s *Provinciales*, an unyielding defence of Jansenist spirituality, but not always accurate or just in their condemnation of the Jesuits’ so-called laxism. The Society’s enemies saw further proof of this laxism in its ‘soft’ approach to the sort of grace necessary for salvation, the notorious Molinism, also pilloried by Pascal.

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The word 'agenda' has been used on a number of occasions so far. The concept of an agenda set in a space outside that of the Church surfaces again in attitudes to the place in a religious culture of elements of pre-Christian culture, the culture of classical Antiquity. The value of classical literature was all the more controversial in that it also found itself at the centre of the educational strategy of the Jesuits and formed part of the curriculum of schools under the aegis of other agencies of the Church. From one point of view, the ancient thinkers and poets approached matters and problems which remained of interest, and which still required resolution. Why jettison such a rich repository of philosophic and human truths which were eternal in their relevance to humanity? As long as the ancient poets and philosophers were read through the truths of the faith, their paganism yielded to religion. An important residue could then be assimilated into a properly Christian culture. What was at hand was the Christianization of thought and literary forms, the Christianization of a culturally familiar world. What better strategy could be adopted in converting the world, in changing the direction of worldly culture? It is, however, curious that in the Christianization of the culture of the social elites, elements of a pre-Christian culture were tolerated far more and for longer than in its popular counterpart. What was on the other hand for some the appropriation of the forms of secular culture (even of the novel) in a Christian design was for others reappropriation in that they regarded ancient myth as a debased and displaced version of biblical sources.

The issue, then, turned on what constituted a properly Christian culture. The most striking thing about the literature and art of our period is the all-pervasiveness of classical sources which provided an important fund of argument and ornamentation. Surely, it is here, in the origins of theatre in idolatry, in the mythical explanations given to the world, in the naked expression of passion, in the presentation of a divine world characterized by moral arbitrariness and human weakness, that we encounter the world at its worst? The negative definition of the world I have alluded to earlier included therefore the possibility of describing the culture of the world as pagan, and that is precisely how it came to be described by some representatives of the Church and their lay allies in the course of the century.

The accusation of paganism by association was not without its difficulties. The literature of classical Antiquity was an important and indelible part of the culture of the Fathers of the Church, whose example and doctrine have been so crucial to the tradition of Catholic teaching throughout the history of the Church. Those anxious to save classical literary forms were not slow to point to those of the Fathers who wrote poetry or drama. St Augustine regarded Plato as the most Christian of the ancient philosophers. And the place of Aristotle in a whole range of fields is represented by the great synthesis of Aristotelianism and Christian thought elaborated by St Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century.

From another point of view, however, the world of paganism was to be rejected as the purveyor of all that was wrong in secular culture. This was especially so if, as many religious moralists and preachers would have it in their more strictly moral condemnation of secular culture, the world was full of false pleasures. The true pleasures were not to be found in the world or this world. The culture of the world perpetuated and encouraged harmful and sinful indulgence, and could not be left to its own devices. The Christian religion was offended by the importation of pagan values into a Christian world supposed to have superseded them. On this basis, a new literalism imposed itself in art where attempts were made to purify the pictorial space, where the use of pagan gods as ornamentation or allegory in sacred subjects was condemned outright. Heroic poetry became at one point the arena for debate, when writers and commentators asserted that only Christian subjects, historical or biblical, could truly convince the true believer. Religious moralists of rigorist persuasion complained that pagan literary forms, theatre above all, still bore the marks of their origin, and that the virtues of pagans; not blessed with the gift of grace were without virtue. Stoicism eventually became the victim of theologians of all persuasions.

But the weight of a cultural heritage was against the rigorists. Artists and writers resisted vehemently any attempt to circumscribe or censor the tools of their trade. They did not think that the use of pagan imagery properly handled and respectfully intended in any way diminished adherence to the faith. They argued that the modern Christian could never and was simply not disposed to read backwards. The classical heritage was in any case deeply ingrained in many men of the Church. Bossuet held for example that the work of Homer could be an inspiration in the domain of civic virtue. The world and the Church in fact shared a culture which in many ways facilitated the movement between the religious and secular domains which the centrality of a humanist education in the colleges both drew on and perpetuated.

This is not to say that elements of a religious culture were absent in attempts to create what might be called a responsible secular culture. How could this be otherwise, when a Prince of the Church,
Richelieu, seemed to have such a stake in it? How indeed can we cope with a figure who took an interest in the reform of the religious orders and the Faculty of Theology of the University of Paris, who was one of the few theologians trained by his time, who built the chapel of the Sorbonne, yet who, in 1641, the year before the theatres were ordered to close in England, built a theatre in his palace at the Palais-Royal, at the opening of which bishops acted as ushers, who commissioned plays and paintings of bacchanalia, and who, also in 1641, formulated an edict, promulgated by the king, absolving actors from the charge of infamy?

The remarkable thing is that Richelieu skillfully steered his course for himself between the rigorous and the liberal in order to construct a secular culture which acted as a civilizing influence on an unruly ‘warrior’ aristocracy, yet which evinced a serious attitude towards cultural forms and their effects. The history of these developments has been brilliantly charted by Marc Fumaroli who argues that the relationship of the religious and secular cultures resided in issues of language. He identifies an opposition between the ponderous and imposing erudition of the legal and parliamentary milieu, which held to a narrow historical definition of the Christian tradition, to the gallican rejection of Roman interference in the State and the Church of France, and to an austere form of morality, and the more immediately attractive, eclectic, and modernizing culture of the Jesuits which, in its emphasis on the teaching of rhetoric, encouraged action in the wider world. It was a world of the voice rather than the library.

The sort of cultural world Richelieu wished to construct would combine both elements, the ‘openess’ of the Jesuit vision — some would of course have said ‘too open’ — and the gravity of the world of erudition. The Cardinal perceived the importance of a new type of language which would appeal to the non-Latinized elites who did not on the whole pass through much formal education of a humanist sort, but which would at the same time be controlled by the ‘doctes’, the learned. Hence the establishment of the Académie française and the influence of individuals like Chapelain, literary theorist, failed poet and state functionary, who ensured the link between these two cultural worlds. Hence the importance placed in the century as a whole on literature as a medium of moral instruction. Hence the intervention by Richelieu in the dispute over Le Cid, reckoned by some to be purveying the wrong sort of pleasure through a subject of dubious nature. Fumaroli argues even that Louis XIV, a monarch we associate with the promotion of very worldly pleasures indeed, continued this process in seeking to integrate the Christian simplicity represented by Port-Royal and the gallican milieu with a peculiarly French form of classicism. Here, then, we have a counterthrust to the initiatives of the Catholic Reform in France. Whereas there the religious culture aimed to absorb the secular culture, we are confronted in this instance with the reverse. Elements of the Church helped in the construction of a cultural gallicanism.

All these alliances, oppositions and tensions were replicated in even more complex fashion in the domain of ideas where divisions derived on the one hand from a confrontation of the two great intellectual traditions of the period, Thomism/Aristotelianism and Augustinianism. While St Thomas frequently referred to St Augustine as an unimpeachable source, there were enough significant differences between them in their respective philosophical positions, inherited by the Grand Siècle, to have led to what must be regarded as one of the most damaging confrontations within European Christendom.

Essentially, but not exclusively, the confrontation focused on the new philosophical system of Descartes and the development of his ideas in the course of the century, although what was at stake was the new science as a whole, which rejected the authority of Aristotle and the intellectual pillars of his system relayed and enshrined in the work of St Thomas. Crucially the principles of Thomistic Aristotelian science, turned resolutely towards the physical universe, could not be divorced from particular explanations of matters of faith, most notably the process of the Eucharist, to which they were peculiarly suited. The essential principles of Thomism were undermined and overturned in the Cartesian system which rested much more on the importance of the inner contemplation of the mind advocated by St Augustine. The importance of these divisions was manifold. First, there was less agreement than ever on the best way intellectually to defend the faith, especially since Descartes sincerely believed that his system, to which proofs of God were essential, served Christianity as well as science. Unfortunately, Cartesian physics did not allow for, even denied the possibility in purely scientific terms of transubstantiation, as opposed to the more traditional account which did. But at the same time Cartesian physics did not contradict, and even reinforced, certain aspects of explanations of the physical world offered by Augustine. It was one thing attacking Descartes, quite another tarnishing the reputation of the most prestigious authority of the Church. We are thus presented with the spectacle of the Church tearing itself apart in a controversy which hit it the heart of tradition and doctrine. The Faculty of
Theology of the University of Paris and the Jesuits, in some ways an unholy alliance, were ranged against the adherents of Descartes, who included members of the Oratory, noted for a significant infusion of Augustinian spirituality, and some members of Port-Royal, the home of Jansenism and the most important and unconditional bastion of support for a radical form of Augustinianism. But even Port-Royal was split over Descartes. Arnauld, one of the finest polemical minds of the century, argued that Christianity would become a laughing stock, and its defence would become untenable if it hitched its wagon to Aristotelianism which was rapidly turning out to be a discredited philosophical and scientific system. Christianity would do well to take to its bosom Cartesianism, a modern philosophical system so much more in harmony with the thought of Augustine. Pascal saw it very differently. Descartes was taking the theology out of St Augustine in the name of philosophy and science, a philosophy and science moreover which he dispensed as promoting the dangerous possibility of the self-sufficiency of human reason. Instead of science serving religion, religion served science. Instead of science being read through St Augustine, St Augustine was being read through science.

There was a further problem in this relation of science to religion. While the pursuit of science was not seen in seventeenth-century France as necessarily a secular activity - such an idea would have made sense to neither Descartes nor Pascal, nor to any other thinker of the period - a split between the religious and the secular spaces did occur. The fact of the matter was that Thomist/Aristotelian science was the form of science officially sanctioned in the Faculty of Theology of the University of Paris and taught in the colleges of the Jesuits. Anyone found teaching contrary to acceptable scientific or philosophical theses could be severely sanctioned. Cartesianism had therefore no institutional framework within which it could function, apart from the colleges of the Oratorians, and they eventually experienced difficulties, often at the initiative of the Jesuits, and from their own Superiors, for their teaching of the new system. Unconditional opposition to Cartesianism had the effect of moving it into the secular world where it found a receptive audience, particularly among those who had received little or no schooling in the official spaces of education, notably aristocrats and women.

What conclusions is it possible to draw from this broad-brush account of the religious and secular cultures of seventeenth-century France? The first point to make is that, despite the aim of rechristianizing secular society and changing the direction of secular culture, and despite enormous success in implanting itself in the world, there is no evidence that the Church was any more in control of secular culture at the end of the century than at the beginning. Indeed, at a number of points, the Church managed to engender strong resistances, in both the popular and elite cultures of the period, resistances prompted by an attachment to deeply entrenched positions and traditions. The Church's promotion of culture was often perceived as going hand in hand with repression. These resistances were not necessarily, if at all, the product of anti-Christian attitudes. What was at stake was rather the ownership of the targeted culture. Artists, writers, craftsmen, and peasants were simply not prepared just to hand it over. In one sense, secular culture represented a neutral and not a hostile space. Hence the participation of many clerics, but particularly Jesuits, in the purely literary debates of the age. In another sense, this situation was brought about by those bent on Christianization through culturally familiar forms. Works of art and literature which did not directly address religious matters could be legitimized, as long as they did not in any way set themselves against religion. Secular culture and a secular agenda could survive in the belief that it was possible to inhabit each culture and defend the relative merits of the one without doing harm to, or reducing the value and importance of the other. For the rigorists, the neutrality of this ready-made secular habitat was ripe for indifferen
tism. A responsible secular culture, with whatever religious input there may have been, made matters even worse since it meant that the secular culture was meddling in the domain of moral teaching, which, given the sources of its values, it was singularly ill-equipped to do.

Structurally, the Church was in an impossible position. The influence of the Counter-Reformation and the Catholic Reform in France could only be diminished by the refusal of the French to enshrine the decrees of the Council of Trent in law. Decisions in respect of the Index of Forbidden Books in Rome were disregarded and at times positively flouted. The Church was gradually excluded altogether from a censorship regime which, by the last quarter of the century, was totally under lay control. The Church itself was never in any case a sufficiently unified force in respect of its attitude to secular culture, in the case of elite culture much less so than in the case of popular culture. In addition, those who advocated converting the world by means of the world's own culture thereby gave credence to it, but it was also a culture destined to have no future, since the forms and theories which were its foundation were soon to be regarded as ossified and obsolete. Important aspects of even the Cartesian system collapsed in the face of the Newtonian
REVELATION 13 AND THE PAPAL ANTICHRIST IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND: A STUDY IN NEW TESTAMENT EISEGESIS

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On 19 April 1993 the now infamous siege of the headquarters of the Branch Davidian cult in Waco, Texas, was brought to a fiery and dramatic close. As the dust settled and the smoke dispersed the horror of what had happened became clear. Not only had David Koresh, the self-styled prophet and leader of the movement, perished, but so too had some ninety of his followers. The count included a high number of children.

Scholars are only now beginning to probe into the reasons for the Waco tragedy and there is much work still to be done, especially in the area of the social-scientific study of this particular religious group. To any one involved in the study of the interpretation of the book of Revelation, however, the events in Waco are no less important, for the siege and its consequences provide a dramatic, if unwelcome, reminder of the extent to which the book of Revelation inspires, or at the very least is conducive to, acts of religious madness. To be sure Koresh did claim prophetic authority and was thereby able to make what he considered to be divinely inspired pronouncements. However, from documents and other sources that have so far become available it is clear that Koresh saw his primary task as interpretative. It was, he claimed, his God-given responsibil-

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1 The most readily available material is found in a collection of essays and documents edited by James Lewis (From the ashes, making sense of Waco (Lantham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1994)). However, the remarks made above are based more directly upon a collection of nine audio tapes, which record a series of Branch Davidian recruitment meetings held in Manchester, England in early 1996, and a series of primary documents and letters sent to me by one of the survivors of the Waco siege.