religions

MDPI

Article

The Persistence of Sacrifice as Self-Sacrifice and Its Contemporary Embodiment in the 9/11 Rescuers and COVID-19 Healthcare Professionals

Javier Gil-Gimeno * and Celso Sánchez Capdequí *

I-Communitas. Institute for Advanced Social Research, Public University of Navarra, 31006 Pamplona, Spain
* Correspondence: fcojavier.gil@unavarra.es (J.G.-G.); celso.sanchez@unavarra.es (C.S.C.)

Abstract: The aim of this paper is to analyze the persistence of sacrifice as self-sacrifice in contemporary societies. In order to reach this goal, firstly, we discuss how in the Axial Age (800–200 B.C.E.) an understanding of sacrifice as ritual worship or a ritual practice that involves the immolation of a victim became less prevalent and a new understanding of sacrifice emerges. This new notion of sacrifice focuses on individual relinquishment and gift exchange, that is, on a person sacrificing or relinquishing him/herself as a gift that is given in an exchange relationship for protecting a greater good (a god, a community, a person, a nation, and so on). Secondly, we analyze how this new sacrifice formula had an important impact on the understanding of sacrifice. Most notably, it led people to conceptualize sacrifice as a project or as something that persons could intentionally embrace. Thirdly, and as a result of the previous processes, we attend to the secularization of sacrifice, not in the sense of a de-sacralization of this phenomenon but in the way of sacralization of the mundane realm and mundane things, such as intentional self-sacrificial acts, in social contexts where there is religious pluralism. Insight into how the notion of sacrifice is secularized is found throughout the classic works of Marcel Mauss and Georg Simmel, and these works are discussed in section three. Fourthly, we study the sacredness of the person as a clear type of secular religiosity that develops self-sacrificial forms. Two of these self-sacrificial forms are the actions of 9/11 rescuers and COVID-19 healthcare professionals. A short analysis of both will serve us to illustrate how self-sacrifice is embodied in contemporary societies.

Keywords: sacrifice; sacredness of the person; self-sacrifice; exchange; gift; relinquishment; secular religiosity

Citation: Gil-Gimeno, Javier, and Celso Sánchez Capdequí. 2021. The Persistence of Sacrifice as Self-Sacrifice and Its Contemporary Embodiment in the 9/11 Rescuers and COVID-19 Healthcare Professionals. *Religions* 12: 323. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12050323

Academic Editor: Klaus Baumann

Received: 18 March 2021
Accepted: 29 April 2021
Published: 1 May 2021

> There is life when something is still also something else. There is death when something is only itself. A rigid tautology.
>
> **Roberto Calasso**

> Le sacrifice est l'homme.
>
> **Sylvain Lévi**

> [It] leads us after all to pose once more, in different forms, questions that are old but ever new.
>
> **Marcel Mauss**

1. Introduction

1.1. The Aim of the Paper

We start by pointing out that sacrifice has been a foundation in multiple and diverse forms in societies throughout history, and that sacrifice remains present in contemporary secular societies (Taylor 2007; Shilling and Mellor 2013). We adopt the premise that sacrifice can be considered an evolutionary universal. According to Paul Weiss. "Sacrifice occurs all the time" (Weiss 1949, p. 78). In this sense, sacrifice is studied here as a relevant experience

of social life that is found in contemporary times. It is considered a meaningful part of human culture (Lévi 1966).

Our analysis is focused on one form of sacrifice: self-sacrifice. First, we study the emergence of self-sacrifice in Axial Age societies. Since that time, violent immolatory ritual sacrifice has been much less prevalent, while peaceful non-violent self-sacrifice has become more prevalent and has become one of the primary forms of sacrifice in contemporary times, especially in modern, secular, and individualized societies. We also show how the development of self-sacrifice led to an important change in the nature of sacrifice. Specifically, there was a clear transition from sacrifice as immolation to relinquishment and a gift exchange relationship. At the same time, there was a progressive secularization of the sacred and of the sacrifice, not in the sense of a de-sacralization but in the way of sacralization of the mundane realm and mundane things. As we will observe, the coexistence between otherworldly and innerwordly religiosities generates a scenario of "many altars", that is to say, of religious pluralism (Berger 2014). After analyzing this, we introduce the concept of the sacredness of the person understood as a secular religiosity that manifests itself in self-sacrificial forms. Two of these self-sacrificial forms are the actions of 9/11 rescuers and COVID-19 healthcare professionals. A short analysis of both will illustrate how self-sacrifice is embodied in contemporary societies.

1.2. The Persistence of Sacrifice

Before delving into an analysis of the waning of the idea of ritual sacrifice and the beginning of the conception of self-sacrifice, there is a preliminary issue that must be addressed. There are some authors, such as Agamben (1998) or Dworkin (2011) who reject the idea of the persistence of sacrifice in modern and secular societies. For Agamben: "In modernity the principle of the sacredness of life is thus completely emancipated, for sacrificial ideology, and in our culture the meaning of the term "sacred" continues the semantic history of *homo sacer* and not that of sacrifice" (1998, pp. 67–68). We agree with him when he states that the sacred remains present in contemporary societies, but we differ in respect to sacrifice. If we pay attention to the etymologic definition of our research's object, we can observe the term "sacrifice" comes from the Latin word *sacrificium*, which means "to make sacred". In this way, if the sacred sphere remains present in modern societies, we think there must be some formulas that allow the sacred to take social forms. In this sense, sacrifice would be one of these basic formulas that allow societies to activate the different processes and mechanisms of sacralization. Sociologically speaking, we think the sacred sphere needs sacrifice (in this case, self-sacrifice) for taking social form as a vehicle or mediation between the sacred and the not sacred spheres.

In discussing the persistence of sacrificing in modern advanced societies, we think it is important to note that social and human sciences have approached the analysis of the sacrifice in many ways. Some of them focus on the violence unleashed in sacrificial actions, for example, the studies by Girard[1] (1977, 2012), Derrida (1998) or Bloch (1992, 2015). Others, such as those of Tylor (2010), Milbank (1996) and Evans-Pritchard (1956) or Levi-Strauss (1966) emphasise the necessary presence of the gift and of the immolation. Other authors had been focused on different aspects: the key presence of patrilineal institutions for understanding the question of sacrifice (Jay 1992), their link with nationalism (Strenski 2002), their analysis such as a political problem (Tava 2018), or the sacrificial role played by national flag (Marvin and Ingle 1999), and so on. The diversity of voices that have analyzed (and remain to analyze it yet) the sacrifice and the variety of conclusions these works have reached lead us to think that our research object has survived to the different social metamorphosis and, for this reason, remains still present in contemporary social life. *We start with the premise that sacrifice can be considered an evolutionary universal which is involved in the different social scenarios, acquiring multiple and diverse forms*. According to Paul Weiss. "Sacrifice occurs all the time" (Weiss 1949, p. 78). In this sense, sacrifice is studied here as a relevant experience of social life, also in our contemporary social life. It is considered a meaningful part of the human culture (Lévi 1966).

We contend that Donald's methodological approach involving the principle of the conservation of gains is a pertinent way of achieving this paper's goals. In two of his major publications (Donald 1991, 2012), Donald presents a model of evolution based on the assertion that "previous adaptations are preserved" (Donald 2012, p. 54), in line with the "principle of conservation of gains" (Donald 2012, p. 54). It can therefore be deduced that subsequent stages of the process of evolution do not entail the disappearance of gains or the characteristic features of previous stages, but rather a reconfiguration of those actual features and their modes and possibilities of both action and accessing meaning. Through this theory, Donald seems to be saying that once a social phenomenon appears on the social scene, and true to Lavoisier's principle of the conservation of matter, it tends to transform rather than be destroyed. Thus, earlier gains are not only an essential part of the genetic code of subsequent ones, but they can also survive the transition from one stage to another and articulate themselves via different "masks" (Sánchez Capdequí 2004), maintaining their right to struggle for a voice and for social recognition. Perhaps one of the biggest mistakes made by evolutionary theorists—including such prominent names as Comte (2009) and Spencer (2004), and even a neo-evolutionist like Parsons (2005)—has been to consider that only hegemonic representations are present at each stage of evolution. "Top or governing representations were thus not the only cognitive–cultural representations circulating in the human matrix as evolution moved forward; they were the ones with most influence at that stage" (Donald 2012, p. 54). In terms of our study, Donald's "principle of conservation of gains" has the following three clear implications: 1. It enables us to establish a methodological grounding for analyzing the persistence of sacrifice in current societies. 2. New sacrificial forms do not mean the death of previous sacrificial forms. Ritual or pre-axial sacrifices do not disappear in modernity. 3. Self-sacrifice (the sacrificial form we consider here) is not the only one present in contemporary societies, but one that coexists with other forms.

If this is so, why is it so difficult to recognize the persistence of sacrifice in current societies? We want to briefly analyze two causes: First, because around sacrifice—as around any social fact—there arise *pars pro toto* dynamics that restrict the social fact to its hegemonic or elementary features. In this case, we can observe a turmoil between ritual sacrifice (*pars*) and sacrifice (*toto*). According to this logic of action, there would be no place for sacrificial demonstrations (as self-sacrifice) beyond those developed during what Hénaff (2010) and Hamayon (1990) have called "The Age of Sacrifice" (i.e., within the context of pre-axial religiosity, a period that dates back to the transition from hunter–gatherer to agropastoral societies, from a nomadic to a settled lifestyle). It is therefore closely linked to the idea of a social life centered on crops and livestock husbandry. As noted by Hamayon (1990, p. 737), a second change takes place in such societies; this time in matters of religion or relationships with the sacred: the supernatural becomes vertical, introducing a world of hierarchies and relationships based on dependence (of the human world on the supernatural) and on filiation, which replaces the earlier notion of an alliance with the supernatural: "[w]e are truly entering a world of hierarchy and debt, which is precisely the world of sacrifice" (Hénaff 2010, p. 171). In these circumstances, ritual sacrifice acts as a mechanism for intermediation in that now-hierarchical scenario, where there is a chasm (Eisenstadt 1986) between the human and the divine. Sacrifice serves to open up communication between the two worlds: the mundane (represented by the sacrificer) and the divine (represented by the sacred object). This argument is consistent with the core program established by Marcel Mauss and Henri Hubert in their early work *Essai sur la nature et fonction du sacrifice* (1964), first published in 1898. Thus, from the perspective that equates sacrifice with "Age of Sacrifice", the end of public sacrifices (Stroumsa 2009) or the end of ritual sacrifices would mean the end of the social fact of sacrifice. However, we argue that the end of ritual sacrifice actually means its decline as a hegemonic representation or "total social fact", but not its disappearance as a phenomenon on the path taken by societies. Sacrifice has slipped from the dominant position that it held during its "Age", but that does not mean that it has disappeared from our global society. Accordingly, self-sacrifice is a post-ritual formula that

emerges during the axial age and remains present in contemporary societies, coexisting with other sacrificial formulas—including ritual sacrifice.

Secondly, there is an analogy between the "process of civilization"—Elias ([1939] 1968)—and the premise of the end of sacrifice when we seek to explain the reluctance to recognize the persistence of sacrifice in modernity. According to this assumption, sacrifice would be a clear example of the stage of barbarity, and it has no place in secular, modern and civilized societies. This is the perspective supported—among others—by Agamben (1998) and Dworkin (2011). As suggested by Terry Eagleton: "That orthodoxy has been well-nigh unanimous in repudiating the concept of sacrifice as barbarous and benighted" (Eagleton 2018, p. 2). We contend that these views on sacrifice that understand it to be a barbarian practice commit a double mistake. First, they accept that there is no place for barbarity or violence in civilized societies. Scholars such as Adorno and Horkheimer (2002) and Bauman (1991), provide us with clear examples of the cohabitation between civilization and barbarity in modern—and theoretically civilized—societies. Secondly, as we assert here, sacrifice is a social fact. From this sociological perspective, what really affects any social fact—with sacrifice being no exception—is metamorphosis. Sacrifice mutates and adjusts to the different social and cultural realities in which it develops.

When analyzing sacrifice, scholars such as McClymond (2008) have posited that it requires a death or, at least, a victim. This question features in the classic discussions about our subject. For example, Mauss and Hubert (1964) share McClymond's approach. Other scholars, such as Robertson Smith (1886, 1972), consider a sacrifice to involve ritual offerings in which there is no immolation of a victim. Regardless of these discussions, it is important to say that the bulk of modern studies on sacrifice (Detienne and Vernant 1989; Cassirer 1955; Weiss 1949; Van Ackeren and Archer 2018; Herrenschmidt 1989; Tessman 2018) focus more specifically on the relationships of exchange *between the gift and the relinquishment (i.e., between what is given and what is taken)*. This means that "immolation" is not indispensable in this kind of analysis, or it does not perform the core role formerly played. At the same time, as already observed, this does not mean that violence or immolation have disappeared from sacrifice. *Narratives on sacrifice centered on violence- and gift-relinquishment share the same span of time within our societies, albeit in dynamic tension*. In fact, the paper's final sections briefly analyze two sacrificial (self-sacrificial) formulas in which the two aspects, namely, immolation of a victim and the relationship of exchange between gift and relinquishment, are crucial for understanding the sacrificial dimension whereby certain people or collectivities decide to *offer* their lives—or are ready to *offer* their lives—to save the lives of others in contexts of social stress or necessity. Having said that, in the two examples that we will briefly be analyzing, immolation is not the action axis, but the self-offering in terms of gift and relinquishment. This happens within a *process* of *sacralization of the person* (Durkheim 1973; Joas 2013), in which the human being simultaneously performs the roles of believer and god. In so doing, sacrifice breaks free from the traditional tendency toward *sacrificing to the god*, and prompts a new inclination focused on the *God's sacrifice* (and, more recently, personal self-sacrifice). Individuals surrender their lives in a radical act of personal sacrifice.

What, then, are the mainstays of the self-sacrificial formula to be analyzed here? We shall be dedicating a large part of this paper to answering this question. We should like to begin by identifying these three mainstays: firstly, *the ongoing acquisition of strength and prominence of the self in sacrificial practices*. This is directly linked to a decreasing precision in differentiating the classic roles of ritual sacrifice (i.e., victim, sacrifier, and sacred object); secondly, there is a *transition from a sacrifice focused on a victim's immolation and the hierarchical relationship between inner-worldly and otherworldly realms to a less hierarchical relationship based on the idea of exchange and focused on the question of gift and relinquishment*. Thirdly, *there is a secularization of sacrifice*, not in the sense of a de-sacralization, but rather as a metamorphosis in the sundry logics of sacralization that multiply themselves, taking different shapes that are not necessarily Historic (Bellah 1969) or Axial (Eisenstadt 1986; Bellah 2011), as they may also be Secular (Aron 1944). In this scenario, the inner-worldly realm becomes appropriate

to sacralization. The sanctity of the person is one of these secular religiosities that fuels self-sacrificial formulas. We will illustrate this theoretical analysis of self-sacrifice and how it is embodied in contemporary societies by briefly analyzing this type of religiosity and two self-sacrificial forms linked to it: the actions of 9/11 rescuers and COVID-19 healthcare professionals.

2. Axial Religiosity, the Waning of Ritual Sacrifice and the Beginning of Self-Sacrifice

2.1. The "End" of Sacrifice? Self-Sacrifice and the Metamorphoses of Sacrifice in the Axial Age

The Axial Age (Jaspers 2011) involved a great transformation in social and religious spheres between 800 and 200 BC. According to Shmuel N. Eisenstadt: "This revolutionary process took place in several major civilizations including Ancient Israel, Ancient Greece, Early Christianity, Zoroastrian Iran, early Imperial China, and the Hindu and Buddhist civilizations. Although beyond the Axial Age proper, it also took place in Islam. These conceptions were developed and articulated by a relatively new social element. A new type of intellectual elite became aware of the necessity to actively construct the world according to some transcendental vision. The successful institutionalization of such conceptions and vision gave rise to extensive re-ordering of the internal contours of societies as well as their internal relations" (Eisenstadt 1986, p. 1). Examples of this new intellectual elite are the Jewish prophets, Greek philosophers, Chinese literati or Hindu brahmins. These intellectuals attempt to re-order the world in terms of the model of the "ideal man" (Eisenstadt 1986, p. 5). *This change implies a new relationship between individual and the world. The individual starts to be in the focus of social concern*. Insofar as pertains to the purposes of our study, the Axial Age marked a transition from religious acts focused on worship (basically sacrifice) to acts focused on *logos*, the word of god as revealed to a chosen few. Thus, axial-age religiosity focused on the word. This "linguistification of the sacred" (Habermas 1984) marking a change in the way in which believers related to their gods. In this scenario, the (holy) book gradually supersedes sacrifice as a privileged or hegemonic way of accessing or communicating with the other world (Assmann 2009; Gil-Gimeno 2021). Intermediation with the sacred no longer involved preferably the immolation of a victim but throughout the truth of a word revealed. *No longer involved preferably ritual but introspection*. Despite this metamorphosis occurs, it would be wrong to think that the end of the Age of Sacrifice or the ritual sacrifice meant the end of sacrifice as a social phenomenon. The "principle of conservation of gains", as discussed by Donald (2012), must be taken into account. This is worth repeating: we do not believe that the decline in sacrifice as a hegemonic manifestation of religion meant the end of sacrifice as a social fact. Stroumsa (2017) writes of the "end of public sacrifices", not the end of sacrifice *per se*. Therefore, we are facing, at the same time, a *metamorphosis* of sacrifice and toward a waning of the ideal of ritual sacrifice.

2.2. The Emergence of Self-Sacrifice. The Example of the Death of Jesus of Nazareth

A clear example—not the only one—of this axial transition in terms of sacrifice is the death of Jesus of Nazareth on the cross. It can be seen as the symbolic culmination of the "Age of Sacrifice" (Keenan 2005; Girard 2012; Theissen 1999), understanding this death as the sacrifice of God himself, this is, God the Son giving up his life to God the Father: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23–46). This viewpoint presents Jesus solely in his divine dimension. Thus, his death on the cross can only be seen as a sacrifice, but one which, paradoxically, seeks to blow away the very logic of ritual sacrifice and turn it into a pagan act which is therefore not fit for forging communication links with the supernatural: it is the ultimate sacrifice, or the sacrifice of sacrifice itself (Nancy 2003; Keenan 2005). However, this approach raises doubts as regards the process of consecration, because if the victim is already consecrated, he cannot be consecrated through the sacrifice. Similarly, the action of the sacrifier in offering up the sacred thing is closer to sacrilege than sacrifice.

This identification of Jesus of Nazareth solely with his divine side triumphed when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire (with the Edict of Thessalonica, issued by Emperor Theodosius in 380 AD), subsequently becoming institutionalised and acquiring hegemony in the Western societies in the Middle Ages. It was symbolised magnificently in the expression *Sacrificiorum aboleatur insania* ("let the madness of sacrifice end!"), which appears in the Codex Theodosianus (438 AD) (Belayche 2001). This expression also marks the shift from a sacrificial religiosity to an axial one, based on the word and focused on the self, and the willingness to make a gift to another and, at the same time, to relinquish their life for getting a greater good. However, this identification reveals certain trouble, as pointed out by Sophie-Grace Chappell:

"What happened on the Cross is a sacrifice in something very like the way that the sacrifices laid down in Leviticus are; only more so. The point of a sacrifice, in Leviticus (see especially Chapters 1–7), is to take away sin, and recreate, by establishing (in blood) a new contract or "covenant", the human–divine relationship that has been disrupted. The more perfect the priest, and the more perfect the victim, the truer and the more effectual the sacrifice. Yet no earthly victim, and no earthly priest, can really be *completely* perfect; only God himself can be that. The ultimate sacrifice, then, the sacrifice that finally and definitively "fulfils the Law" (Mt 5.17), must be one *like* the Levitical sacrifices, and yet of an entirely different order, offered by a priest who, like the mysterious Melchizedek (Ps 110.4, Hebs 6–7), is no Levite at all, and seems to have no clear human origin that anyone can trace. Since literal perfection is required both in priest and in victim, and since only God is literally perfect, this ultimate sacrifice must be *God offering God*; but since the sacrifice has to be one in which the priest represents humanity before and to God, it must also be *man-God offering man-God.* And that, says Hebrews, *is precisely what Jesus does on the Cross.*" (Chappell 2018, p. 18)

The fact that this interpretation of the divine nature of Jesus gradually became hegemonic does not mean that there were no other interpretations that emphasized his human side in early Christian communities[2]. Indeed, this latter interpretation can even be justified also by reference to the canonical texts of the Church, e.g., the Gospel of John (John 1: 14), where Jesus is referred to as follows: "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us"[3]. He is thus seen as God become man and not exclusively as the son of God. This dual nature (divine and human) gathered into one person broaden the range of interpretations in regard to his death and its sacrificial implications, taking it beyond the logic of the sacrifice of sacrifice (Keenan 2005) or the sacrifice of God (Nietzsche 1967), because it could be argued that it is not the God who gives up his life but the man (or the God-as-man), i.e., *that it is a person who empties himself, who offers himself up completely, who relinquishes his life* in an exercise of *kénosis*.

From this viewpoint, Jesus is not the sacred thing (sacred being) but rather a propitiatory victim who offers himself or is offered up[4] in a self-sacrificing process for a greater good, i.e., the forgiveness of original sin. By this action, he either transcends his human dimension (returning to the divine) or becomes consecrated (thus becoming a sacred being through his act of sacrifice). Under both views, his action can be seen as a sacrifice in all lights. As mentioned above, this interpretation of the nature of Jesus was popular among some early Christian communities. Specifically, those considered as martyrs[5] acted on the basis of the idea of *Imitatio Christo*, seen as a way of consecrating themselves and accessing the sacred. From this, it can be deduced that these *early Christians saw Jesus as a man, albeit a great man, who attained transcendence by selflessly giving up his life*. The *Imitatio* of Jesus as God could be seen as sacrilege, but the *Imitatio* of Jesus as a man opened up the way to a process of consecration throughout an exercise of relinquishment and gift. Thus, it can be argued that what these martyrs did was not sacrilege (i.e., acting as if they were gods) but quite the opposite, i.e., consecrating themselves through their actions as their spiritual leader had taught them. This would make them victims who self-immolate and relinquish their lives for the salvation of the world, i.e., for the collective (sacrifier). In this sense, Stroumsa pointed out: "Elsner analyzes the mosaics of Santa Maria Maggiore in

Rome dating from Pope Sixtus III, in the 430 s, and the sacrificial processions in the mosaics of Sant´Apollinaris Nuovo. According to him, these mosaics demonstrate not only the symbolic polysemy of Christian sacrifice, but also the radical abolition of the ideology of reciprocity, even if the pagan gesture of sacrifice was still known. The martyrs and virgins no longer bring the sacrifice—they *are* the sacrifice. In effect, Christianity offers to every man and woman the possibility of becoming the sacrifice" (Stroumsa 2009, pp. 76–77). In fact, as it was pointed out by Rives (1995), human sacrifice was jointly considered by pagans and Christians a boundary between humanity and barbarism.

It is important to say that the archetypical and exemplary action of self-sacrifice developed by Jesus of Nazareth also provoked the emergence of the martyr that will replace the scapegoat in monotheistic religions, producing a metamorphosis in sacrificial narrative and oriented the sacrifice in a new, more spiritual (introspective), individualized and mundane way that it will be gradually developed and that it will reach their flashpoint in modernity.

Likewise, the death of Jesus of Nazareth on the cross is a clear example—not the only one, of course—of the metamorphosis that experiments with sacrifice in the Axial Age. In this sense, *we can observe a first transition from ritual sacrifice to self-sacrifice*. At the same time, sacrificial actions were marked by a number of changes in the own dynamics of sacrifice. First of all, as mentioned by Stroumsa (2017), sacrifices ceased to be openly public in nature and became more internal and spiritual (Cassirer 1955; Detienne and Vernant 1989; Keenan 2005; Duyndam et al. 2016) or introverted (Adorno and Horkheimer 2002). Sacrifice shifted away from the altar (Eagleton 2018) and became lodged more and more within each individual. The same occurred with religion and religiosity. Secondly, there was a change in the relationship between the sacrifier and the sacrificial victim; on the one hand, the sacrifier no longer played such an active role in consecration (though he/it continued to receive the benefits associated with the immolation of the victim). On the other hand, the victim gradually acquired more of a voice and greater autonomy, and thus began to be a more active party in the process of consecration. As a result, victims also began to receive the benefits of the sacrifice. In both the cases analyzed here, the victim no longer needs to be led to the altar by the sacrifier but is increasingly willing to go on his/her own initiative. Here we can start to observe a clear tension between what Ulrich Bröckling calls "chosen self-sacrifice" and "not chosen by oneself victim" (Bröckling 2020, pp. 230–31). The independence thus acquired is linked to the third and most significant difference with ritual sacrifice: *victims are no longer domesticated animals but persons who offer up their life willingly to save others* (Petropoulou 2008). In this sense, Schiller (1845) or Ingolf Dalferth speak about altruistic sacrifice for defining this process as "[s]omething done for others, which leads to the loss of one's own life". (Dalferth 2010, p. 83). In the fourth section, we will analyze how the axial turn toward self-sacrifice (focused on the field of historic religions) becomes the "highest form of sacrifice" (Weiss 1949, p. 80) in modern and secular societies.

Summarizing, in the Axial Age we attend the emergence of self-sacrifice and to a transition from ritual sacrifice to this new sacrificial formula (self-sacrifice): "A key moment in the evolution of sacrifice arrives when the victim themselves becomes conscious of their condition, and in doing so assumes agency of the event (. . .) What was a process to be endured becomes a project to be executed" (Eagleton 2018, pp. 50–51). This is the starting point of a clear metamorphosis in sacrifice that, step by step, becomes more secularized and focused on gift and relinquishment social fact.

3. Gift, Relinquishment and Exchange

3.1. Secularization, Exchange and Sacrifice

In their *Essai sur la nature et fonction du sacrifice* (1898), Hubert and Mauss established a clear connection between the sacred and profane, substantiated in the victim's immolation. Nevertheless, in a work authored alone and titled *Essai sur le don* (2002), first published in Année Sociologique in 1924, Mauss adopted a new methodological bias to explain

the connection between the two realms. Whereas the first publication is essential for a sociological systematization of ritual sacrifice, and therefore for understanding its outlines and consequences, the second one has certain key elements that allow us to analyze, on the one hand, the persistence of sacrifice over time and, on the other hand, the different metamorphoses that this social fact has undergone. We therefore contend that the concept of gift plays an important role. We want to discuss *The Philosophy of Money* (2004) by Georg Simmel, where he develops a secularized notion of sacrifice based on the premise of relinquishment.

Why do the concepts of gift and relinquishment in Mauss and Simmel allow us to better understand the self-sacrificial forms? Through them, the collective dynamic of giving and receiving—institutionalized by social constructs like potlach in ancient societies or by the monetary market in advanced societies—becomes a key axis of sacrificial practice. In the previous section, we analyzed the emergence of self-sacrifice and how the arrival of axial religiosity leads to a transition from ritual sacrifice to self-sacrifice. Our aim in this section is to study another double process linked to the metamorphosis of sacrifice: the secularization of the phenomena and the acquisition of relevance by the gift and the elements of relinquishment at the expense of those linked to immolation.

Before analyzing the contributions made by Mauss and Simmel, we need to make two comments: the first one is that both contributions are aimed at social institutions that have not been considered as religious in a historical sense (Bellah 1969), like the market or the primitive potlach. The second one is that the two proposals focus on the idea of exchange as a common denominator. Let us now briefly discuss them both.

Firstly, the secularization of sacrifice does not mean a decline in belief or religious practice (Casanova 2001), but a reorientation of religiosity towards the profane or secular realms. For Durkheim: "[s]acred things are not simply those personal beings that are called gods or spirits. A rock, a tree, a spring, a pebble, a piece of wood, a house, in a word anything, can be sacred [. . .]. The circle of sacred objects cannot be fixed once and for all; its scope can vary infinitely from one religion to another" (Durkheim 1995, pp. 34–35). Underlying these words is an idea that can also be found in the studies by Robertson Smith (1972) and Mauss and Hubert (1964): something is rendered holy by the collective sentiment with which it is addressed. Through the development of secular religiosities—as illustrated through the sanctity of the person—sacrifice has not only transcended the ritual dimension, but has also superseded traditional religiosity (Bellah 1969). This happens because sacralization processes have also undergone changes in their historical course. "Classic" religious formulas coexist in modern societies with other secular religiosities (Aron 1944). Some examples of these are the sanctity of the person (Durkheim 1973; Joas 2013), civil religion (Bellah 1967; Giner 1993), revolutionary cults (Mathiez 2012), and public religions (Casanova 1994).

Secondly, the narrative of the transition from barbarity to civilization has several implications for the sacrifice. We should not confuse barbarity with violence, or civilization with the absence of violence. Examples such as 9/11, the Holocaust or the Gulag are proof of this. It is true that we live in civilized societies or in societies in which a "process of civilization" has taken place, but this does not mean we live in non-violent societies. In the transition from barbarity to civilization, societies adopt mechanisms for controlling violence. The main one has been state bureaucratic rationalization (Weber 2004), together with the subjective rationalization of the affective household (Elias [1939] 1968). Yet this does not mean that other societies in the past have not created their own mechanisms for achieving the same goal. This is the position defended by Girard (1977, 2012), whereby ritual sacrifice is one of the first social attempts to harness pure violence through ritual violence. Ritual sacrifice would therefore be one of the first milestones in the civilization process, and not a clear symbol of barbarism.

We will now focus on the contributions made by Mauss ([1924] 2002) and Simmel (2004). With respect to the former, the discussion addresses two issues: first, the collective dimen-

sion involved in the gift institution, and second, the spiritual dimension involved in the object of exchange.

3.2. Le Don, Mauss and Sacrifice

Mauss stated the following in *The Gift* (Mauss [1924] 2002): "First, it is not individuals but collectivities that impose obligations of exchange and contract upon each other. The contracting parties are legal entities: clans, tribes, and families who confront and oppose one another either in groups who meet face to face in one spot, or through their chiefs, or in both these ways at once. Moreover, what they exchange is not solely property and wealth, movable and immovable goods, and things economically useful. In particular, such exchanges are acts of politeness: banquets, rituals, military services, women, children, dances, festivals, and fairs, in which economic transaction is only one element, and in which the passing on of wealth is only one feature of a much more general and enduring contract" (Mauss [1924] 2002, pp. 6–7). These words reveal the collective dimension of the institution of giving, while at the same time we can start to perceive its related moral or spiritual dimension.

The last question specifically arises when Mauss defines the gift exchange as a spiritual mechanism that obligates the "person to reciprocate the present that has been received" (Mauss [1924] 2002, p. 9); in other words, the exchange based on the gift, its essence, lies in the spiritual (symbolic) value present either in the objects or in the actual exchange process. "The thing received is not inactive (. . .) because the thing itself possesses a soul, is of the soul" (Mauss [1924] 2002, pp. 15–16). "In this system of ideas one clearly and logically realizes that one must give back to another person what is really part and parcel of his nature and substance, because to accept something from somebody is to accept some part of his spiritual essence, of his soul" (Mauss [1924] 2002, pp. 15–16).

Mauss ([1924] 2002) thereby implicitly expands the sacrifice's sphere of action when indicating that one of the main links in human and social experience is the obligation of giving and receiving. Ritual sacrifice would therefore be a precise formula adopted by this social "leading wire". In this shift, Mauss seems to retrace his 1898 steps by reporting that the gift institution is a more important element in sacrificial ritual practice than the immolation of the victim as a way of communicating between the mundane and supra-mundane. Likewise, the narrative shift Mauss takes allows us to refer to emancipation of sacrifice from its ritual manifestations of immolation. Exchange relationships still remain following the transition from ritual to self-sacrifice, when axial societies give way to secular religiosity. In fact, what in axial religiosity is perceived as ongoing proximity between divine and human realms, in modern societies becomes secular religiosity, which means correlation (Cassirer 1955) rather than a chasm, between sacred and profane realms.

The argument we uphold is the following: The ceremonial exchange relationships based on gift and relinquishment (and its full secular versions developed by Simmel) are a more appropriate cue for understanding the metamorphosis of sacrifice, and above all their persistence in secular and modern societies, than other forms related to the victim's immolation for filling the vacuum between the mundane and supramundane realms. This does not mean, for example, that the element of immolation disappears, because sacrificial practice (as in the examples to be analyzed later) could sometimes require the giving of life for keeping alive the circle of sacred things. This idea is indeed closely linked to what occurs in exchange mechanisms, as we shall see in the work by Simmel (2004).

It needs to be recognized that this relevance of exchange and reciprocity in sacrificial ritual practice has already featured in the analyses made by prominent scholars such as Evans-Pritchard (1956); Tylor (2010); Van Baal (1976); and Robertson Smith (1886, 1972). The last of these focuses on a governing principle of social life: "those who sit at meat together are united for all social effects" (Robertson Smith 1972, p. 269). The idea here is that sacrifice makes divine beings and mortals into commensals. Robertson Smith holds that this is the main function of sacrifice, whereby it is linked not so much to consecration as to sociability around a table (commensality). This viewpoint is also developed by Seaford (2004) in

the context of Greek Sacrifice: "Though always dedicated to a god [sacrifice], it was a communal event, with the meat shared among the participants and with only the bones and the fat burned for the god, as against the more normal Mesopotamian case where the sacrifice was dedicated primarily to the god and only the king or priests could partake." (Bellah 2011, p. 669).

3.3. Economic Exchange, Simmel and Sacrifice

Although sacrifice is not the core element in the *Essai sur le don*, the analysis conducted by Mauss provides us with interpretative elements for better understanding this social fact, its metamorphosis, and its persistence in modern and secular societies. Simmel's *Philosophy of Money* (Simmel 2004) also offers us new interpretative elements, but on this occasion, sacrifice becomes a key concept for articulating the economic exchange theory.

For Simmel: "The object acquires its practical value not only by being in demand itself but through the demand for another object. Value is determined not by the relation to the demanding subject, but by the fact that this relation depends on the cost of a sacrifice which, for the other party, appears as a value to be enjoyed while the object itself appears as a sacrifice" (Simmel 2004, p. 77). Sacrifice, understood as relinquishing something valuable—a thing, person, symbol, and so on—for achieving something, becomes—for Simmel—not only the measurement of something's value, but also the measurement of the exchange value itself (in this case monetary exchange). *Simmel introduces us to sacrifice completely devoid of the element of "immolation", focused on exchange relationships and, above all, the act of relinquishment* (the meaning of sacrifice in its own terms) *that it always requires*. People relinquish the thing sacrificed, which is given as a gift for achieving something. *Simmel's proposal has two clear ramifications for our work: firstly, it awards a moral, spiritual, and even religious dimension to economic exchange through sacrifice; secondly, it certifies the existence of a secularized version of sacrifice based on the notion of relinquishment*. In so doing, Simmel agrees with another modern analysis centered on sacrifice that emphasizes the importance of relinquishment. This is a highlight in the works of Herrenschmidt (1989), who says that what is relinquished is offered to another, Bataille (1992), who focuses on the relationship between relinquishment and giving in the sacrificial practice, and Marcel Detienne and Vernant (1989), who states the following: "[w]ith the appearance of sacrifice everything changes, for the most obscure or even the crudest of sacrificial acts implies something unprecedented: a movement of self-abandon" (Detienne and Vernant 1989, p. 20). We can find traces of our argument in the works of Dalferth (2010); Schiller (1845); and Cassirer (1955).

For Simmel, sacrifice plays a significant part in the economic exchange equation, whereby exchange would be worthless without sacrifice. "But here we overlook that sacrifice is by no means always an external obstacle but is the inner condition of the goal itself and the road by which it may be reached (. . .) In brief, the inhibiting counter-motion, to eliminate which a sacrifice is required, is often, perhaps even always, the positive precondition of the goal. The sacrifice does not in the least belong in the category of what ought not to be, as superficiality and avarice would have us believe. Sacrifice is not only the condition of specific values, but the condition of value as such; with reference to economic behaviour, which concerns us here, it is not only the price to be paid for particular established values, but the price through which alone values can be established" (Simmel 2004, p. 82). In short, the works by Mauss ([1924] 2002) and Simmel (2004) show us how, through its development, sacrifice undergoes a secularization process focused on relinquishment and the exchange of gifts. The two dynamics analyzed in the previous sections (i.e., individualization and secularization) originate from the emergence of secular patterns and examples of self-sacrifice. The next sections analyze the sanctity of the person as a secular religiosity that is governed by new self-sacrificial formulas. We briefly analyze two: the actions undertaken by 9/11 rescuers and by COVID-19 healthcare professionals.

4. Self-Sacrifice, Modernity and Secularization Process

In the previous section, we said that we must avoid the easy identification of secularization with desacralization. Rather, what happens is that secularization inserts changes in the way human societies accomplish the task of making things sacred. With respect to our goal, we want to highlight two of these changes: firstly, the inner-wordly realm and mundane things become potentially goods for sacralization. This does not mean that innerwordly realm replaces the other-worldly realm as object of sacralization, but rather that these secularized religious forms and another traditional or "historic" (Bellah 1969) live together in modernity. Secularisation did not spell the end of religiosity but rather a crisis in what Bellah calls "historic religions" (Bellah 1969, p. 78) on the one hand and the rise of a new way of making things sacred on the other, characterised by "the collapse of the dualism that was so crucial to all the historic religions" (Bellah 1969, p. 79) and by the sacralisation of secular, mundane aspects. Thus, the scenario in the modern era can be defined as one of religious pluralism (Berger 2014) where the religious domain does not however hold hegemony over the life of society as a whole. Secondly, in the introduction, we spoke on the idea of "making sacred" one thing, object, being, and so on. Well then, the secularization processes influence both fields, the sacred as well as the profane. Self-sacrifice shapes a new constellation of meaning in which the bloody, immolatory and ritualistic forms are reshaped by non-violent, secular, forms of self-sacrifice.

Having said that, in this section, we want to analyze two specific dimensions of this new type of sacrifice. On the one hand, we study the sacredness of the person as one of the most important types of secular religiosity that develops self-sacrificial forms. On the other hand, we briefly analyze—as an example—two of these self-sacrificial forms: the actions developed by 9/11 rescuers and COVID-19 healthcare professionals. A short analysis of both will serve us for illustrating how self-sacrifice embodies in contemporary societies, this is, how sacrifice persists in contemporary societies throughout self-sacrifice.

4.1. The Sacredness of the Person

The study of the sacredness of the person can first be glimpsed in the mid 19th century in Ludwig Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity* (Feuerbach 1882), but it was Durkheim who first tackled the issue head-on in "Individualism and the Intellectuals" (Durkheim 1973), first published in 1898. He states that in modern societies "it is humanity which is worthy of respect and sacred" (Durkheim 1973, p. 48). However, it is important to point out that what is sacralised is humanity in the abstract sense (in its altruistic, universal dimension) and not a particular individual. In short, "this human person (*personne humaine*), the definition of which is like the touchstone which distinguishes good from evil, is considered sacred in the ritual sense of the word. It partakes of the transcendent majesty that churches of all time lend to their gods; it is conceived of as being invested with that mysterious property which created a void about sacred things, which removes them from vulgar contacts and withdraws them from common circulation. And the respect which is given it comes precisely from this source. Whoever makes an attempt on a man's life, on a man's liberty, on a man's honor, inspires in us a feeling of horror analogous in every way to that which the believer experiences when he sees his idol profaned. Such an ethic is therefore not simply a hygienic discipline or a prudent economy of existence; it is a religion in which man is at once the worshiper and the god" (Durkheim 1973, pp. 45–46).

We agree with Durkheim that the human person has been sacralised but are (like H. Joas 2013) less willing to agree with the idea that a sort of religion has been established around it. As Durkheim himself was aware, religion requires institutionalisation and the systemization of a set of "beliefs and practices relative to sacred things" (Durkheim 1995, p. 44), and this cannot be said to have existed around the human person at the time when Durkheim was writing, or indeed in the present day.

This sociological "urbanisation" of the sacralisation of the person continues in the work of Joas (2013), who picks up the glove thrown down by Durkheim in 1898 and analyzes the development of the phenomenon and its persistence in contemporary societies. He begins

with a dialogue with the exhaustive reflections of Foucault (1977) and Beccaria (1995) on the evolution of forms of punishment. For Joas, the key to understanding the presence of such forms in modern societies lies not so much in the need to discipline criminals (as argued by Foucault (1977)) but rather in the defence of the human being as a transcendent object: "In the history of criminal law, the worst crime has generally been that which violates the sacred core of the community. So it seems reasonable to trace changes in the penal system back to changes in the understanding of the sacred. This is why I refer to the alternative interpretation proposed here as the "sacralization of the person". From this perspective, the reforms of penal law and penal practice, and the rise of human rights in the late eighteenth century, are the expression of a profound cultural shift in which the human person became a sacred object". (Joas 2013, p. 49).

Thus, in contemporary societies, the person has become an object of veneration. As stated by Joas (2013) and Durkheim (1973), attacks on persons are among the worst crimes that can be committed. This begs the question of whether there are sacrificial representations based on this new "sacred thing". We believe that there are. Thus, to complete this look at the course of sacrifice and record its presence in modern, secular societies, we briefly analyze two examples of situations that have hit the civilian population in the past few decades: *the 9/11 attacks and the COVID-19 pandemic*. We believe that certain actions taken by groups in society such as fire-fighters, police officers and volunteers in the first case and healthcare workers in the second can be associated with a clear self-sacrificial dimension focused on the sacredness of the person. This does not mean that sacrifice can only occur nowadays in scenarios of social stress, but merely that the two examples set out here come from such scenarios. Clear differences can be seen between the two cases, but we focus here solely on the aspects that they have in common.

4.2. Self-Sacrifice and the Sacredness of the Person

In their article "The Culture of Sacrifice in Conscript and Volunteer Militaries" (2016), Richard Lachmann and Abby Stivers state that the Vietnam War was a landmark event in transforming the reasons why US soldiers earned military distinctions. Previously, honour had been associated with taking enemy lives, but now it comes to be attained mainly for saving the lives of fellow soldiers and protecting those of civilians. The ultimate expression of this new discourse comes when soldiers lay down their lives to save others, i.e., when they sacrifice their lives for a sacralised greater good. Soldiers still kill people in the course of their duty, but this shift from "offensive heroism" to "defensive heroism" (Lachmann and Stivers 2016) is a clear sign of the impact and capacity for the influence of the sacralization of the person in contemporary societies. This case study shows a clear example of the transition from ritual sacrifice to self-sacrifice, where the tragic–heroic narrative shift into one focused on the exchange relationship between something that is given like a gift and something that is relinquished in the process of getting a greater good. *We think that this shift from offensive to defensive heroism can be applied to the actions developed by 9/11 rescuers and by healthcare professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic, because the main aim of the actions developed by these professionals is to save the life of other people, even if it means to relinquish, to sacrifice, their own life.*

In the same way, *the action of a soldier, firefighter, police officers or healthcare professionals who sacrifice their lives to save others* can be seen as clearly linked to the development of specific professional ethics and the functions associated with these jobs, which include sometimes risking one's life. In this sense, we think that it is interesting to say that in a philosophical discussion about sacrifice we can identify a clear tension between the supererogatory and demandingness understanding of this social fact (Van Ackeren and Archer 2018; Urmson 1958; Benn 2016; Dorsey 2013). "Supererogatory actions are characterized as actions that are morally good, but not morally required, actions that go beyond the call of our moral obligations" (Dorsey 2013, p. 355). Demandingness actions, on the contrary, would be actions morally good and, at the same time, morally required. James O. Urmson offers an interesting example of this tension when states: "We may imagine a

squad of soldiers to be practicing the throwing of live hand grenades; a grenade slips from the hand of one of them and rolls on the ground near the squad; one of them sacrifices his life by throwing himself on the grenade and protecting his comrades with his own body (. . .) It is clearly an action having moral status. But if the soldier had not thrown himself on the grenade would he have failed in his duty?" (Urmson 1958, p. 202). As we can see, the key question here is not the act of immolation but the act of relinquishment.

Without denying the existence of such elective affinities between specific professional ethics and the functions associated with these kinds of jobs, we contend that the attitude of soldiers, firefighters and police officers during 9/11 rescue or healthcare professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic in seeking to save lives (even if it means sacrificing their own) is also directly linked to the sacredness of the person. Indeed, it is the blend of these two elements that provide an understanding of the self-sacrificial attitude of certain occupational groups in Western contemporary societies.

Throughout history soldiers have sacrificed their lives, be it for their lord, their nation (these are clear examples of a tragic–heroic narrative) or, as in the case of the UN's "Blue Helmets", to protect civilian populations in conflict zones (this would be an example of the self-sacrificial narrative, focused on exchange relationship). Both narratives live together in contemporary societies, but we think the second is actually more important for understanding not only the transition from "offensive heroism" to "defensive heroism" (Lachmann and Stivers 2016) in the militaries, but the cases (analyzed here) of fire-fighters, police officers and volunteers in the aftermath of 9/11 and healthcare professionals in COVID-19 pandemic too, because the specific underlying reasons for risking their lives in each of these scenarios reveal another dimension of the phenomenon which is much more closely linked to what society holds sacred (Roszak 2020). If military honour is nowadays earned by protecting people's lives, that is because those lives have become a treasured good.

If professional ethics are intertwined with the sacredness of the person, more groups prepared to give up their lives to save others emerge. Four cases in point are *fire-fighters, police officers, the volunteers*[6] *in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in New York* (Gil-Gimeno 2018, 2020) *and healthcare professionals in the COVID-19 pandemic* (in most countries around the world). What these four groups have in common is that in a context of social tension they have either risked or sacrificed their lives to save others. During the rescue efforts following 9/11, 343 fire-fighters, 85 police officers and an unknown number of volunteers died. Almost 20 years later, members of these groups continue to lose their lives as a result of their actions at that time. Almost 200 more fire-fighters have died from the after-effects of breathing in toxic fumes and atmospheric contamination at Ground Zero. An Amnesty International[7] report published in July 2020 put the number of healthcare professionals who had died to date in the (still ongoing) COVID-19 pandemic at around 7000 worldwide[8].

Some actually interesting analyses point out that "religious capital" has become a central factor in coping with COVID-19 (Seryczyńska et al. 2021). The same happened during the 9/11 rescue and the commemoration ceremonies raised on this tragedy (Riley 2014). These type of stressful, traumatic and unexpected social experiences produce some answers focused on the necessity for: "peopled with god-like heroes; generative of myth, new interpersonal rituals, but also iconic circulations of familiar imagery, and it has been haunted by a relentless search for both the blame and the salvation of charismatic authority" (Alexander and Smith 2020, p. 264), that is to say, that denote a clear transcendent, religious background. Concepts as salvation, charisma, ritual, are clearly linked to sacralization processes. Our point is that people and societies continue in searching and articulating this kind of answer for solving some of the problems of their everyday life, and, for it, develop some sacrificial (in this case, self-sacrificial) forms. *In this sense, sacrifice or self-sacrifice remains as one of the main mechanisms throughout one thing, object, being, and so on, becomes sacred*.

Some social practices as, for instance, the applause ritual to healthcare professionals in Spain (and in other countries around the world) during the first months of COVID-19

Pandemic are social practices directly linked with the (post) heroic status adopted by these professionals. This is what guaranty the persistence of sacrifice in modern societies. This (post) heroic status is developed as a result of their self-sacrificial role played during the pandemic event. The same happened (and still happen) with police officers and firefighters in the city of New York. This last idea can be observed through another form of worship, in this case, less ritualized. In United States delivery trucks, vans or private cars, we can still see statements as: "To our heroes", "Serving those who Serve", and so on. A great part of these slogans are devoted to soldiers, but the number of these vehicles that are devoted to 9/11 rescuers is not minor.

The question we want to highlight is that the existence of these two worship practices (introduced here just as examples), and others that we can observe, are a consequence of a previous self-sacrificial exercise, that, at the same time, is based on the idea of the sacredness of the person. The idea of sacredness of the person—understood as a secular religiosity—and the self-sacrifices made in their his/her name produce the rise and development of a set of religious practices throughout religious life which is constantly renewed in modern societies.

The actions made by 9/11 rescuers and healthcare professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic are two clear examples of how Western societies activate to protect human life as one of its greater treasures by making self-sacrificial practices. One might assume that for healthcare workers, police officers and fire-fighters placing their lives at risk is just part of their code of professional ethics, as it is in the case of the military, but that raises the question of why this is so. Is it also part of the code of ethics of volunteers? Codes of professional ethics *per se* clearly do not suffice to provide an understanding of why these groups take the actions that they do. It is necessary to add meaning, a consecrated underlying value: the sacredness of the person on the terms set out by Durkheim (1973) and by Joas (2013). This operates in two directions: by inducing them to act in situations where the lives of civilians are under threat and, if necessary, by engaging a *pars pro toto* sacrificial mechanism in which the protection of the *personne humaine* in the abstract sense (Durkheim 1973) takes precedence over the life of any specific human person. It is worth considering this second meaning briefly: social emergencies call for a sacrifice in which part of society (the victim, or in this case the aforesaid groups of specialists) offer their lives as a gift, relinquishing them and immolating themselves for the whole (the sacrifier, or in this case civil society as manifested in the persons trapped in the World Trade Center or infected by the COVID-19 virus). The replacement mechanism developed is evident, but so is the sacred thing: the human person.

With respect to the function of sacrifice, i.e., consecration, is concerned, the sacrifier and/or the victim are moved to act by the idea of self-sacrifice or altruistic sacrifice (Schiller 1845; Dalferth 2010), though in this case it is secularised and focused on the sacredness of the *personne humaine* seen as a mundane religiosity rather than on the love felt by God the Father for his children as set out in the perspective of the "historic religions" (Bellah 1969).

As far as the development of sacrifice is concerned, some of the features developed during the Axial Age persist, such as the internalisation or spiritualisation of sacrifice and the blurring of the distinctions between sacrifier and victim, because the fact that it operates a transition from ritual to self-sacrifice means that they both begin to play the dual role of giving up lives and reaching the effects of that action through the consecration previously reserved solely for the sacrifier. In this scenario of internalisation or individualisation of sacrifice, the victim is consecrated through the action of sacrifice and can become a secular hero or a martyr of religiosity focused on the sacredness of the person. The role of the sacrifier becomes less central in regard to the first function, but he/she is still the basic recipient of the benefits of the action of sacrifice, because although the victim takes on the status of sacredness his/her act is aimed at protecting the group or a greater good. This does not mean that the sacrifier gives up the role of offering up lives to the sacred thing. The fact is that the process is articulated as one of transfer, of delegation, in which the victim acts as a representative of the sacrifier. For that delegation to be considered a

sacrifice there must be a correlation between the two, in which the victim (in carrying out his/her action) is actually acting as a representative of the sacrifier group and not as a deviant individual unconnected to the sacrifier. That correlation can be seen clearly in the two examples presented above.

Even so, it must be said that in the modern period this blurring of the distinctions between sacrifier and victim also extends to the sacred thing. The human person, in general, is sacralised but the victim offered up in sacrifice is (or rather continues to be) also a human person, but a specific one. It could be argued that what is protected is human life on a general rather than an individual level, as stated by Durkheim (1973), but that does not resolve the clear tension, and even paradox, that arises when the victim and the sacred thing are one and the same. This paradox can be summarized in the following statement: "In part this is because there may be in such cases special sources of plurality and incommensurability of values, because the conflict is likely to be between something that is valued by a social group, and something that is valued particularly by an individual who has to consider self-sacrificing" (Tessman 2018, p. 376). The price paid for saving human lives (sacred thing) is, sometimes, a life itself (sacred thing). This is the reason why Weiss speaks about self-sacrifice in these terms: "the highest form of sacrifice is self-sacrifice, the deliberate acceptance of a course of action, entailing the loss of one's life (. . .) In self-sacrifice death is not chosen. Rather it is accepted, submitted to as a consequence of an effort to reach something else" (Weiss 1949, p. 80).

On the basis of the previous paragraph, this paradox reveals the transcendent and ambivalent dimensions linked to sacrifice. As pointed out by Burkert (1983) or Heyman (2007) through the experience of sacrificial killing (of self-sacrificial killing too): "One perceives the sacredness of life; it is nourished and perpetuated by death" (Burkert 1983, p. 38). Here, we can observe the important role played by sacrifice as one of the main means through the sacred gain a voice, through the sacred can be articulated. In this sense, either in the shape of relinquishment to a physical or moral good, or thanks to giving the life itself for achieving a greater good *the sacred needs for sacrifice*. Sacrifice places human beings in front of the transcendence mirror.

One of the most important features of modern life is their "ability for self-correction" (Beriain 2005, p. 7). As we observed along this work, this provokes the emergence and cohabitation of several narratives in constant *dynamic tension* (Beriain 2020). In the introduction, we spoke about the cohabitation of sacrificial–ritual narratives and self-sacrificial narratives in the scholar studies on sacrifice. We think this cohabitation can be extrapolated to overall social life. Sacrifice understood in the light of ritual perspective is a violent act (here is not important if this violence is focused on the control of violence itself or, on the contrary, is a clear example of triggered violence). However, if we approach sacrifice in the light of self-sacrifice, it loses a great part of its violent dimension (at least, in which respect to the underlying logic of action), and focuses on—as we have seen—an exchange relationship based on gift and relinquishment. In this scenario, sacrifice develops a more performative and symbolic way and a less violent role (focused on immolation). Both narratives live together, *interacting and clashing*, as Max Weber reveals through their "new warrior Gods" metaphor.

In fact, the two examples we briefly analyzed in this section share some elements of these two narratives. Ritual narrative is depicted by the physical (not symbolic) life sacrificed of Police Officers, Firefighters, Volunteers and Healthcare professionals. Self-sacrificial narrative can be observed in the acts of relinquishment and gift involved in these lives delivered. Despite the two narratives living together in the examples analyzed, the cases of 9/11 and the COVID-19 pandemic reveal a stronger presence of self-sacrificial narrative than ritual, that is, in Bröckling's terms—in this case—the "chosen self-sacrifice" is most important rather than the "not chosen by oneself victim" (Bröckling 2020, pp. 230–31). In fact, the underlying narrative in these two examples is clearly the self-sacrificial one.

5. Conclusions

In this paper, we show that sacrifice remains present in today's societies. Sacrifice has not been diluted in the magma of history, but as a social fact, has adjusted its logic of action to the different scenarios in which it has developed. In this sense, in our work, we analyzed three changing dimensions with regard to ritual sacrifice: firstly, *a clear spiritualization or individualization of the practice that emanates from the transition to Axial Age religiosity and then the gradually secularized version of sacrifice. This generates a transition from ritual sacrifice to self-sacrifice*. As observed, The self becomes the subject of action, i.e., the person in charge in deciding if relinquishes him/her-self for a greater good or, in cases of force majeure, if gives willingly her/his life. Secondly, *we can observe a shift in the underlying logic of sacrificial practice from immolation to relinquishment*. In this sense, the main feature of self-sacrifice is the exchange relationship focused on what is relinquished and what is given as a gift. In the cases briefly analyzed in the last section, even when human life is given as a gift, this logic of action prevails. The good we relinquish is offered in the exchange. Through this exchange, the sacred thing is fostered. The sacred thing that we introduced in this work is the person. By contrast, the underlying logic of ritual sacrifice is immolation for establishing communication between mundane and supramundane realms. Thirdly we can observe *a cohabitation between historic and secular forms of religiosity*. On the one hand, in contemporary societies remain present the narrative of historic religions (Bellah 1969). These forms of religiosity develop around the idea of the existence of a chasm between mundane and supra-mundane orders. However, on the other hand, and at the same time, a new religious-secular narrative appears that gets behind in the sacralization of mundane questions like the nation, civil life, the person itself, the childhood or nature, among others. In the last section, and for illustrating the persistence of sacrifice in contemporary societies, we introduce a short analysis of one type of secular religiosity—sacredness of the person—that develops self-sacrificial forms. We briefly analyze two: the actions developed by 9/11 rescuers and by healthcare professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic. *In the terms we analyzed it with, sacrifice's persistence in modern societies entails three significant social dynamics: secularization of religiosity, individualization of religious and sacrificial practices, and a transition from immolation to relinquishment and gift with respect to sacrifice*.

In the first pages of this work, we made reference to the notion of Donald's *principle of conservation of gains*. In their course of action, societies have incorporated new elements that live together and interact with those typical of previous contexts. Each step taken in social life generates an increase in social complexity, requiring answers adapted to this increasing complexity. The future is not a *tabula rasa* from the past but a dynamic tension between the old and the new in the present. The same happens with the different mediations between sacred and profane things, they are constantly changing. The *principle of conservation of gains* embodies sacrifice through the dynamic tension existing among three historical dimensions of this social fact: *the ritual pre-axial*, the *axial–spiritual* and the *modern cognitive–instrumental*, the latter focused on gift exchange and relinquishment. These three dimensions do not perform in an independent way, but in an interdependent one, and they appear in hybrid variations like those that have been briefly shown in the examples of 9/11 and the COVID-19 pandemic. The social evolutionary analysis of Donald leaves the door open for the development of persistent processes of emergence and re-emergence of social action logics and, therefore, of sacrifice action logics. *Self-sacrifice based on gift and relinquishment is the underlying logic in the cases analyzed, but it is not the only narrative raising around sacrifice in contemporary societies*. We think this narrative is one of the most important today, but we also think that it is not the only one.

Following Donald, our proposal tries to avoid a teleological bias. Dynamic tensions among the three dimensions of sacrifice—and also between the sacred and the profane—symbolize just the opposite. We do not defend a finalist view of sacrifice, one based on the existence of several stages. In fact, we tried to avoid conjectures like: "when a society achieves their most modern expression, it is less violent and more peaceful", which seek to eradicate sacrifice from modern social life, because they understand it as a past vestige, as a

remainder of what we have been, but not of what we are. *The principle of conservation of gains* tells us just the opposite: Social facts remain and experiment with metamorphoses. In this way, for understanding them, it is necessary to take into account these two dimensions of social change and the constant dynamic tensions experimented by the old and new gains.

Author Contributions: J.G-G. and C.S.C. have jointly developed all the paper. Both authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: "This translation was funded by Social Changes Research Group Public University of Navarra". This research was funded by the National Project "Variedades de la experiencia creativa y modelos de sociedad" (REF: CSO2017-85052-R) granted by Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad (Spain).

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

1 In this sense, we can read an interesting paper: Belmonte (2020): "Phenomenology of resentment according to Scheler and Girard in light of sloth in Thomas Aquinas' Summa Theologiae". *Scientia et Fides* 1: 221–42. doi:10.12775/SetF.2020.002, that linked R. Girard's work to Thomas de Aquinas thought.

2 In this sense, it is important to say that we can find three theological perspectives: 1. Docetism, linked to the idea of Jesus has only divine nature. 2. Adaptionism/Arrianism, only human nature is adopted by the divine person 3. Hypostatic Union, Jesus was one person with two natures, divine and human.

3 It is important to highlight the name of the supernatural is clearly axial: *logos*, "the word".

4 This could be argued about at great length.

5 The etymology of the word can be traced back to the root meaning of "witnesses".

6 This group is added because it was one of the most prominent in the rescue works made in Manhattan following the 9/11 attacks, not for being an "occupational group".

7 https://www.amnesty.org/es/latest/news/2020/09/amnesty-analysis-7000-health-workers-have-died-from-covid19/ (accessed on 8 March 2021)

8 Supporting this idea, we introduce two statements linked to the sacrificial dimension of firefighters in 9/11 attacks and healthcare professional during COVID-19 pandemic. Firstly, the words of Rob Serra, surviving firefighter in the rescue of Twin Towers: "I do remember thinking that this is probably going to kill me". Statement removed from: https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/9-11-anniversary/9-11-first-responders-begin-feel-attack-s-long-term-n908306 (accessed on 8 March 2021). Secondly, we introduce this little extract of an opinion piece writes by Norma Torres, member of US Congress (California): "As a nation, we have always honored the men and women who make the ultimate sacrifice, and we should do the same for our medical heroes too. That's why I introduced the Frontline Heroes Act last week. [. . .] We have never failed heroes who sacrificed their lives before, and we're not going to start now. Americans are grateful for the sacrifices that healthcare workers are making." Statement removed from: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/oct/09/frontline-medical-workers-coronavirus-support-congress (accessed on 8 March 2021).

References

Adorno, Theodor W., and Max Horkheimer. 2002. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Standford: Stanford University Press.

Agamben, Giorgio. 1998. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign, Power and Bare Life*. Standford: Stanford University Press.

Alexander, Jeffrey C., and Philip Smith. 2020. COVID-19 and Symbolic Action: Global Pandemic as Code, Narrative and Cultural Performance. *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* 8: 263–69. [CrossRef]

Aron, Raymond. 1944. L´avenir des religions séculières. *La France Libre* 8: 210–17.

Assmann, Jan. 2009. *The Price of Monotheism*. Standford: Stadnford University Press.

Bataille, George. 1992. *Theory of Religion*. New York: Zone Books.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 1991. *Modernity and the Holocaust*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Beccaria, Cesare. 1995. *On Crime and Punishments*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Belayche, Nicole. 2001. Partager la table des dieux: L´empereur Julien et les sacrifices. *Revue de l´Histoire des Religions* 218: 457–86. [CrossRef]

Bellah, Robert N. 1967. Religion in America. *Daedalus. Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 96: 1–21.
Bellah, Robert N. 1969. Religious Evolution. In *Sociology and Religion. A Book of Readings*. Edited by N. Birnbaum and G. Lenzer. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, pp. 67–83.
Bellah, Robert N. 2011. *Religion in Human Evolution: From Paleolithic to the Axial Age*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
Belmonte, Miguel Ángel. 2020. Phenomenology of resentment according to Scheler and Girard in light of sloth in Thomas Aquinas' Summa Theologiae. *Scientia et Fides* 1: 221–42.
Benn, Claire. 2016. Overdemandingness Objections and Supererogation. In *The Limits of Moral Obligation*. Edited by Marcel Van Ackeren and Michael Kuehler. London: Routledge, pp. 68–83.
Berger, Peter L. 2014. *The Many Altars of Modernity*. Boston: De Gruyter.
Beriain, Josetxo. 2005. *Modernidades en Disputa*. Barcelona: Anthropos.
Beriain, Josetxo. 2020. The Endless Metamorphoses of Sacrifice and Its Clashing Narratives. *Religions* 11: 684. [CrossRef]
Bloch, Maurice. 1992. *Prey into Hunter. The Politics of Religious Experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Bloch, Maurice. 2015. *In and Out of Each Other's Bodies: Theory of Mind, Evolution, Truth and the Nature of the Social*. New York: Routledge.
Bröckling, Ulrich. 2020. *Postheorische Helden. Ein Zeitbild*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, pp. 230–31.
Burkert, Walter. 1983. *Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Casanova, José V. 1994. *Public Religions in the Modern World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Casanova, José V. 2001. Secularization. In *The International Encyclopaedia of Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Edited by Neil J. Smelser and Paul B. Baltes. Oxford: Elsevier, pp. 13.786–13.791.
Cassirer, Ernst. 1955. *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms. Volume Two: Mythical Thought*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Chappell, Shopie-Grace. 2018. The Cross. *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 26: 1–21. [CrossRef]
Comte, Auguste. 2009. *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*. 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Dalferth, Ingolf. 2010. Self-sacrifice. From the Act of Violence to the Passion of Love. *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 68: 77–94. [CrossRef]
Derrida, Jacques. 1998. *Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of Religion at the Limits of Reason Alone*. Edited by Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo. Standford: Standford University Press, pp. 1–78.
Detienne, Marcel, and Jean Pierre Vernant. 1989. *The Cuisine of Sacrifice among the Greeks*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
Donald, Merlin. 1991. *The Origins of the Modern Mind: Three Stages in the Evolution of Culture and Cognition*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Donald, Merlin. 2012. An Evolutionary Approach to Culture: Implications for the Study of Axial Age. In *The Axial Age and Its Consequences*. Edited by Robert N. Bellah and Hans Joas. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, pp. 47–76.
Dorsey, Dale. 2013. The Supererogatory, and How to Accommodate It. *Utilitas* 25: 355–82. [CrossRef]
Durkheim, Émile. 1973. Individualism and the Intellectuals. In *Émile Durkheim. On Morality and Society*. Edited by Robert N. Bellah. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 43–57.
Durkheim, Émile. 1995. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. New York: Free Press.
Duyndam, Joachim, Anne-Marie Korte, and Marcel Poorthuis. 2016. *Sacrifice in Modernity: Community, Ritual, Identity. From Nationalism and Nonviolence to Health Care and Harry Potter*. Leiden: Brill.
Dworkin, Richard. 2011. *Justice for Hedgehogs*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Eagleton, Terry. 2018. *Radical Sacrifice*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Eisenstadt, Shmuel N. 1986. Introduction: The Axial Age Breakthroughs- Their Characteristics and Origins. In *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations*. Edited by Shmuel N. Eisenstadt. New York: State University of New York, pp. 1–25.
Elias, Norbert. 1968. *The Civilizing Process. Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*. London: Blackwell. First published 1939.
Evans-Pritchard, Edward. 1956. *Nuer Religion*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Feuerbach, Ludwig. 1882. *The Essence of Christianity*. London: Trübner and Co.
Foucault, Michel. 1977. *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison*. London: Allen Lane.
Gil-Gimeno, Javier. 2018. Lo religioso en escenarios de estrés social: El 11-S visto desde la perspectiva de la religión civil de Robert N. Bellah. *Revista Anthropos. Cuadernos De Cultura Crítica Y Conocimiento* 248: 115–28.
Gil-Gimeno, Javier. 2020. La pervivencia del rito en las sociedades modernas y seculares. El 11-S como ritual piacular. In *Creatividad: Entre Transgresión Y Normalización*. Edited by Celso Sánchez Capdequí. Madrid: La Catarata, pp. 175–219.
Gil-Gimeno, Javier. 2021. Las ambivalencias creativas del libro: Del monoteísmo al fundamentalismo moderno. *Revista Española de Sociología (RES)* 30: 1–18.
Giner, Salvador. 1993. Religión civil. *REIS* 61: 23–55. [CrossRef]
Girard, René. 1977. *Violence and the Sacred*. Washington: John Hopkins University.
Girard, René. 2012. *Sacrifice*. East Lansing (MICH): Michigan State University Press.
Habermas, Jürgen. 1984. *The Theory of Communicative Action. Lifeworld and System*. London: Heinemann, vol. 2.
Hamayon, Roberte. 1990. *La Chasse À l´Âme. Esquisse d´Une Theorie Chamanienne Siberienne*. Nanterre: Societé d´Ethnologie.
Hénaff, Marcel. 2010. *The Price of Truth*. Standford: Standford University Press.
Herrenschmidt, Olivier. 1989. *Les Meilleurs Dieux Sont Hindous*. Lausanne: L´Âge D´Homme.

Heyman, George. 2007. *The Power of Sacrifice: Roman and Christian Discourses in Conflict*. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press.
Jaspers, Karl. 2011. *The Origin and Goal of History*. London: Routledge.
Jay, N. 1992. *Throughout your Generations Forever: Sacrifice, Religion and Paternity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Joas, Hans. 2013. *The Sacredness of the Person. A New Genealogy of Human Rights*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
Keenan, Dennis K. 2005. *The Question of Sacrifice*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Lachmann, Richard, and Abbey Stivers. 2016. The Culture of Sacrifice in Conscript and Volunteer Militaries: The US Medal of Honor from the Civil War to Iraq, 1861–2014. *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* 4: 323–58. [CrossRef]
Lévi, Sylvain. 1966. *La Doctrine Du Sacrifice Dans Les Brâhmanas*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
Levi-Strauss, Claude. 1966. *The Savage Mind*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
Marvin, Carolyn, and David W. Ingle. 1999. *Blood Sacrifice and the Nation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Mathiez, Albert. 2012. *El origen De Los Cultos Revolucionarios*. Madrid: CIS.
Mauss, Marcel, and Henri Hubert. 1964. *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Functions*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
Mauss, Marcel. 2002. *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. London: Routledge. First published 1924.
McClymond, Kathryn. 2008. *Beyond Sacred Violence: A Comparative Study of Sacrifice*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
Milbank, John. 1996. Stories of Sacrifice. *Modern Theology* 12: 75–102. [CrossRef]
Nancy, Jean Luc. 2003. *A Finite Thinking*. Standford: Stanford University Press.
Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1967. *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*. New York: Random House.
Parsons, Talcott. 2005. *The Social System*. London: Routledge.
Petropoulou, Maria Zoe. 2008. *Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Greek Religion, Judaism and Christianity, 100 BC-AD 200*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Riley, Alexander. 2014. Flags, Totem Bodies, and the Meanings of 9/11: A Durkheimian Tour of a September 11th Ceremony at the Flight 93 Chapel. *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 39: 719–40. [CrossRef]
Rives, James. 1995. Human Sacrifices among Pagans and Christians. *Journal of Roman Studies* 85: 65–85. [CrossRef]
Robertson Smith, William. 1886. Sacrifice. In *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, p. 132.
Robertson Smith, William. 1972. *The Religion of the Semites. The Fundamental Institutions*. New York: Schocken.
Roszak, Piotr. 2020. Mute Sacrum. Faith and Its Relation to Heritage on Camino de Santiago. *Religions* 11: 70. [CrossRef]
Sánchez Capdequí, Celso. 2004. *Las Máscaras Del Dinero. El simbolismo Social de la Riqueza*. Barcelona: Anthropos.
Schiller, Friedrich. 1845. *Aesthetic Letters, Essays and Philosophical Letters*. Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown.
Seaford, Richard. 2004. *Money and the Early Greek Mind: Homer, Philosophy, Tragedy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Seryczyńska, Berenika, Lluis Oviedo, Piotr Roszak, Suvi-Maria Katariina Saarelainen, Hilla Inkilä, Josefa Torralba Albaladejo, and Francis-Vincent Anthony. 2021. Religious Capital as a Central Factor Coping with the COVID-19. Clues from an International Survey. *European Journal of Science and Theology* 17: 43–56.
Shilling, Chris, and Philip A. Mellor. 2013. Making Things Sacred: Re-theorizing the Nature and Function of Sacrifice in Modernity. *Journal of Classical Sociology* 13: 319–37. [CrossRef]
Simmel, Georg. 2004. *Philosophy of Money*. London: Routledge.
Spencer, Herbert. 2004. *The Principles of Sociology*. 4 vols. Forest Grove (Oregon): Pacific University Press.
Strenski, Ivan. 2002. *Contesting Sacrifice: Religion, Nationalism and Social Thought in France*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
Stroumsa, Guy. 2009. *The End of Sacrifice: Religious Transformations in Late Antiquity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Stroumsa, Guy. 2017. *The Making of the Abrahamic Religions in Late Antiquity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Tava, Francesco. 2018. Sacrifice as a Political Problem: Jan Patocka and Sacred Sociology. *Metodo* 6: 71–96. [CrossRef]
Taylor, Charles. 2007. *A Secular Age*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.
Tessman, Lisa. 2018. Sacrificing Value. *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 26: 376–98. [CrossRef]
Theissen, Gerd. 1999. *A Theory of Primitive Christian Religion*. London: SCM Press.
Tylor, Edward B. 2010. *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art and Custom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Urmson, James O. 1958. Saints and Heroes. In *Essays in Moral Philosophy*. Edited by Abraham I. Melden. Washington, DC: University of Washington Press, pp. 198–216.
Van Ackeren, Marcel, and Alfred Archer. 2018. Sacrifice and Moral Philosophy. *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 26: 301–7. [CrossRef]
Van Baal, Jan. 1976. Offering, Sacrifice and Gift. *Numen* 23: 161–78. [CrossRef]
Weber, Max. 2004. *El político Y El Científico*. Madrid: Alianza.
Weiss, Paul. 1949. Sacrifice and Self-sacrifice: Their Warrant and Limits. *The Review of Metaphysics* 2: 76–98.