Seeking Solidarity: Discoursing Theology and Cultural Theory as Complementary Forces in Promoting and Sustaining Solidarity in the Public Sphere

by

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Abstract
In this thesis I discuss the concept of solidarity. Specifically, I propose that concerns of solidarity that conceive it narrowly as mere social action can be supplemented and enriched by a retrieval of the rich anthropological heritage within theology. In a Christian context, the meaning of solidarity is more correctly captured by our mutual and public recognition of each other. Toward illuminating this point, I examine the intersecting relationship between theology and cultural theory. I seek to illuminate a Christian identity that brings theology into discourse with our wider culture in ways that illuminate how all persons and societies are open to grace. What emerges is a complementary response to questions of solidarity that avoids an understanding of solidarity akin to social action. This thesis offers an understanding of solidarity that is based in a mutual recognition of each, which extends toward the practice of hospitality as both a moral imperative and a legal right.
Table of Contents

Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 1
Thesis Statement ............................................................................................................................. 10
Method ........................................................................................................................................... 11
Chapter 1 Habermas and the Implications of Translations ......................................................... 14
  1.1 Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 14
  1.2 Common Sense: As a Corrective to Ideological Forces ....................................................... 15
  1.3 Translation ........................................................................................................................... 20
  1.4 Translation: Religious and Secular Communities as
      Co-learning Communities ................................................................................................. 23
  1.5 Translation as a Dialogical Procedural Frame Work ............................................................. 24
  1.6 Translation as Conserving ................................................................................................... 30
  1.7 The Project of Integrationism ............................................................................................. 31
  1.8 Conclusion ............................................................................................................................ 37
Chapter 2 Jeffrey Stout and the Merits of Conversation ............................................................ 39
  2.1 Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 39
  2.2 Pragmatism and its Contribution to the Body Politic .......................................................... 40
  2.3 Stouts Coalition with Religiously Orientated
      Groups and Persons ........................................................................................................... 44
  2.4 Stout and Practical Wisdom as Achieved Through Discernment ....................................... 47
  2.5 Faith Claims versus Religious Claims ............................................................................... 49
  2.6 Conclusion ............................................................................................................................ 54
Chapter 3 Karl Rahner and a New Theology of Grace ................................................................. 57
  3.1 Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 57
  3.2 A Theology of Mutually Conditioned Relationships ............................................................ 59
  3.3 Neo-Scholasticism: The Challenges of a Theology
      that “Others” Grace ............................................................................................................. 62
  3.4 Grace as the Self-Gift and the Self-Communication of God............................................... 65
  3.5 The Critique of de Lubac: Rahner’s Rejection of
      a Natural Beatitude ............................................................................................................ 71
  3.6 Rahner’s Break from de Lubac ......................................................................................... 73
  3.7 Nature and Grace: Conceptually Distinctive, but
      joined Existentially ............................................................................................................. 74
  3.8 Conclusion ............................................................................................................................ 77
Chapter Four Thomas E. Reynolds and Seyla Benhabib:
Availability and Participation ......................................................................................................... 80
  4.1 Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 80
  4.2 Historical Context: Hospitality as a Duty of Solidarity ...................................................... 80
  4.3 The Translational Model and the Conversational Model ..................................................... 83
  4.4 Hospitality and Participation over Conversation
      and Translation ................................................................................................................... 85
  4.5 Hospitality: A Moral Disposition of Availability ................................................................. 87
  4.6 From International Rights to Norms of Cosmopolitanism .................................................. 93
  4.7 Members and Non-members in Public Spheres .................................................................... 96
  4.8 Hospitality as a Legal Right ............................................................................................... 98
4.9 Interactive Universalism that Champions Participationism .......................... 102
4.10 Conclusion................................................................................................. 103
General Conclusion: Toward Solidarity .......................................................... 105
Bibliography .................................................................................................... 112
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Introduction

In March, 2008, Loyola High School, Montreal, (a Jesuit owned and operated school of the Jesuits in English Canada) requested that it be exempt from teaching the provincial government’s newly devised and mandated “Ethics and Religious Culture Program” (henceforth ERC). The program aims to solidify a shared understanding of the religious heritage of Quebec through a focus on the recognition of others and the common good. Loyola High School claims several key factors that would make teaching the program a conflict with the Catholic character and values of its school. Their motion claims in particular two substantive objects to the ERC programme:

1. The incompatibility [of a Catholic ethics course with the ERC program], which is both substantive and methodological, is that the ERC program put forward by the Ministry represents and inculcates a relativistic philosophy, which to employ for convenience a label used by some academics, may be referred to as “normative pluralism,” and a pedagogy that corresponds to that philosophy.

2. Moreover, while the new program does not prohibit private Catholic schools such as Loyola from providing supplementary religious education in addition to the mandatory ERC courses, such a course of action is unacceptable in that it would amount to inculcating in students two incompatible worldviews.¹

In response to Loyola High School’s request for an exemption to teach the provincial course, the Ministry of Education in Quebec claims that religious freedom is limited to individuals, not to institutions. As Loyola is an educational institution it cannot

appeal to the “freedom of religion” clause for exemption. Moreover, the government of Quebec argues that “freedom of religion” cannot apply in the case of Loyola as the ERC programme is “neutral.” Given that, Loyola High School takes notable opposition with the government of Quebec, claiming that education, religious or otherwise, cannot be neutral. Loyola High School, however, holds that the course “outcomes” of ERC—such as responsible citizenship, mutual respect for the other, and concern for the poor—are the same outcomes achieved by a similar course taught within a Catholic context. For our purposes, this case captures the current ideological tensions of trust between governments and the various and diverse stakeholders within the nation state. The Loyola case has been before the Supreme Court of Quebec (which ruled in favour of Loyola High School), the Court of Appeal of Quebec (which ruled in favour of the government of Quebec), and, most recently, Loyola High School was granted by the Supreme Court of Canada leave to appeal the December 4, 2012 judgment of the Quebec Court of Appeal.

The case of Loyola before a variety of courts illustrates a provincial and ideological anxiety within the government of Quebec—legitimate or otherwise—that religion is a threat to solidarity within our modern society. Given that anxiety, it is to be expected that the Quebec government adhere to “neutrality” in the teaching of educational modules designed toward respecting others and supporting the common good. At the same time, their adherence to “neutrality” in the ERC programme becomes for Loyola—and potentially other persons or institutions—an act of conscripted religious neutrality which silences Loyola’s teaching of its distinctive heritage and religious faith. The subsequent standoff being played out in the courts between the Ministry of Education and Loyola High School distracts from larger questions, such as questions concerning how diverse
persons and institutions within a modern liberal state might collectively work together in sustaining solidarity.

For Catholics, and more generally, for Christians, solidarity never remains just between individuals. In the context of Christian anthropology and theology, solidarity defines relationships between individuals, professions, churches, religions, states, and God. For the Christian, solidarity has a democratic, civic and redistributive dimension. It is not the purpose of this paper to evaluate the arguments in the Loyola High School case. The case, however, illuminates the bigger questions of whether a Christian World view, personal or institutional, can facilitate fruitful cooperation within the modern state to form competent, compassionate and responsible citizens. Indeed, solidarity is not just about civic, democratic or redistributive processes. Solidarity is fundamentally about trusting your neighbour, whether “neighbour” is an individual or an institution. The current stand off between Loyola High School and the Government of Quebec is a potential undermining of the very social cohesion that a mutually sustaining solidarity supports.

Historically, Canada has taken seriously the responsibility of sustaining solidarity, while, at the same time, accommodating diversity within its state. One such example of sustaining solidarity is Canada’s socialized health care. Yet, the current case regarding the ERC program highlights a breakdown in the mutual responsibility shared between governments and the various public constituents regarding the common trust needed for

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In the concluding section of my thesis “Trust” will be considered as a response to the suspicion and anxiety that can exist between religious persons and institutions and secular persons and institutions. I will utilize Thomas Reynolds’s contribution in this area, which he has entitled “Toward the Recovery of Trust.”
sustaining solidarity within the modern state. Solidarity, for a Christian, brings into play the belief that the incarnation of God signals in a very real way God’s solidarity with humanity and, in turn, humanity’s solidarity with God. In light of this, I wish to suggest that the ideal of Christian solidarity—the ability to recognize God in every individual and every individual in God—is an effective way for the Christian to open up the correlation between their worldview, informed by faith, and another person’s worldview, whether secular, cultural or religious, in an orientation fruitfully aimed at sustaining collaborative solidarity in our modern pluralistic society.

The concept of solidarity holds multiple dimensions: democratic solidarity, such as care for basic human rights and equalities; civic solidarity, such openness to newcomers and mutual tolerance; redistributive solidarity, and such as support for redistribution toward the poor. Within the twentieth century, persons of faith and secularists alike have taken seriously the promotion of solidarity within society. Two examples of such promoters of solidarity, which we will later explore in greater depth, are the cultural theorists Jürgen Habermas and Jeffrey Stout. Within Christianity, Pope John Paul II’s theologically framed world-view of solidarity captures its democratic, civic and redistributive dimension in his 1987 encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (Social Concern): “[Solidarity] is not a feeling of vague compassion or a shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and preserving determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individ-

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ual, because we are all really responsible for all.” Solidarity aids in seeing the other as worthy of compassionate consideration. The other may be a person, people or nation. Sensitive to our responsibility to the other, John Paul II skillfully presents solidarity as a mutual recognition and an ethical responsibility for the other.

One might ask why a hermeneutical approach is needed for sustaining solidarity? Thomas E. Reynolds offers the following helpful justification in support of his preference of a critical hermeneutics of recovery: “[hermeneutics is employed] . . . not only to preserve the capacity to resist and expose corruptions and distortions, but also to retrieve the full capacities of human beings as productive agents of their own mutual flourishing in webs of dialogical solidarity.” For the Christian, underpinning this correlation of dialogical solidarity is a Christian theological anthropology that extends toward and transforms how we see the other. This approach seeks to foster dialogue with the other in practical ways. Thus, before launching into the practice of solidarity, a Christian must first attend to the hermeneutical task of understanding what solidarity entails and how, in its correlational character, it transforms the way we recognize the other. This recognition is complicated, however, by the pluralism that characterizes not only the public sphere, but also the variety of Christian communities who exercise ministry within society. The tendency to label persons as “other” is a divisive act, undermining our mutual cooperation in sustaining a thick solidity in the public sphere. A renewed understanding of Christian solidarity—through hermeneutics—can make a worthwhile contribution toward the Christian sustainment of a thick solidarity in today’s modern society.

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The emerging tension between religious and secular worldviews is the underlying tension driving this work. Because of this tension, the retrieval of a “theology of grace” cannot be merely a restatement of what Rahner said about grace. The work of restating Rahner’s insight and contribution to a theology of grace will involve a process of interpretation whereby the achievements of past theologies will integrate within our current theologizing. This correlation will allow—for our purposes—a new understanding of solidarity that honours our past theological heritage, while also remaining credible in our contemporary contexts. Yet, our hermeneutical approach is not exclusively theoretical. In our concluding section we will describe particular social practices that sustain solidarity in our modern society.7

As just indicated, hermeneutics plays a key role in the way we might exercise both a critical and self-critical approach to the contribution of Christian solidarity within the public sphere. Historically, hermeneutics was tied specifically to such disciplines as theology and philosophy. Today, however, it is seen more broadly as a method of understanding that enjoys a cross-disciplinary use and respect. Through an emphasis on dialogue, current hermeneutics seeks to bring about meaningful agreement on any number of topics. In the discipline of theology, we have seen the expansion of theological discourse

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One principle of the Church’s social doctrine is subsidiarity. The argument of Loyola High School, arguably, could be understood as an undermining by the Province of Quebec of the Principle of Subsidiarity. To illustrate, the Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace in its *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* argues that "In this way, intermediate social entities can properly perform the functions that fall to them without being required to hand them over unjustly to other social entities of a higher level, by which they would end up being absorbed and substituted, in the end seeing themselves denied their dignity and essential place" (186). The obligatory teaching of the ERC programme might be considered by the Christian Community an unnecessary act of centralization denying Loyola High School its responsibility to teach ethics from within a Christian discourse that seeks the same educational outcomes as the ERC programme.
into other disciplines, such as disability studies and ecology. Such inter-disciplinary exchanges contribute toward an understanding of the conditions through which human agreement can be reached as well as highlight common meaning or disagreements among people. The branching out of hermeneutics into different disciplines highlights, too, the reality of pluralism. Pluralism is a defining feature of the public sphere because it presents particular challenges to how we understand one another, let alone achieve consensus in the public sphere. It is our contention that theological hermeneutics has a significant contribution to make in producing the kind of dialogue that sustains solidarity within pluralistic societies.

Given that theology is in perpetual self-development, the hermeneutical project I foresee as useful is one that is itself in a constant process of re-interpretation. One particular method helpful to our work is a “method of correlation.” 8 Roger Haight’s approach to this method, first formulated by Paul Tillich and modified later by David Tracy, makes a distinction between original revelation and dependent revelation in such a way as to invite a re-interpretation of revelation in light of current human experiences and

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8 Roger Haight, *Dynamics of Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 191. Here, Haight draws upon the contributions of both Tillich and Tracy. Haight notes that David Tracy in *Blessed Rage For Order: The New Pluralism in Theology* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975) “investigates the anthropological grounds for theological language as such, that is, as a discipline among other disciplines in the academy. He then proposes a nuanced method of correlation for theology that integrates and holds together faith in transcendence and knowledge and commitment to the human project” (259).

Tracy draws on Tillich—and moves beyond Tillich—for an understanding of Correlation in David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1975), 44-46. Tracy agrees with Tillich that theology ought to have two sources and for Tillich these sources happened to be “situation” and “message.” While acknowledging the indebtedness that many theologians have to Tillich’s twofold theological method, Tracy argues that theologians cannot accept Tillich’s method of correlation. Tracy argues that “Tillich’s method does not actually correlate; it juxtaposes questions from the ‘situation’ with answers from the ‘message.’ Insofar as this critique is true, the contemporary theologian can accept Tillich’s articulation of the need for a method of correlation, but he cannot accept Tillich’s own model for theology as one which actually correlates” (46).
contexts.9 Sustaining solidarity is one such “correlation” that focuses on the religious engagement in public life. Haight identifies five attributes that are directly applicable to processes of correlation, and any theological engagement with various disciplines and traditions that coexist in the public realm. Firstly, the method is “apologetic,” making the Christian message intelligible. Secondly, the method is “dialogical,” and uses a dialogical form of interpretation. As dialogical, Haight argues, in its procedure, “current consciousness confronts the world of traditional symbols: and the symbols of tradition confront the present world of experience.”10 Thirdly, the method describes human freedom and a Christian understanding of such freedom. Fourthly, this method shows how theology has always been done, through the raising of new questions and responses, to such questions within an interpretation of the Christian tradition. Finally, the method encourages theology to acknowledges its own claims as historically relative and pluralistic.11 As we are not employing theological hermeneutics for its own sake, it is essential to our project that we have a hermeneutical framework to conceive of and work toward sustaining solidarity in

9 Neill Ormerod, "Quarrels with the method of correlation," in Theological Studies 57.4 (1996), accessed Feburary 11 2014, http://go.galegroup.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA19020925&v=2.1&u=utoronto_main&it=r&p=AONE&sw=w&asid=49788b6d56608cf7e74dad9f26bfbebb. Here, Ormerod gives a succinct account of Haight’s method of correlation: “A method of correlation rests on this necessary fusion of past and present in the reception of revelation. It consists in distinguishing and then bringing together original revelation as mediated through its traditional symbols and the situation of human consciousness in which it is received at any given time. What are correlated are the meaning of the original revelation and present-day human experience. Thus the method involves two movements. The first is to distinguish the meaning of the symbols of tradition from current experience; the second is to bring them together in such a way that they "mutually condition each other in generating an understanding of the object of Christian faith." Haight sees such a method as essential to theology. It is not, for him, merely one method among others, but the proper method for theology. Without it one will fall into either a revelational positivism (e.g. fundamentalism) or a reductionist psychological anthropology.”

10 Roger Haigh, Dynamics of Theology, 192.

our present time and within pluralistic society. Given that the “method of correlation” is neither mechanical nor deterministic it is a helpful approach in sustaining solidarity.\footnote{Haight’s theory of correlation addresses issues of anthropology. If we take the quality of apologetics within his theory of correlation we notice that it takes seriously the life of Jesus in his day and how that historically lived and particular life might address questions of anthropology today. To quote Haight, “It is not a question of literally imitating Jesus, but of finding salvific meaning in response to the negativities, the meaninglessness, and the death dealing social structures that mark common social human existence.” Ibid., 206. This wider sense of solidarity within a “common social human existence” is captured by Cathleen Kaveny. She argues for an understanding of human dignity within the context of community as opposed to an understanding rooted in a strict sense of the autonomy of the person: “fundamental human dignity is not a purely individual matter; it is the common moral currency of the community. An individual can no more define and apply her own unique conception of fundamental dignity than she can design and print her personal, boutique conception of legal tender. Judgments about fundamental dignity must be universalizable; they cannot be made about particular persons suffering from particular deficiencies without also implying the same judgments regarding others who are similarly situated.” Cathleen Kaveny, \textit{Law’s Virtues: Fostering Autonomy and Solidarity in American Society}, 171. Solidarity is about recognizing each person as social and the role of society is to draw out the individual into a wider social community for both their good and the common good. Ibid., 28.}

Conversations within a pluralistic public sphere on matters of religion have highlighted significant complexities, if not mistrust, between persons and traditions. One recent example of this is the proposed Charter of Values in Quebec. At issue is whether there are resources and means by which persons from varied traditions can come together in productive conversation about shared public goals, and if so, what those goals are. Is a secular and neutral common ground required to reach consensus? Does this mean all must translate their convictions into a neutral discourse—one in principle sharable among all—in order to speak together? Or are there ways to frame a conversation in which each speaks from within their convictions yet respects the other? More specifically, how might Christians do so?

This thesis suggests that Karl Rahner provides Christians with an answer to the question of how we might understand solidarity and practice solidarity. If we believe that God graces every human being, and if one of the effects of this grace is a change in atten-
tiveness, then we must find ways to recognize the good in non-Christians and their communities and acknowledge that it may be the result of God’s universal grace at work. Rahner’s lead here can create optimism and not pessimism in how Christians understand and dialogue in the world.

Within the Christian community, however, dialogue within the public sphere has generated criticism and even suspicion. Using Rahner as theological source for opening genuine dialogue offers us an interpretative framework to engage in public life constructively and foster solidarity. Crucially, this practical emphasis on solidarity envisions an approach that generously anticipates God’s work already active in the public sphere, and in other people and perspectives. Rahner’s theology, therefore, provides an important route to a dialogue by cultivating openness to others as a Christian virtue grounded in traditional theological claims.

**Thesis Statement:**

This thesis will argue that Rahner’s theological legacy offers important resources for the Christian in promoting and sustaining a thick solidarity of others in our modern and pluralistic society. In promoting and sustaining a thick solidarity, Rahner’s “supernatural existential” is a critical resource in not only understanding his theology of grace but it also serves as a formidable resource for engaging questions of solidarity. As a critical resource, the supernatural existential seeks to hypothesize and express the *a priori* graced-experience of being human that is both intrinsic and constitutive of being human. Existence is a gift from God for all, not simply for Christians. Accordingly, this project will show that solidarity is not merely concerned with social planning, but more funda-
mentally concerned with mutual recognition. From such mutual recognition comes a shift in our theological understanding of the other, the one before us, through which we engage with the other in a transformative mutual recognition that expands into a co-labouring in promoting and sustaining solidarity in our public spheres.

Method:
We plan to approach our topic through a critical engagement with cultural theorists and theologians. This advancement constructively turns theology toward cultural studies whereby both disciples can mutually dialogue with each other in such ways that both compliment and promotes the shared concern of promoting and sustaining solidarity in the public sphere. The criteria for engaging the subject of our thesis are threefold: fidelity, intelligibility, and empowerment. Haight as an interpretation and method for a constructive theology employs this threefold criteria. For him, fidelity understands original revelation as that which gives shape to our current questions and asks new questions of theology today. Fidelity, however, is not just a recapitulation of the original. Rather, as subject to the method of correlation, fidelity seeks constantly to bring original sources into conversation with current concerns in such a way theology is, on the one hand, faithful to an original revelation, and, on the other hand, uses that fidelity to mediate new understandings of theology. Intelligibility as a criterion for interpretation builds up faithfulness. Its goal is not just apropos with a particular culture. Rather, it seeks a wider and more universal coherence. Intelligibility must be mediated by a universal anthropology

13 Ibid., 211.
14 Please refer to Cathleen Kaveny, Law’s Virtues: Fostering Autonomy and Solidarity in American Society, 27. Here she argues for an understanding solidarity that achieves a relationship between the
that recognizes the theological dignity of every person. In doing so, we argue for an understanding of human dignity—an anthropology—that is not a individual matter, but an understanding of human dignity that is the moral currency of the community. Lastly, an experience of the infinite must be empowering to the whole life of the human subject, whereby our solidarity is best captured in mutual recognition of each other as created in the image and likeness of God.

This thesis will unfold in four chapters. In the first chapter we will consider Habermas’ employment of translation as a means to create a viable public discourse, noting its implications for faith-orientated persons. The chapter will examine whether his efforts to promote a more humbled understanding of reason is helpful for theology today. In the second chapter, we will consider the efforts of a North American contributor, Stout, to create a thicker public discourse by involving the religious claims of religiously orientated persons. The third chapter utilizes the contribution of Rahner in creating an anthropological pathway for understanding solidarity as mutual recognition over and above social planning. The final chapter extends this by considering the work of Christian theologian, Reynolds, and the non-confessional cultural theorist, Seyla Benhabib, in developing a practice of hospitality rooted in solidarity.

In the end, Rahner’s methodological and theological commitments provide us with important resources for understanding how we can be both faithful to our religious tradition and sincere contributors to the wider human community. Most significantly for Christians, Rahner’s methodological and theological achievements remind us that within individual and the broader community. Such relationships within our community are a necessary ingredient of human flourishing.

15 Ibid., 171.
the public sphere, love of God and world are mutually inclusive. We love God in the
very way we love those we encounter—familial or stranger—and we love God in the way
we love our world. For the Christian, sincere love of God can never lead to a rejection of
one’s neighbour. The task, therefore, of the contemporary Christian vocation in the public
sphere is to be open to others. Treatment of solidarity within the discipline of theology is
one important step toward fostering dialogue within the public sphere.
Chapter One

Jürgen Habermas and the Implications of Translation

1.1. Introduction

Jürgen Habermas is best known for his development of the theory of communicative action. Emerging from the Frankfurt School, he was regarded as indifferent to religion. As a critical theorist, he championed the formal interrogation of traditions, arguing that one cannot take for granted the validity of the presuppositions of any tradition. In this respect, critical theorists challenged comprehensive world-views that were rooted in ideologies assuming for themselves a partial or wholesale sacredness. To that end, critical theorists developed an innovative theory of rationality based in traditions of Marxist analysis. Through rationality, critical theory sought to reveal the existence of universal social norms. Critical theorists argued that such universal social norms were to be found in our communicative action. While communicative action is not a good in itself, it is considered a project.

This chapter follows the range in both tone and meaning of Habermas’ notion of solidarity in the public sphere. We begin first by outlining Habermas’ presentation of critical rationality and in particular, we will consider his account of “common sense” as it acts as a deterrent against forms of ideology within the public sphere. From that, we proceed to consider his theory of “translation” as a mechanism for moving religion from the localized or self-focused concern to a force for solidarity within the wider community in the public sphere. While acknowledging the significant contribution of Habermas in fostering a wider public solidarity, our discussion argues that the imposition placed upon religious persons and groups to translate their religious premises in the public sphere is
disproportionate. It is levied upon religious persons and groups in a way that segregates their religious resources and convictions from what they can proclaim in the public sphere. Such divisions cannot create the kind of respectful recognition required for a thick solidarity in the public sphere, creating instead communities of mere redistribution.

1. 2 Common Sense: As a Corrective to Ideological Forces

The task of communicative action for Habermas is the creation of a rational understanding free from ideological distortions and corrects the Enlightenment project which had become so obscured by capitalism and individualism. In addition, communicative action sought to create social consensus and solidarity. Within the theory of communicative action religious world-views were to be understood socially and scientifically, free from any theological claims which were seen as divisive and instrumental in character, seeking to colonize the public sphere. That position on religion seemed to strip of its very foundational claims that motivated religious persons toward trust and solidarity in our societies. More recently, however, Habermas, in a most unprecedented move, seems to retrieve theology for the sake of reason. His new-found relationship with theology is generally perceived to have occurred after the terrorists attacks upon the United States of America in September 2001. The discussion here will address this innovative move by Habermas through an exploration of his most recent writings.

In addressing secularization within Western societies, Habermas argues for a definition of secularism that facilitates agreement between the many competing world-views
through the vehicle of “common sense.” In illustrating that point, Habermas notes that post-secular society “adapts to the fact that religious communities continue to exist in a context of ongoing secularization. It obscures the civilizing role of a democratically shaped and enlightened common sense that makes it a third party, so to speak, amid the kulturkampf confusion of competing voices.” Common sense presupposes an endowment of natural intelligence in rational beings. Moreover, such good practical sense, while everyone’s inheritance, demands tact and readiness in dealing with everyday affairs. It is this shared inheritance of “common sense” that Habermas utilizes as an arbiter between religious and secular voices within the democratic state.

Common sense, however, cannot be taken for granted. Indeed, religious fundamentalism is presented by Habermas as a lack of common sense. In order to engage in the very civilizing role that occasions the possession of common sense within the democratic

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For Habermas, secularism concerns the neutrality of the liberal state with respect to comprehensive world-views. His understanding, however, is an evolved one. In a speech entitled “Faith and Knowledge,” Habermas offers the following account of the evolution of the term “secularization,” which may help clarify our understanding of the term today: “In Europe, the term ‘secularization’ first had the juridical meaning of a forced conveyance of church property to the secular state. This meaning was then extended to cover the rise and development of cultural and social modernity as a whole. Ever since, ‘secularization’ has been subject to contrasting evaluations, depending on whether its main feature is seen as the successful taming of clerical authority, or as the act of unlawful appropriation.”

Post-secular, on the other hand, makes a distinction between an informal discourse between religious believers and secularists in the public sphere. Such informal discourse is exempt from the demand upon religious people to translate their religiously rooted world-views into a more accessible language which can be understood by a more general audience. These distinctions will be elaborated upon in greater detail as the essay proceeds.

17 Ibid., 329.

Habermas is referring specially to replacement model and the expropriation models of interpreting secularism.

18 Ibid., 332.

Habermas argues that “common sense,” in and of itself, fails to create the required framework in which reasonable discourse can take place in the public sphere. Common sense, for him, is too populated with illusions about the world. In response to this, Habermas argues for a “democratic common sense.” It is common sense informed by the sciences, with an attentiveness to the everyday world. “Democratic Common sense” seeks reasons within public discourse that are not just acceptable to one specific group. As such, its is not a “singular” common sense.
state, a criterion is imposed upon what we name as “religious” communities to discern whether their participation in public discourse is genuinely directed toward a common interest.\(^{19}\) To this end, Habermas employs the word reasonable, as a moderating and regulatory characterization for religious communities which can help them legitimately contribute toward the common good in the public sphere. Such religious communities ought\(^ {20}\) to exercise a reasonableness in their discourse language, language seemingly free from religious references not shared by all in the public sphere. Habermas frames it with reference to violence, stating prescriptively: “from the perspective of the liberal state, only those religions communities which abstain, by their own lights, from violence in spreading their beliefs and imposing them on their own members, let alone manipulation inducing suicide attacks, deserve the predicate of ‘reasonable.’”\(^ {21}\) For Habermas the creation of just and effective frameworks of dialogue within the public sphere is achieved through critical rationality. Such public rationality is the place where citizens organize their shared social space and enter into dialogue.

Habermas is aware, however, that ideologically toxic world-views have compromised the social bonds and affections that assist in creating social solidarity. Religious fundamentalism is just one example of an ideology, which acts against a common solidarity so necessary for society. The unreasonableness of religious fundamentalism, which

\(^{19}\) Ibid., 329.

Habermas does not provide a definition of the term “religious communities.” He does argue, from the perspective of the liberal state, a criteria by which religious communities can be deemed “reasonable,” and, as such, can participate in constructively in public life.


While the word “ought” gestures toward a moral imperative, Habermas argues that moral reasons can be agreed upon and shared by both a religious citizen and a non-religious citizen.

\(^{21}\) Habermas, “Faith and Knowledge” in The Frankfurt School of Religion, 222.
ultimately rejects shared social space and dialogue, is often a reaction to some external force or imposition: “Fundamentalism . . . can be construed, among other things, as a long-term result of violent colonization and failed decolonization. Capitalist modernization that forcibly penetrates these societies from outside under unfavorable conditions trigger social un-certainty and cultural upheavals.”22 The terrorist attack in the United States on September 11th, 2001 is an obvious example of a religious community or persons reacting fundamentally to the external force of globalized modernity, which they understand as evil and anti-God. While religious fundamentalism is not new, or particular to our age, it is from this immediate perspective of social disharmony that Habermas is motivated toward an engagement with both the religious and the secular in the hope of achieving a civilizing counter-force to both religious terrorism and financial terrorism.

His attentiveness not only to that which is unreasonable in religious communities, but also to encouraging Western accountability regarding complicity in facilitating social disharmony, communicates the nonpartisan frame work of Habermas’s critical theory. It is this two-fold sense of how so many have contributed to the social disharmony of our world that fuels Habermas’ modest naming of the goal of his dialogical framework. It rests, he claims, upon a “bleak hope.” 23 This “bleak hope” seeks to “present a different image of the West to other cultures.”24 In effect, he strives to present a universal image of

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24 Ibid., 328
Western society as whole and reasonable.\textsuperscript{25} He also considers cultural pluralism a necessary constituent toward achieving a whole and reasonable society.

In advancing such an image of Western societies, Habermas offers the public sphere an exchange between reasonable religious communities and secular communities as a framework. This framework is one of practical reason, whereby a civilized sharing of social space occurs. With respect to the role of religious communities within such a framework, Habermas charts a threefold scheme of reflection. This reflection is characterized by a positive “restraint” in public discourse. The “restraint” is rooted in an awareness of one’s own fallibility and a commitment toward maintaining social order. The triple scheme of reflection allows religious consciousness “first, [to] come to terms with the cognitive dissonance of encountering other denominations and religions...[while adapting] to the authority of the sciences which hold the societal monopoly of secular knowledge. It must, last, agree to the premises of a constitutional state grounded in a profane morality.”\textsuperscript{26} Put positively, Habermas is encouraging religious persons and communities to participate in a civilizing dialogue within public sphere by transposing pertinent religious contributions into a language that is accessible to a wider constituency beyond its own.

\textsuperscript{25} I am conscious that Habermas affords Western society a very positive and integrated reading. Whether this society can be characterized as “whole” is questionable. It is after all the context from which emerged a most brutal global capitalism, which has even undercut the very value of solidarity upon which the European Union was first imagined.

\textsuperscript{26} Habermas, "Faith and Knowledge" in \textit{The Frankfurt School of Religion}, 329.
1.3 Translation

Arguably, what is being asked of religious communities through the very act of translation is the removal of any religious language that cannot be legitimately shared by all members of a given liberal democratic society. At the same time, Habermas’s framework can be understood as a democratic process designed to aid particular religious persons or communities to move from a localized or self-focused concern toward a common or more universal concern for all members and communities within the public sphere.

The process outlined by Habermas exhibits delicate gradations in both tone and meaning. On the one hand, he suggests that only secular reasons count in political debates on the institutional level within the liberal democratic state. On the other hand, he also rejects any process, which renders a religious individual or community marginal within the liberal democratic state:

"Every citizen must know and accept that only secular reasons count beyond the institutional threshold separating the informal public sphere from parliaments, courts, ministries, and administrations. This only calls for the epistemic ability to consider one’s own religious convictions reflexively from the outside and connect them with secular views. Religious citizens can and certainly acknowledge this “institutional translation proviso” without having to split their identity into public and private parts the moment they participate in public discourses. They should therefore also be allowed to express and justify their convictions in a religious language even when they cannot find secular ‘translations’ for them."

Habermas contends that at a sub-institutional level, it would be unreasonable to demand that religious citizens offer a secular explanation for their religious beliefs. Indeed, his position in this regard attempts to address any separation within the religious citizen between her religious life and commitments and her rights and responsibilities within the

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27 Habermas, “Religion in the public Sphere,” in Between Naturalism and Religion, 130.
liberal democratic state. Toward this end, he employs the term “translation,” as opposed to “restrain,” in characterizing the process of reflection. Such a process of reflection creates the possibility for a civilizing democratically shaped and enlightened common sense that can assist in fostering social solidarity. In a gesture of concern for the burden of translation carried by religious persons, Habermas contends:

If we accept this, to my mind compelling objection, then the liberal state, which expressly protects such forms of existence as a basic right, cannot at the same time expect all citizens in addition to justify their political positions independently of their religious convictions or world-views. This strict demand can only be made of politicians operating within state institutions who have a duty to remain neutral (not to accent to any world-view) among competing world-views, in other words, of all those who hold a public office or are candidates for such.28

As such, the process of “translation,” which protects religious persons from incurring a privatization of their religious beliefs, affords a positive currency to the contribution of religion in the liberal democratic state. As previously noted, the employment of the word “translation,” appears to be a corrective to the word “restraint” used in his speech “Faith and Culture” in 2002. “Restraint” denotes an injunction against the free expression of an individual, which imposes a restriction upon the freedom of expression to such a degree that essentially a prohibition is enacted. Conversely, “translation,” rather than denoting a restriction, denotes an expression of something simply through another medium. Subsequently, “translation” is presented as a positive and creative process. Following Habermas’ thought, then, religious beliefs within the liberal democratic state can indeed assist in the creation of political opinions. They do so indirectly by way of “translation” as opposed to a “restriction.”

28 Ibid, 128.
In a spirit of cooperation, Habermas offers an account of how non-religious citizens can constructively cooperate with religious persons in the necessary work of translation:

But only if the secular side, too, remains sensitive to the force of articulation inherent in religious languages will the search for reasons that aim at universal acceptability not lead to unfair exclusion of religion from the public sphere nor sever secular society from important resources of meaning. In any event, the boundaries between secular and religious reasons are fluid. Determining these disputed boundaries should therefore be seen as a cooperative task, which requires both sides to take on the perspective of the other.29

Such a cooperative task characterizes the process of facilitating an equally shared civilizing responsibility toward achieving a universal consensus within the liberal democratic state. In highlighting this process, Habermas is aiming toward a collaborative way of proceeding toward consensus. Unfortunately, however, the burden of translation toward the achievement of consensus is all too often unequally shared: “To date, only citizens committed to religious beliefs are required to spilt their identities, as it were, into their public and private elements. They are the ones who have to translate their religious beliefs into a secular language before their arguments have any chance of gaining majority support.”30

Despite Habermas’ constructive opinion of the role of religion within the liberal state, it remains unclear whether he is advocating a public reason enriched by confessional beliefs or a form of atheistic public reason that privileges secularization.

29 Habermas “Faith and Knowledge” in The Frankfurt School of Religion, 332.
30 Ibid, 332.
1.4 Translation: Religious And Secular Communities As Co-Learning Communities.

Given the apparent burden levied on religious persons with respect to translation, Habermas argues for complementary intellectual formations sourced in faith and reason respectively. Complementary intellectual formations, put simply, recognize that both religious and secular communities are learning communities, ones that can even assist one another in acquiring new insights. Habermas is not ignorant of the challenges of the two inherited traditions. With respect to reason, he rejects the “blinkered enlightenment which is unenlightened about itself and which denies religion any rational content.”\(^{31}\) In addition, he also rejects a Hegelian understanding of religion which “represents an intellectual formation worthy of being recalled, but only in the form of a ‘representational thinking’ which is subordinate to philosophy.”\(^{32}\) With respect to faith, he argues that faith “remains opaque for knowledge in a way which may neither be denied nor simply accepted.”\(^{33}\) Such a faith “reflects the inconclusive nature of the confrontation between a self-critical reason which is willing to learn and contemporary religious convictions.”\(^{34}\) As a result, Habermas seems to be pointing toward a cooperative enterprise of seeking truth, whereby presented claims are both questionable and exchangeable. The affirmation he affords, albeit through a form of negativity, is an affirmation of faith. Yet the question remains as to whether religions are required to deny themselves to gain voice in the public sphere. In considering this question, Habermas gestures again toward translation in the treatment of languages. He notes,


\(^{32}\) Ibid,18.

\(^{33}\) Ibid,18.

\(^{34}\) Ibid,18.
Moral feelings which only religious language has as yet been able to give sufficiently differentiated expression may find universal resonance once a salvaging formulation turns up something almost forgotten, but implicitly missed. The mode for nondestructive secularization is translation.  

1.5 Translation As A Dialogical Procedural Framework

The requirement for translation is rooted within a liberal imagination in which religious sources of authority lack the sufficient reasoning necessary for creating public legislation. Yet, for Habermas, the position is not an anti-religious one. Indeed, the kind of translation to which Habermas invites us toward is a proceduralist one. Legislation that seeks to address equality and justice from a proceduralist theoretical perspective seeks to secure justice by emphasizing procedures and processes of interaction among differences rather than a shared normative or substantive account of what justice consists of.  

Luke Bretherton notes appreciatively that the dynamic at work within proceduralist approaches “allows for a range of ‘comprehensive’ doctrines to accept its terms and conditions without having to agree with one another.” Arguably, however, as we shall see, such a proceduralist manner of translation could be accused of excluding transcendence within public discourse.

Within this proceduralist framework political liberalism achieves a high degree of plurality in public discourse, a plurality captured by the inclusion of religious consciousness within the public discourse. Habermas, however, understands political liberalism as “a non-religious, post metaphysical justification of the normative foundations of constitutive

37 Ibid, 87.
tional democracy.” In addition, the plurality achieved through proceduralist frameworks originates in understanding of citizens as “co-legislators.” To this end, Habermas proposes the following:

Citizens as co-legislators are supposed to make active use of their communication and participation rights, this means using them not only in their enlightened self-interest but also with a view to promoting the common good and solidarity. This demands a more costly form of motivation that cannot be legally exacted. A duty to vote would be as alien as to a constitutional democracy as legally prescribed solidarity. The willingness to take responsibility if need be for anonymous fellow-citizens who remain strangers to us and to make sacrifices in the common interest can only be requested of the citizens of a liberal polity.

As co-legislators, citizens are entrusted with a responsibility toward a commitment to the common good. Religious persons and secular persons alike, as equal co-legislators, share responsibility toward fashioning the common good within a dialogical framework that is characteristically equitable. The dynamic of the dialogue ought not exclude the settled opinions and beliefs of those co-legislators. The dialogue, rather, within a constitutional democracy, “depends on a mode of legitimation founded on convictions.” Within this proceduralist framework of dialogue we engage and speak with one another, rather than speaking about one another from a disengaged position. At the same time, the mode of legitimation begs the question as to whether certain “voices” script the parameters in which discourse is regarded as legitimate and whether such parameters afford a subjectivity and intersubjectivity that is open to a transcendental framework of interpretation.

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39 Ibid, 105.
41 Ibid, 16.
With this in mind, the proceduralist framework aims to remedy any deficiencies resulting from an exclusively rational discourse or argument, deficiencies that would restrict diverse perspectives from contributing.\textsuperscript{42} Indeed, the proceduralist framework creates communicative opportunities and ways of “speaking across difference in the absence of significant shared understanding.”\textsuperscript{43} Bretherton, in offering a positive critique of the proceduralist method, quotes Iris Marion Young: “As such, keeping diverse and thick forms of communications in play in public deliberation ensures on the one hand that difference is respected, and on the other that there is both the expression and the extension of shared understanding, where they exist, and the offering and acknowledgement of un-shared meaning.”\textsuperscript{44} For Young, such thick communication, which supplements a purely rational discourse, includes more “tradition-specific forms of communication,” such as “greeting, rhetoric and storytelling.”\textsuperscript{45}

Ironically, Habermas’ theory of communication seems to be complemented, if not rescued, by the thickness of “greeting, rhetoric and storytelling,” which in principal can

\textsuperscript{42} Habermas wishes to broaden our concept and application of reason, whereby we move from a narrow scientistic concept of reason toward, what he terms, a more critical or postmetaphysical reason. He suggests that such a move will allow for a more serious engagement between Christianity and postmetaphysical thinking. Celestino Perez offers the following understanding of how Habermas’s critical reason allows for a dialogue between faith and reason: (1) philosophy generally cannot pronounce on the truth of falsity of religious faith; (2) philosophy must learn from faith; (3) faith must learn from philosophy; (4) thick traditions contribute functionally to the solidarity of a liberal-democratic polity; (5) yet liberal democracy too generates a contrasting secular and neutral brand of solidarity; (6) in the postmetaphysical era, secular presuppositions carry a more direct, heavier load than cultural presuppositions; (7) constitutional patriotism still requires a robust, mutually crafted integration of the secular with the ethical or religious.

For further reading on this, please refer to: Celestino Perez, “Jürgen Habermas and Pope John Paul II on Faith, Reason, and Politics in the Modern World” (PhD diss., Indiana University Press, 2008), 69-74.


\textsuperscript{44} Iris Marion Young, Justice and the Politics of Difference (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 75.

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid, 75.
included theological assertions. In an apparent gesture toward this encounter between the secular and the religious, Habermas notes:

The point of departure for the philosophical discourse on reason and revelation is the recurring idea of a reason reflecting on its deepest foundations and discovering its source in an Other whose ominous power it must acknowledge if it is not to lose its rational orientation in the dead end of a hybrid self-subjection. Here the self-empowerment, or at any rate self-initiated, spiritual exercise of conversion—a conversion of reason by reason—serves as a model.46

Habermas places weight on ‘source in another’ as a theological moment, whereby reason assumes a practical application in that critical reason has a relational component. Developing the relational dimension of critical reason, Habermas employment of the word “conversion” in order to illustrate the very process of transposition or translation gestures toward a possible theological moment where what is real for the other is engaged. The theological moment appears framed within a secular discourse of reason. His reference to discovering the “source in the other” of that which is foundational to the human person deliberately addresses a testimony of life beyond mere scientific facts:

A reason initially free of theological intent becoming aware of its limits transcends itself toward an Other, whether in the mystical union with an encompassing cosmic consciousness, in the despiring hope in the historical advent of redemptive tidings, or in the form of a future-orientated solidarity with the humiliated and the down-trodden that seeks to accelerate the advent of messianic salvation.47

This theological moment is captured not as a comprehensive doctrine, but as the “Other” of reason.48 Habermas is not making a claim to a specific “other” but simply acknowledging a possibility within communicative rationality. Arguably, the theological moment is

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the moment when reason transcends itself. Within this theological moment world-views, even religious, are afforded the occasion to offer public account of themselves.

In capturing the proceduralist dynamic that results in an agreement within civil society, Habermas strains toward conceiving a diverse composition of voices, each of which might aid in the achievement of agreement. Furthermore, no one participant within the dialogical composition holds any infallibility over any of the other participants. Starting points for perspectives are fallible, and they vary. As Habermas contends:

> It makes no difference whether reflection begins with self-awareness of the knowing and acting subject, as in Schleiermacher, or with the historicity of each individual’s existential self-confirmation, as in Kierkegaard, or with the provocative inner turmoil of ethical life, as in Hegel, Feuerbach, and Marx.\(^{49}\)

In this way, secularism responds to historical problems, and in so doing, holds open space for many voices to contribute to achieving consensus or agreement on how we can live together. Junker-Kenny captures the openness of dialogue championed by Habermas:

> “Public reason is not limited in advance by ‘political values’ but it is to be worked out and owned by participants in civil society, rather than left to democratic institutions.”\(^{50}\)

Equally, the distinctiveness of such an understanding of secularism is reiterated by Thomas Reynolds, who argues that “liberal democracy [ought to be] a positive and distinctly unfinished ‘response,’ which entails a certain conception of the social world that is dynamic and open, and as a result can honor pluralism and, thus, religious contributions to the construction of social space.”\(^{51}\)


Yet the question remains whether we can achieve bonds of interdependence between the public reason and religious beliefs, an interdependence that recognizes an essential and fundamental bond already shared by all. To this end, Habermas speaks of a positive historical “cross-fertilization” between religion and culture:

The cross-fertilization of Christianity and Greek metaphysics gave rise not only to the discipline of dogmatic theology and a--not always propitious--Hellenization of the Christian faith. It also promoted an assimilation of genuine Christian elements by philosophy. This process of assimilation led to such normatively charged networks of concepts of responsibility, autonomy and justification, history and remembrance, rebirth, innovation and return, emancipation and fulfillment, renunciation, internalization and incarnation, individuality and community. Although philosophy transformed the original meaning of these terms, it did not deflate them and exhaust their meaning.\footnote{52 Jurgen Habermas, “Foundations Of A Constitutional State,” in \textit{Between Naturalism And Religion}, Trans. Ciaran Cronin (Polity Press, 2008): 110.}

Habermas recognizes the significant and formative contribution of religion within public discourse. It is a contribution that acquires new ideas and insights through processes of interpreting philosophical ideas and experiences in relation to religious traditions and experiences. In this respect religion becomes subject to a necessary and ongoing reinterpretation that is at once critical and self-critical. Public discourse is not an end of itself. Rather, the aim of public discourse is the achievement of consensus. In doing so, the public sphere moves beyond the limitations of particular worldviews, positions or interests, the insularity of which inhibit the creation of solidarity and shared space.

Given that secularism has neither “deflated” nor “exhausted” many of the necessary values that create solidarity, we can confidently affirm that religion remains a necessary participant in any discourse, which can be a partner in public processes that seek progress in human flourishing. The role of religion within the complementary learning process of secularism, in Habermas’ words, points to “the insight that vibrant world reli-
gions may be bearers of ‘truth-contents,’ in the sense of suppressed or untapped moral intuitions, is by no means a given for the secular portion of the population.”

1.6 Translation As Conserving

The translation required in achieving cross-fertilization is not a neutral translation, however. Habermas echoes this very position in stating “the translation of the theological doctrine of creation in God’s image into the idea of the equal and unconditional dignity of all human beings constitutes one such conserving translation.” Translation is a process that conserves or maintains human flourishing. It also constructs a new language of understanding our common identity. Thus it manifests itself as a creative performance of the proceduralist method of discourse. This form of public interaction “makes the content of the biblical concepts available to the general public of unbelievers and members of other faiths beyond the boundaries of a particular religious community.” A conserving translation, therefore, acts against separation, seeking instead to forge connecting points between the many participants of the public interaction. Furthermore, it acts against assimilation or subjugation in respecting diversity. Hence, the democratic public sphere according to such a perspective, as suggested by Reynolds, “is a form of public interaction and reasoning that recognizes the diverse convictions and the thick traditions that different people bring to the common project of negotiating a public domain of interaction.”

55 Ibid, 110.
A conserving translation, however, is not without its dialectical demands. Herein lies the challenge presented by translation: if religious communities are to co-labour with secular institutions in the creation of the common good and the fostering of communities of solidarity, religious communities must alter their religious consciousness so as to join with their secular counterparts and assist in cooperative labour. Habermas refers to this act of altering religious consciousness as an adaption. While acknowledging that “every religion is originally a “worldview” or a “comprehensive doctrine...in the sense that it claims the authority to structure a form of life as a whole,” he argues for a surrendering of such claims by religious community in order to facilitate participation in discourses that seek the integration of all citizens.57

1.7 The Project of Intergrationism

Integration within the liberal state aims to achieve a sense of solidarity instead of fractures and enclaves. For Habermas, “the universal legal order and egalitarian social morality must be connected with the ethos of the community from within in such a way that one follows consistently from the other.”58 The adaption required for the integration of religious communities seems excessively one way, however. Indeed, Habermas acknowledges the burden expected of religious communities is “not shared equally by believers and unbelievers, as is shown by more or less liberal abortion regimes.”59 In what can be described as a conciliatory gesture, which responds to the excessive burden

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57 Seyla moves away from Habermas on the point of “intergrationism,” opting instead for “participationsim.” I will deal with this move in the final stages of the thesis.
59 Ibid, 112.
levied on religious communities in dialogue with secular institutions, Habermas reminds secular institutions that they are “expected to adopt a self-reflexive critical stance toward the enlightenment.” 60 A self-reflexive critical stance requires a shared—albeit not equal—commitment to translation.61

In a recent exchange at New York University with Judith Butler, Charles Taylor and Cornel West, Habermas offered the following explanation of his understanding of translation:

What I have in mind is the task of translating not from religious discourse but from presentations in a religious language to a public language, which allows us to arrive at reasons that are more general than the ones in the original language. This wider accessibility and appeal of reasons is the idea that I connect with the ‘secular,’ reasons which are secular in the sense of transcending the semantic domains of particular religious communities, that reach even beyond the generalizing move that originally connected with the term secularization, from within the Christian Church anyways.62

The translation from a religious language to a public language often occurs within an “informal communication network of the public sphere.”63 Habermas described the dynamic of the network as “muddy.” 64 Yet its lack of clarity and impurity is perhaps its greatest strength. Habermas’ deliberate inclusion of the religious consciousness in the public realm renders possible the ethics and moral orientations of a given religious foundation

60 Ibid, 112.

61 Josef Schmidt, "A Dialogue In Which There Can Only Be Winners" in An Awareness Of What Is Missing (Polity, 2012), 69, offers an explanation of what Habermas means by a “self-reflexive critical stance.” This stance inhabits an inclusive space. Within this space questions about truth, goodness, solidarity and the ordering of common space can be presented. The legitimacy to present such questions rests in the common enterprise of understanding each other. The context whereby these questions are presented is understood as "fallible." As such, the discourse occurring within the context is open to critique.


63 Ibid, 114.

64 Ibid, 114.
available to a much wider audience. By extension, “as long as the religious communities remain a vital force in civil society, their contribution to the legitimation process reflects at least an indirect reference to religion, which ‘the political’ retains even within a secular state.”

Habermas in a recent dialogue with the then Prefect for the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, positions the reference concerning the contribution of religious within a less reflexive language. At issue is Habermas’ understanding of translation, which raises questions about the freedom of religious persons to source their religious resources in a communicative network in the public sphere. Through his discourse with Ratzinger, Habermas attends to the concern of religious sourcing: “it is in the interest of the constitutional state to deal carefully with all the cultural sources that nourish its citizens’ consciousness of norms and their solidarity.”

The state’s careful attentiveness in exercising concern for the interests of many cultural sources, including religious sources, has the potential to encourage new forms of discourse between those very sources and the liberal state. Habermas names this new context as post secularism. Within a post secular society “the democratic process is also a learning process, one often blocked by a deficient sense of what is lacking and what is

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66 Maureen Junker-Kenny, *Habermas and Theology* (T & T Clark International, 2011), 136. The tension here addresses the rationality of religious belief. Maureen Junker-Kenny explains that Habermas’ original understanding that communicative reason should take over the function of religion has been rescinded. Given that religion continues to exist within our post-secular societies, Junker-Kenny determines that Habermas now assumes the following position: “At the conceptual level, he argues for disconnecting the theory of modernity from secularization theory. Regarding the epistemic status of religion, he requires secular knowledge...to be self-critical and to accord religious convictions an epistemic status as not simply irrational.”
still possible.”  

Despite his reassuring account of religious sourcing as part of translation within the context of a learning liberal state, concerns still remain as to “how” and “when” a religious person can source the resources of their faith tradition.

Junker-Kenny raises questions about whether “translation” captures the insights achieved through a dialogue between religiously conscious persons and secular persons in the public sphere. Specifically, she wonders whether the term “translation” adequately depicts the achievements of religious consciousness in reminding those who adhere only to the Enlightenment as a cultural resource of its deficiency when held absolutely. The term “translation,” she argues, separates persons from the very foundational source of their faith-inspired trust and solidarity, namely, the love of God. She makes the following case:

For Christians, the truth of the gospel remains something given in the precise sense that it was not in the power of reason to initiate it. The self-sufficient understanding of reason implied in the task of translating into the target language of rationality has to be enlarged into one in which reason is also allowed to be receptive and open to God’s offer.  

What Junker-Kenny is describing is aptly captured in her characterization of God’s offer through naming it in a “precise sense.” In doing this, she presents not only a relationship between the public sphere and religion, but she also reminds us that we are all, religious and non-religious, personal subscribers to worldviews of all types.  

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The task of “translation,” as presented by Habermas in his discourse with Joseph Ratzinger, addresses the very question of whether a religious person can source religious resources within the context of a discourse in the public sphere. Habermas’ response acknowledges the growing interest of religion as a public resource within civil society. Yet his response to the role of religious persons is not simply addressing the fact that religion exists within our society and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Habermas states it clearly:

The expression ‘post secular’ does more than give public recognition to the religious fellowships in view of functional contribution they make to the reproduction of motivations and attitudes that are societally desirable. The public awareness of a post-secular society also reflects a normative insight that has consequences for the political dealings of unbelieving citizens with believing citizens. In a post-secular society, there is an increasing consensus that certain phases of the ‘modernization of the public consciousness’ involves the assimilation and the reflexive transformation of both religious and secular mentalities.71

Amounting to a noteworthy shift, Habermas argues that “assimilation” and “reflexive transformation” concerns not just those of a religious consciousness, and more, that the process of acquiring new insights through the work of reflection and interpretation is a process involving all. In effect, he is arguing for a reciprocal communication, which demands more of secularism than mere sensitivity in its dealings with religiously conscious communities.

Habermas in his later writings is arguing for a more just proportion in the burdens that public discourse places on both religious and secular persons. One of his more affirmative statements on the role of religion in public discourse is communicated through a consideration of how a secularist person ought to respond to a religious person: “when

secularized citizens act in their role as citizens of the state, they must not deny in principle that religious images of the world have the potential to express truth. Nor must they refuse their believing fellow citizens the right to make contributions in a religious language to public debates. Indeed, the truth claims of a religious believer compliments the public debate on solidarity and responsibility, for example. As such, the inclusion of religious persons is not just about equity; the inclusion of religion assists in the ongoing renewal of society.

This renewal, however, is not achieved through a submission to a religious authority or dogma. Rather, it is a renewal that is achieved through the muddy waters of public discourse. Informally, it would seem religious language that uses religious images can be applied. Yet, for the sake of a more general conversation that is universally accessible to all persons, translating one’s religious beliefs when engaging in a formal discourse with secular institutional bodies appears a non-negotiable. Habermas’ last sentence in his deliberations with Ratzinger makes clear that point: “Indeed, a liberal political culture can expect that the secularized citizens play their part in the endeavors to translate relevant contributions from the religious language into a language that is accessible to the public as a whole.” While Habermas presents a model of cooperation with respect to translation, it remains ambiguous whether this cooperation affords religion the freedom to contribute to the construction of public space.

1.8 Conclusion

72 Ibid, 51.
73 Ibid, 52.
The non-negotiable demand of the ‘institutional translation proviso’ affords religious reasons a level of participation that is only partial, within informal discourse in the public forum. Habermas’ sympathy toward religious reason only extends so far, excluding its participation from the institutional structures of the liberal state. Such a prescriptive direction seems to suggest an opportunism of sorts, whereby what is deemed useful by secular reason for religious communities to contribute is permissible, while what is deemed unhelpful within the public sphere must remain silent and private. This compromises the operative presupposition that a post-secular democratic society is open to all. On the other hand, the significance of Habermas’ contribution is that it includes the religiously conscious person or group within the public sphere.

As a source of richness and vitality, religion can be a creative and innovative contributor to the creation of consensus, solidarity and human flourishing. We contend that in demanding religious persons and/or communities translate the insights of their respective religious traditions into a universally acceptable language, Habermas did not intend to marginalize religion. Yet the co-labouring of religious persons with others in the creation of a shared space of consensus, solidarity and human flourishing requires more than translation. Our public spaces need to invite and foster a participation that is hospitable to the other beyond just the translation of languages that are most precious to us.
Chapter Two

Jeffrey Stout and the Merits of Conversation

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines “conversation” as an alternative to “translation” in which a more expansive understanding of solidarity can be communicated and fostered in the public sphere. As a student of theology, I am keenly aware of the need for a public theology that employs, both in style and content, a language more fulsomely addressing topics of interest to the greater community. This need demands a communication of theology that moves from a theologically literate constituency to a constituency that is representative of the general public. Stout offers a convincing account of “conversation” as one means of doing so. Indeed, as we shall see, conversation is a necessary route in creating greater solidarity between religiously confessional persons and non-confessional persons in the public sphere.

Stout is a prominent American pragmatist who is a sympathetic interpreter and commentator of religious tradition and its contribution to the public sphere. Before assessing his understanding of conversation and its merits for framing dialogue between religious and non-religious persons. As a “school of thought,” pragmatism has made a significant contribution in shaping the religious-secular discourse within the academy in North America. As a North American response to questions of the role of religion within the democratic state, pragmatism offers a trans Atlantic perspective to Habermas’ more European-focused response. As is Habermas, Stout is a genuine collaborator who values the positive influence of religion and religious persons in shaping the common good.
2.2 Pragmatism and its Contribution to the Body Politic

Pragmatists share a common concern for social solidarity, democratic participation and social justice. Pragmatism should be understood as a constructive philosophical tradition with its own positive agenda. This agenda defines itself neither by reaction against nor by opposition to religion, but by constructive social cooperation. Pragmatism presents the function of thought as a means to action and creating solidarity in our world. At the same time, it has less to do with statements, beliefs, rules and customs, but more to do with practical implications and problem-solving. For example, through conversation, pragmatism seeks a negotiated mutual understanding, culminating in an agreement toward a certain action. As Stout notes, “No matter how ardent, [disagreement] may be overcome or accommodated in constructive social and political arrangements.”

He is a highly regarded contemporary voice in the pragmatist tradition whose work, in large part, aims at articulating the fruitful social and political possibilities inherent in conversation as a means of building communal solidarity. In Democracy and Tradition, Stout offers a defense of pragmatic styled democracy as a way to achieve common agreement and forge practical ways of co-existing with each other. For him, “pragmatism is the philosophical space in which democratic rebellion against hierarchy combines with traditionalist love of virtue to form a new tradition that is indebted to both.” Not only is democracy a tradition, it is one with a positive and subversive quality. Presenting democ-

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74 Ibid., 5.
racy as such, he is signaling toward some significant developments in our current understanding of normativity within the public sphere, particularly around one’s beliefs and one’s relationship to authority. The trajectory of rebellion, while used by Stout in a political sense, has deep roots too in religion. Kevin W. Hector, for example, puts the trajectory from merely inheriting belief from authority toward critical self-involvement in belief in the following way: “There was a shift in the prevailing conditions of belief, away from the authority of tradition and toward ‘thinking for oneself,’ the aim of which is to avoid believing anything simply because it is what one has been taught, what one always believed, etc.” By aligning democratic tradition with virtue, Stout is making known the expressions of democracy as articulated by Walt Whitman and John Dewey. These intimations sought to articulate an American expression of character within the culture of their day. Stout proceeds to name three virtues—historically partial religious virtues—that have historically been used in framing American character: piety; hope, and love/generosity. Thus the relationship between rebellion against hierarchy and virtue is historically sourced in such moments as the Reformation and the Enlightenment as a protest against the status quo, and an entering into a conversation on our commitments that is both critical and self-critical. In outlining some of the features of democracy, Stout brings to the fore certain expected qualities. Among these, he affirms freedom of religion and the right to practice one’s religion. Having posited these qualities as legitimate ingredients of civil society, he asks the following provocative question:

78 Ibid., Stout understands freedom of religion consists “first of all in the right to make up one’s own mind when answering religious questions. Secondly, he understands the practice of religion as “the
More controversial, however, is a class of acts that express religious commitments in another way, namely, by employing them as reasons when taking a public stand on political issues. What role, if any, should religious premises play in the reasoning citizens engage in when they make and defend political decisions? 

To answer this question, Stout embarks upon a dialectical journey between secular liberalism, on the one hand, and the new traditionalism (among Christian philosophers and theologians), on the other. Mediating between the two, he desires to “develop an alternative public philosophy.” In doing so, he articulates a pragmatic philosophy that creates a dialectical space. Part of the process of initiating a new and pragmatic “space in which democratic rebellion against hierarchy combines with traditionalist love of virtue to form a new intellectual tradition that is indebted to both,” is, as Stout aptly puts it, the inclusion of “strangers and enemies, as well as fellow citizens, in the verbal process of holding one another responsible.” What is required here is a tempering of religion—as a comprehensive worldview—with epistemic fallibilism.

Significantly, pragmatic space is not concerned with the recognition of a universal judgment rooted in presumed universal norms equally shared. Indeed, Stout cautions against such conjecturing on universal norms, which create impediments for processes of conversation. He notes, “philosophers make the [exchange of reasons] look easier than it is when they claim that all human beings already share a common morality, the common right to act in ways that seem appropriate, given one’s answers to religious questions—provided that one does not cause harm to other people or interfere with their rights. Among the expressive acts obviously protected by this right are rituals and other devotional practices performed in solitude, in the contexts of one’s family, or in association with others similarly disposed. (64).

79 Ibid., 64.
80 Ibid., 296.
81 Ibid., 13.
morality, simply by virtue of being human.”82 Here, Stout departs from Dewey’s assertion on the matter of truth claims. Stout explains his position, “My most obvious departure from Dewey is my claim that truth is not an essentially relative concept . . . But I maintain that emphasizing the priority of social practices in the way pragmatism does need not prevent us from thinking of ethical discourse as an objective endeavor in which full-fledged truth-claims play an essential role.”83 Traditions, for Stout, play an essential role in human thought. He creatively understands the divisions within traditions as conversation-engagers rather than conversation-stoppers.84 For him, the reality of differing religious traditions provides an opportunity for new arrangements. He breaks rank with Richard Rorty and others, whose vision of the good society is a secular utopia of sorts. His vision of the future inherently involves mixed messages: on the one hand, he champions the exclusion of religious persons and groups from the conversational space; on the

82 Ibid., 14.
83 Ibid., 14.
84 Stout’s understanding of truth claims as valued ingredients toward the creation of a conversation space distinguishes him from other disciples of pragmatism. For example, in A Common Faith John Dewey in “A Common Faith,” argues for a setting aside of basic divisions so that we might inhabit a common space as exemplified by his use of the “boat” metaphor: “I cannot understand how any realization of the democratic ideal as a vital moral and spiritual ideal in human affairs is possible without surrender of the conception of the basic divisions to which supernatural Christianity is committed. Whether or not we are, save in some metaphorical sense, all brothers, we are at least all in the same boat traversing the same turbulent ocean” cf. John, Dewey, A Common Faith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937), 84.

Dewey’s recognition that we are in the same boat is not a Kantian universalism. Neither is it a denial of difference. It is, however, a recognition and a faith that such difference ought not to divide us. Our fate does not have to be conflict and division. Ways toward ensuring this is through immanent critique, the possibility of mutual recognition, and discursive transformation. Stout is also affirming the fact that all humans together remain in the same boat and must find a cooperative way to steer it away from various destructive fates.

Richard Rorty assumes a more aggressive secularism, bluntly arguing that religious truth claims are absolute obstructions toward conversation, “The main reason religion needs to be privatized is that, in political discussion with those outsider the relevant religious community, it is a conversation stopper” cf Richard Rorty, “Religion as a Conversation Stopper,” in Philosophy And Social Hope (Penguin Books, 1999),171. Indeed, Rorty’s thesis on the merit of tradition is distinctively opposite to Stout’s. Rorty’s position is put forward in a way in which the goal and the procedures are one, it is “getting our fellow citizens to reply less on tradition, and to be more willing to experiment with new customs and institutions, (168).”
other hand, he strains toward inclusion of religious persons and groups within the public sphere. On the point of inclusion or exclusion, Stout assumes a position affirming the contributions of religious persons to the creation of a conversation space:

If [religious persons] are discouraged from speaking up in this way [i.e., expressing their religious reasons for doing why they do what they do], we will remain ignorant of the real reasons that many of our fellow citizens have for reaching some of the ethical and political conclusions they do.

In a further cautionary note on the exclusion of religiously conscious persons from public discourse, he suggests that,

We will also deprive them of the central democratic good of expressing themselves to the rest of us on matters about which they care deeply. If they do not have this opportunity, we will lose the chance to learn from, and to critically examine, what they say. And they will have good reason to doubt that they are being shown the respect that all of us owe to our fellow citizens as the individuals they are.

His supportive position recognizes not only the rights of religiously conscious persons to express their viewpoints in public space, but also the value of religious viewpoints in contributing to public conversations. His vision of pragmatism allows religious voices to play an important role in developing and engaging the discourses of secularism, without requiring tabling or “translating” their tradition’s theological distinctiveness.

2.3 Stout’s Coalition with Religiously Orientated Groups and Persons

Stout’s favourable estimation of tradition as capable of fostering a public coalition of diverse and pluralistic doctrines is helpfully illustrated by means of contrast with others who argue for a less robust and thick public conversation. One contrasting position on

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86 Jeffrey Stout, Democracy and Tradition , 64.
87 Ibid., 64.
the recommended type of speech in public discourse comes from Habermas. Admittedly, both Stout and Habermas seek to allow a place for religion within public discourse that goes beyond mere tolerance. Yet, what they propose in terms of conversation differs. Stout contends that, in public conversations, immanent critique is important as an effort to change the minds of religious people on certain issues by appealing to reasons that they already accept. These, however, show novel steps that are in fact different from what Habermas seem willing to try.

Optimistically viewed, Habermas’ framework can be understood as a democratic process designed to aid particular religious persons or communities to move from a localized or self-focused concern toward a more common or more universal concern for all members and communities within the public sphere. The process here exhibits delicate gradations in both tone and meaning. On the one hand, Habermas argues that only secular reasons count in political debates on the institutional level within the liberal democratic state. On the other hand, he also rejects any process that renders a religious individual or community marginal in relation to the liberal democratic state:

Every citizen must know and accept that only secular reasons count beyond the institutional threshold separating the informal public sphere from parliaments, courts, ministries, and administrations. This only calls for the epistemic ability to consider one’s own religious convictions reflexively from the outside and connect them with secular views. Religious citizens can certainly acknowledge this “institutional translation proviso” without having to split their identity into public and private parts the moment they participate in public discourses. They should therefore also be allowed to express and justify their convictions in a religious language even when they cannot find secular “translations” for them.  

While assuming, problematically, that secular reasons are equal to universal reasons, Ha-

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bermas has recognized the problem, and scaled back his position accordingly. As we noted in the previous chapter, he still believes that religious world-views carry heavier metaphysical baggage than secular ones. Therefore, their justificatory burden is heavier than non-religious ones. His position is one we cautioned against in the previous chapter. On the other hand, “translation” is not unlike the word “conversion,” which the Oxford English Dictionary denotes as a “transposition,” whereby the transposition of the subject and predicate of a proposition form a new proposition by immediate inference. Subsequently, “translation” can be generously presented as a transformative and creative process. Yet, the position of Habermas essentially neutralizes the discourse of religious persons within the public institutional sphere and beyond through a demand for translation that appears not to be a two-way street.

Given Habermas’ emphasizes on rationality, the question of human cohabitation is not only caught up with reason itself, but also deeply involves our passions. Stout rightly recognizes the legitimate reasons and passions of persons and communities, whether religious or not, within pluralistic and diverse Western societies. The challenge today is to create spaces of conversation whereby greater mutual understanding between persons of diverse reasons and passions can occur. While Habermas opts for a discourse of neutrality in the formal public sphere as a means toward achieving such mutual understanding, Stout, on the other hand, opts for a discourse of frank conversation, which results in a practical wisdom.

2.4 Stout and Practical Wisdom Achieved through Discernment

The Christian churches have a contribution to make within a discourse of frank conversation and practical wisdom. Before we proceed to offer a proposal in this regard, it will be helpful to map out Stout’s position on “practical wisdom and tact.”

For Stout, practical wisdom and tact includes religious premises. Yet he notes the challenge of using religious premises in the context of discursive exchange:

The reason that relying on religious premises is often imprudent when debating matters of public policy is not, however, that it violates a compromise supposedly reached between “the enlightenment” and “the religious.” It is rather that, in a setting as religiously divided as ours is, one is unlikely to win support for one’s political proposals on most issues simply by appealing to religious considerations.

For him, the use of religion in the context of discursive conversation requires discernment. Every situation is different and every conversation is particular. In addressing the dynamic quality of conversation involving religion, Stout makes the following comment, showing his distance from Rorty: “Is it true that religion is essentially a conversation-stopper? I would have thought that the pragmatic line should be that religion is not essentially anything, that the conversational utility of employing religious premises in political arguments depends on the situation.”

At the same time, the resources within a religious tradition are not without their challenges. Stout contends religious premises in the form of faith claims do, in fact, tend to become conversation-stoppers: “There is one sort of religious premise that does have a

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90 Jeffrey Stout, Democracy and Tradition, 86.
91 Ibid.
92 Ibid.
tendency to stop a conversation, at least momentarily—namely, faith claims.\textsuperscript{93} He nu-
ances, however, his understanding of faith claims within a wider sense of discourse. He begins by noting that if one was to employ the definition of faith-claims as suggested by Robert Brandom they would indeed become conversation-stoppers. He understands a faith claim as that which “avows a cognitive commitment without claiming entitlement to that commitment.”\textsuperscript{94} Stout appears, however, not to share Brandom’s declarative position on faith-claims. Instead, he presents the following common discursive move as an example of how faith-claims can terminate dialogue:

In the context of discursive exchange, if I make a faith-claim, I am authoriz-
ing others to attribute the commitment to me and perhaps giving them a better understanding of why I have undertaken certain cognitive or practical com-
mitments. I am also making the claims available to others as a premise they might wish to employ in their reasoning. But I am not accepting the responsi-
bility of demonstrating my entitlement to it. If pressed for such a demonstra-
tion, I might say simply that it is a matter of faith. In other words, “Don’t ask
me for reasons. I don’t have any.”\textsuperscript{95}

It is important to note here that Stout recognizes that secular people, when pushed to the very foundation of their world-view orientations, will also be at a loss for reasons. Ludwig Wittgenstein called these “spade turning points”, and Rorty described this situation in terms of a final vocabulary. Stout is highlighting how many viewpoints assume a discursive move that is not open to any critical dialogue. So it is not so much that religion is a conversation-stopper; rather, for Stout, it is those discursive claims—which often take the form of faith-assertions—that refuse any critical exchange and deny offering any addi-
tional reasons why they accept what they accept as claims that end a conversation.

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., 87.
2.5 Faith claims versus religious claims

In a conciliatory gesture toward religious persons, Stout offers a comprehensive understanding of faith not particular to religions. He notes “everyone holds some beliefs on nonreligious topics without claiming to know that they are true. To express such a belief in the form of a reason is to make what I have been calling a faith-claim.”96 Stout explains that persons who make such faith-claims generally fall into two categories: the first consists of “hard-liners on both sides who not only propose answers, but also claim to know that their answers are right”97; the second consists of a “group of people in the middle who are prepared to take a stand, if need be, but would never claim they knew that they were right.”98 These types of positions, as Stout’s notes, are often the way of politics. Examples, such as the abortion debate, highlight this point well.99 Stout continues:

It is important in this context to recall the distinction between being entitled to a belief and being able to justify that belief to someone else. Even in cases where individuals do plausibly claim to be epistemically entitled to religious premises, they might still be unable to produce an argument that would give their interlocutors reason to accept those premises. To assert such a premise would not qualify as a faith-claim in the strict sense that I have just defined, but it would create a potential impasse in conversation.100

In a move toward recognizing faith as a comprehensive human resource, Stout notes the following:

Yet here again, the same sort of difficulty arises for all of us, not only for religious believers, when we are asked to defend our most deeply engrained commitments, especially those that we acquired through acculturation instead

96 Jeffrey Stout, Democracy and Tradition, 87.
97 Ibid.
98 Ibid.
99 Ibid.
100 Ibid.
of through reasoning. We are normally entitled to hold onto commitments of this kind unless they prove problematic in some way—for example, by turning out to be either internally incoherent or too hard to square with newly acquired commitments that strike us as hardly credible."^101

It is, therefore, the type of commitment we hold as absolute that becomes the conversation-stopper. Such commitments are characterized by an incontrovertible moral position determinative of a course of action. Such choices are particularly played out in political or social questions or in furthering a political doctrine or cause. Recognizing that such commitments are not exclusively religious commitments, Stout implies the responsibility shared between all persons, religious or secular, in expressing commitment in a way that fosters participation and mutuality in conversation:

If the reason for excluding the expression of religious commitments is that they create this type of discursive impasse, then the only fair way to proceed is to exclude the expression of many nonreligious commitments, as well. But if we go in this direction, Rorty’s view will require silence on many of the most important issues on the political agenda.^102

Indeed, Stout argues robustly against the response of silence supported by Rorty. The renunciation of speech and the omission of religious reasoning in public discourse, for Stout, is an undesirable commitment. Should such a burden be placed upon religiously conscious persons it would expose an ironic double standard. Indeed, this point was not lost on Rorty, as Stout points out:

Rorty grants that there is “hypocrisy involved in saying that believers somehow have no right to base their political views on their religious faith, whereas we atheists have every right to base ours on Enlightenment philosophy. The claim that in doing so we are appealing to reason, whereas the religious are being irrational, is hokum.”^103

^101 Ibid., 88.
^102 Ibid.
^103 Ibid, 89.
In using Rorty’s own words, Stout is arguing against the Jeffersonian compromise, which as Stout argues, proposes,

It is always wise, pragmatically speaking, to confine the premises of our political arguments to commitments held in common. Religious premises are to be excluded not because they involve faith-claims and not because they involve vocabularies that cannot be defended without circularity, but rather because they are not held in common.\textsuperscript{104}

In an outright rejection of Rorty’s strategy of restraint, Stout bluntly argues,

Reasons actually held in common do not get us far enough toward answers for enough of our political questions. The proposed policy of restraint, if adopted, would cause too much silence at precisely the points where more discussion is most badly needed. The policy itself would become a conversation-stopper.\textsuperscript{105}

Stout wishes to promote greater understanding between differences, at both personal and communal levels. In agreement with Rorty, he holds that conversation is the most appropriate and productive way for such understanding to arise.\textsuperscript{106} However, he differs from Rorty and Habermas with respect to decisions on which premises can and cannot be part of the discursive process. Stout argues for a thicker conversation:

The political discourse of a pluralistic society [is] a mixture of normal discourse and conversational improvisation. In the discussion of some issues, straightforward argument on the basis of commonly held standards carries us only so far. Beyond that, we must be either silent or conversational. But we can be conversational, in the spirit of Rorty’s most edifying philosophical work, only by rejecting the policy of restraint it endorses.\textsuperscript{107}

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 90.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid.

Stout and Rorty, however, disagree on the dynamics of the conversation which ought to take place. Stout explains that Rorty suggests a role of keeping discursive exchange continuing for “edifying philosophy,” when “normal” discourse, discourse on the basis of commonly accepted standards—cannot straightforwardly adjudicate between competing claims. Conversation is a good name for what is needed at those points where people employing different final vocabularies reach a momentary impasse.”
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid.
To be in conversation is as much about recognition of what is held in common, and what is not, as it is about transformation. As such, conversation is about the work of reshaping how we live together. Such reshaping recognizes that cooperation toward substantive normative commitments is possible, without individuals or groups withholding their commitments and compromising their integrity.\textsuperscript{108} Stout notes that, in a democracy, living together “takes for granted that reasonable people will differ in their conceptions of piety, in their grounds of hope, in their ultimate concerns, and in their speculations about salvation.”\textsuperscript{109} In spite of our differences, the fact that we share public space presumes shareable normative commitments, about which we have conversations. Hence, as Stout continues, “people who differ on such matters can still exchange reasons with one another intelligibly, cooperate in crafting political arrangements that promote justice and decency in their relations with one another, and do both of these things without compromising their integrity.”\textsuperscript{110}

The action of co-operating together, however, requires serious attention to issues beyond the activities and policies associated with government. As Stout observes, “cooperating democratic citizens tend also to be individuals who care about matters higher than politics, and expect not to get their way on each issue that comes before the public for deliberation.”\textsuperscript{111} Significant for him is the practice of being ethically responsible for not only one’s conclusions, but also for proceeding from premises to conclusions. This is part of what it means to share public space productively. Hence, he contends that conversation

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 298.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.
within a democracy involves “[holding] one another responsible discursively that we do not agree on everything and therefore need to talk things through.”\textsuperscript{112}

The separation of Church and State within modernity has encouraged a robust and comprehensive conversation within the public sphere. Two recent examples of such conversations concern failures of the Catholic Church to protect children against sexual abuse by religious authorities and priests, and the frank exchange that occurred recently in the United States between the Obama administration and Church officials on ObamaCare. While the separation of Church and State remains part and parcel of living in a modern democracy, it is crucial also to recognize that this very separation is not the elimination of religious voices from important matters of modern everyday life within the state.

Alluding to the transformation which is possible from conversation, Stout understands the human subject as one “one who need not be a theist.”\textsuperscript{113} The human subject, however, “[needs] to have an active imagination”\textsuperscript{114} A generous reading of his conciliatory and modest epistemology here serves to “make room for conscientious objection [underscoring] the need for social criticism [assuring] us that a lonely dissenter

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 299.
  \item \textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 242.
  \item \textsuperscript{114} Ibid.
\end{itemize}

Stout explains active imagination: “First, you need to imagine the possibility of all the various conceptual improvements that could be made in the ways we think and speak about moral matters. Second, you need to imagine the possibility of all the various sentences that could appear in the resulting language games to imagine the full range of possible improvements not yet realized, while remaining agnostic about the details. Finally, and most importantly, you must be prepared as I am, to apply the concept of truth to moral sentences.” Stout’s use of the word “agnostic” arguably is a provocative but unclear description of workings of his presentation of the moral imagination. He continues though to explain his presentation, although never clearly addressing in an explicit way what he actually means by “agnostic.” (Jeffrey Stout, Democracy & Tradition, 242-3).
or critic, taking a stand against a crowd or the powers that be, might be right.”

Encouraging a strong sense of fallibilism, he understands religious tradition as best exercised when greater weight is placed upon current knowledge and experience as filters through which tradition is employed.

2.6 Conclusion

Stout takes a modest approach to both pragmatism and the role of religion in the public sphere. He understands tradition positively as a subversive force against totalizing ideological discourses, be they secular rationalist or religiously based, and also against the power those discourses covet. The dialogical space that conversation creates allows for a generative subversion. It not only forms ethical persons, but also re-orientates communities. His contribution highlight a more worthwhile public conversation—one that attends to both transformation and confession.

For Stout, public conversation depends on a “common basis,” that is practical, moral and even anthropological. As such, he is happy to have a conversation that involves all three ingredients, even if these ingredients create dissonance among each other. Conversation, therefore, allows all parties to speak in their own tongues and avoid the burden of translation if they happen to be religious. For Christians, however, an important dimension of public discourse involves anthropological assumptions which are expressed in “mutual recognition” and framed by a “theology of universal grace”. Christian theologians will want to affirm an anthropology that contextualizes the ethic of public discourse within a world-view that recognizes and affirms the dignity—not just rights—of every

115 Ibid., 244.
human being. Accordingly, Stout’s position, while helpful, does not seem to go far enough. For example, he notes that the moral imagination he is presenting is at once a “minimal version” and “metaphysically austere.” Stout’s proposal though lacks the anthropological thrust which many Christians demand in their morality. The deficiency of his proposal is clearly evident: “By adding commitments not presumed by the minimal version, you can get increasingly controversial versions of the concept. If you are a theist, for example, you might wish to add that God is the author of the moral law. You might go on to describe the moral law as promulgated providentially, as an ordinance of divine reason for the common good. By making these additions, you would be taking the moral law closer to what Aquinas calls the ‘eternal law.’” His project leaves Christian theological motivations unexplored.

What we have achieved thus far is making cultural theorists, such as Habermas and Stout, significant dialogue-partners in reflecting upon the role of religion in the public sphere. Having theology dialogue seriously with cultural theory on matters of mutual concern is a reflection on the changing ways within the academy of understanding how theology ought to be done. More particular for our work here, having theology engage with cultural theory on the role of religion within the public sphere creates a space whereby theology can engage in a critical and self-critical way in cultural criticism, on such areas as the role of religion in the public sphere. Having examined both Habermas and Stout, we agree with both that dialogue is needed in creating a greater sense of solidarity in the public sphere. Where we depart from them is who can dialogue and in what way dialogue ought to occur. For Christians, the fact of the common origin of all human beings from God and that human beings are the made in God’s own imagine and likeness
is a context which Christians cannot ignore or remove. For to do so, would serve as a restriction on truth claims within our moral discourse. Our next two sections, therefore, seek to achieve two things: emphasize the theological development of how Christians understand our common origin in God, through a consideration of both the development and implications of such in claim as expressed in a theology of grace. Rahner’s theology of grace will establishes a theology of grace that achieves both a theologically relational and historical force necessary that eliminates any group and graced over another. Having established this, we will then proceed to move from such an anthropological context toward an ethical or moral expression of solidarity as hospitality in action. Reynolds and Benhabib are significant voices in progressing our project toward this end. Significant for both is the creation of an expression of solidarity by means of hospitality that not only invites the participation of non-members, but that demands it.
3.1 Introduction

Thus far we have looked at two resources, Habermas and Stout, for generating solidarity in the public sphere. While acknowledging Habermas’ genuine interest in valuing and including the input of religious persons and traditions in building solidarity, we equally noted the significant challenges presented to religious persons by the demand to “translate” what is real and of value for them in order to participate in formal public discourse. Additionally, we considered the efforts of Stout to create a thicker discourse with the body politic, one rooted in pragmatic conversation between different perspectives, including religious ones, without requiring translation in advance. For Christians, however, there remains the question of locating adequate theological roots to provide the incentive or desire for public discourse. In an effort to make use of the theological notion of culture, this chapter will compliment previous modern notions of culture with a more theological self-conscious account of culture as it developed through the centuries, offering an explicit account of theological culture. That is, what motivates Christians to engage in the kind of public conversation outlined by Stout? With this question in mind, we turn toward a potential theological resource in the theology of Karl Rahner. His theology of grace offers us a fundamental theological anthropology, through a strong tradition of interpretative application, that goes a long way toward helping Christians contribute toward solidarity in the public sphere.

Indeed, Rahner’s theology of grace is very much concerned with reconciling the self-realization of those considered “members” of the Church with those in our societies.
considered non-members. His efforts in this regard are best exemplified in his treatment of the anonymous Christian. For this thesis, the theology of grace enters into the scene because Habermas, Stout, and Rahner, are each in their own way ultimately concerned about the human capacity for self-determination. In Rahner’s theology, self-determination has the Divine as both its origin and telos. Nevertheless, such an understanding supports the democratic process esteemed by Habermas and Stout, and in the end serves to motivate Christian engagement in solidarity making activities in the public sphere. This chapter will examine Rahner’s theology through an examination of his understanding of grace, noting its style and content. We will argue that his theology builds an anthropological foundation that fosters mutual recognition and ultimately points toward solidarity as more than mere social planning, but rather is a robust sense of kinship with others in sharing public space.

Instrumental to such solidarity is Rahner’s location of self/subjectivity in a tripartite context: the relationship of the subject to oneself, to God and to other persons in a quality of mutual relations. In *Hearers of the Word*, Rahner presents the identity of human beings through their relations to others. This insight is the result of integrating the philosophical tenets of existentialism within a theological method and discourse. Existentialism concentrates on the nature of the individual who, being free and responsible, asserts his or her identity through acts of the will. In presenting the human person as primarily a relational being, Rahner argues for a more holistic understanding of the human person. His understanding of the human person upholds the “openness” of the human person, as taught by existentialism. Yet Rahner radicalizes the limits of existentialism’s openness not just toward one’s immediate context and social world, but extends that
openness and relatedness toward the Divine. Significant for our purposes is the way in which Rahner connects the self, others and the Divine through a theology of grace, while sorting through the prejudices within traditional theologies of grace so as to assist us today in best understanding our experiences as Christians.

To give an account of Rahner’s theology of grace, this chapter will explore two informing theological voices working in the background of Rahner’s perspective: neo-scholasticism and Henri de Lubac’s own response to neo-scholasticism. We will contrast these with Rahner’s re-interpretative theology of grace rooted both in Scripture and in Christology. Rahner’s rich account of grace, when placed along side the more philosophical account of grace and nature in neo-scholasticsm, highlights the negative reductionism at play in neo-scholasticism. We will also examine Nouvelle Théologie’s response to Neo-Scholasticism as illustrated in the theology of de Lubac. This informing background will allow us consider the distinctiveness of Rahner’s contribution to a theology of grace, as well as understanding more fully what is precisely at stake for him in theology. Rahner, concerned with matters of freedom and grace in de Lubac’s theology, offers a corrective through his unique construction of the term “supernatural existential.” Finally, I will briefly consider the merits of Rahner’s theology of grace and assess whether Rahner is a theologian for the twenty-first century.

3.2 A Theology Of Mutually Conditioning Relationships

Existentialism affords theology a new language, concentrating on the person as free and responsible. Using this new understanding of self within the ordinary living of one’s life, Rahner’s Christian form of existentialism sees being human as a journey toward God in the world. As such, the human person does not know himself or herself immediately. He
writes, “the subject’s self-alienation in the world is precisely the way in which the subject discovers himself and affirms himself in a definitive way.” Meaning is not immediately contained in the self, but is discovered and understood in our relationships to one another, to the created universe and to God. As Ethna Regan observes, Rahner “treats relatedness as essential to the human being, for there is no individuality without community and no community other than the intersubjectivity of individuals. Subjectivity stands in a tripartite context: the relation of the subject to herself, to God, and to other persons.” These relationships are not lived in a parallel existence to one another, but are interconnected. Neither is the human person defined by private and self-contained introspection, but in relationship. What Regan affirms in Rahner is the quality of mutual relations within a treatment of subjectivity where the relationship to oneself, God and others are “mutually conditioning one another, in every act of the subject endowed with intellect and freedom, whatever form this act may assume.”

Highlighting the quality of mutually conditioning relationships, Rahner signals a theological change from the neo-scholastic essentialist mode of doing theology to a dynamic re-interpretation of theology involving humans as they actually live. This shift in theologizing stresses an understanding of a human person as a “being” over the inherited theological discourse, which emphasized a person as “essence.” According to Francis Colborn, the movement from “essence” to “being” marks a shift in how we understand the role of grace within interpersonal relationships. Grace is understood within the dynamic of relationships; relationships are channels of grace. Colborn notes this way of

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116 Ibid., 41.
117 Padraic Conway & Fianche Ryan eds, Karl Rahner: Theologian for the Twenty-first Century (Peter Lang, 2010), 127.
118 Ibid., 127.
viewing “relationship is not so much defined (metaphysically) as it is to be described (phenomenologically). The important question to be asked is not about the essences of persons involved but about the origin and the development of the relationship between them.”

Rahner’s understanding of the character of the human person explores the dynamics of graced mutuality operative within human relationships.

In this context, it becomes clear why Rahner employs the term “supernatural existential” to communicate the human capacity for God. Regan suggests that Rahner’s use of the term “supernatural” is not in any way “referring to something beyond the ontological realm, but is indicating the graced character of all human reality, grounded as it is in creation and redemption.” With respect to the term “existential,” she notes that Rahner employs the term in the Heideggerian sense as: “a permanent determination penetrating all elements of human existence, which reveals its meaning and structure, characterizing the human being before she engages in any free action.” While Rahner does not offer any precise definition of the “supernatural existential,” he does however use this term in communicating the graced character of the human person. Consequently, Regan holds that for Rahner, “God’s self-communication in the human person is an existential-ontological reality.” Such self-communication pervades the relational context of human life.

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120 Padraic Conway & Fianche Ryan eds, Karl Rahner: Theologian for the Twenty-first Century, 127.
121 Ibid.
122 Ibid, 128.

3.3 Neo-Scholasticism and the challenges of a theology that “others” grace

To consider the significance of Rahner’s creative means of joining philosophy and theology to fashion a new theology of grace by analyzing the dynamic operations of humans relations, it is necessary to explore the dominant neo-scholastic tradition against which Rahner’s particular contribution stands out. For this we will briefly look at Haight’s *The Experience and Language of Grace*, which skillfully traces the background to Rahner’s theology. In outlining the development of the understanding of grace over the centuries, Haight quotes Peter Fransen’s estimation of the contribution of the Council of Trent (1545-63): “Theologians satisfied themselves mainly with substantiating the existence of created grace. By and large, they failed to give serious thought to what was in fact the ultimate root of man’s interior sanctification: the living indwelling of the Blessed Trinity. And so created grace was understood by the ordinary faithful to be the thing in itself.”

Scholastic theologians were in agreement that through grace one entered into a new relationship with God. Unfortunately, as Haight notes, it was viewed that this “relation-ship was based on an ontological change in the human person.” Haight contends that the implications of this post Tridentine theology “subordinated God’s presence to existence; his indwelling to this created change in a person’s being.”

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124 In this section we will contrast “created” and “uncreated grace.” Uncreated grace is the communication of the triune absolute mystery to the human person, demands as the possibility for it being grasped a person who is already within the order of grace. Created grace—the created ontological modification of the human person—renders the human subject capable of receiving the divine mystery. Rahner sees both and intertwined.


126 Ibid.

127 Ibid.
for this is taken from Rahner’s article, The Theology of the Symbol¹²⁸. There Rahner appeals to Scripture in his efforts to dismantle a neo-scholastic understanding of grace which stripped grace of any personalism.

Establishing a theology of grace based on personhood, Rahner argues that “it is because God must express himself inwardly that he can also utter himself outwardly; the infinite, created utterance ad extra is a continuation of the immanent constitution of ‘image and likeness’--a free continuation, because its object is finite--and takes place in fact ‘through’ the Logos (Jn 1:3).”¹²⁹ Having established God’s expressive communication in the Word, Rahner stresses the personal characteristic of the Divine communication to human beings:

But when putting forward this thesis, one should be clear that this existence of the Word is again not to be thought of as the reality which--merely because of its being infinite--could bestow existence on any thinkable ‘essence,’ as if it could offer any essence a ground of existence which in itself was indifferent to this essence rather than that or to which manner of existent being arose thereby. The being of the Logos--considered of course as that which is received by the procession from the Father--must be thought of as exteriorizing itself, so that without detriment to its immutability in itself and by itself, it becomes itself in truth the existence of a created reality--which must in all truth and reality be predicated of the being of the Logos, because it is so.¹³⁰

Rahner astutely narrates the working of grace through terms agreeable to neo-scholasticism. Having started from “these Thomistic principles,” Rahner argues that the created effect within the human person is an effect of the indwelling of the Divine in the human person. According to Rahner, the person’s orientation to God is grace. God has given the gift of God’s self to the human person in a way that radically constitutes the

¹³⁰ Ibid.
human-divine relationship in the person even before their exercise of freedom in response to God’s offer. To this end, he roots his argument within a Christological framework:

We arrive at considerations and insights which show how truly and radically the humanity of Christ is really the ‘appearance’ of the Logos itself, its symbolic reality in the pre-eminent sense, not something in itself alien to the Logos and its reality, which is only taken up from outside like an instrument to make its own music but strictly speaking to reveal anything of who uses it...The humanity of Christ is not to be considered as something in which God dresses up and masquerades— a mere signal of which he makes use, so that something audible can be uttered about Logos by means of this signal. The humanity of the self-disclosure of the Logos itself, so that when God, expressing himself, exteriorizes himself, that very thing appears which we call the humanity of the Logos. 131

Advocating a theology of uncreated grace (God’s self communication), Rahner understands uncreated grace as no longer appearing to be merely a consequence of the creation of ‘infused’ habitual grace, regarded as a physical accident. It is rather seen as what is truly central in grace, such that created grace entails uncreated grace. His efforts to stress the appearance of the Divine as not something other but immanently part of the human condition served to correct a neo-scholastic theology of grace heavily bound by the weight of essentialism and a focus on grace as ‘other.’ While some have criticized Rahner’s move in this direction, his account argues for a shift in language of grace that is personalized, viewing the human person as a receiver of the Word and emphasizing a personal God who wishes to communicate in uncreated grace.132

131 Ibid., 128.
132 Cf Fainche Ryan’s article “Rahner and Aquinas: The Incomprehensibility of God,” in Karl Rahner: Theologian for the Twentieth-first Century (Peter Lang Press, 2010), 16. Ryan argues that Rahner failed to afford “due significance to doctrinal and institutional forms of religious expression.”
3.4 Grace as the self-gift and the self-communication of God

Grace for Rahner is not something other than God. Equally, it is not some metaphysical substance. Grace is the self-gift and the self-communication of God: “Grace is God himself, the communication in which he gives himself to man as the divinizing favour which he is himself.”\(^{133}\) Though the foremost gift of grace is God, it is a gift that affects the relationships we have with each other and with our world. Haight, recognizing this personalized understanding of grace, notes that “Rahner himself consistently describes grace as God’s gift of himself to human beings, his personal self-donation to the person in love.”\(^{134}\) As such, grace is “not thought of as a ‘thing.’ It is something that is only ‘put at man’s disposal’ in that act of ‘letting one’s self be disposed of’ which is the proper gift of the freest grace, the miracle of love.”\(^{135}\)

The implications of the nature-grace opposition dramatically shaped not only a theology of grace, but also the church’s theologizing on morality and ecclesiology, to mention just two examples. The Medieval debate over distinctions between nature and grace lapsed into “separation and Catholicism was to be bedeviled by all the disastrous dualisms that plague still: sacred and secular, church and world, salvation history and world history, spiritual and human.”\(^{136}\) Correcting the theology of the neo-scholastic period became the theological undertaking of two significant twentieth century theologians, namely, Henri de Lubac, a French Jesuit, and Karl Rahner, a German Jesuit. Both de Lubac, a French born citizen, and Rahner, a German born citizen, belonged to the same

\(^{134}\) Roger Haight, *The Experience and Language of Grace*, 123.
\(^{136}\) Ibid., 169.
Religious Order, but their approaches to repairing the theology of nature and grace and the supernatural were different, leading to divergent conclusions.

Within a discourse of extrinsicism, grace became understood through the theological appropriations of the term “supernatural.” Grace was seen as “super” or beyond the natural, separate from the natural world. In more moderate theological discourse the word “supernatural” might well refer to the “transcendence of God and the sheer gratuity of the divine self-communication to humans.” Unfortunately, however, the term “supernatural” became “encrusted [within a narrow definition of its meaning] and an extrinsicism colored it so that grace was viewed as super-natural in that it comes to one from outside, from a God above the world and history.” Grace became reduced to “an extrinsic addendum having nothing to do with nature, which increasingly came to be thought of as a self-sufficient part of a whole meaningful in and of itself, so that one had to wonder why anyone would be the least bit interested in an added reality that did not ever enter the consciousness of persons, who live meaningful lives without it.”

The medieval distinction between nature and grace as communicated through extrinsicism introduced a language of opposition and differentiation that would negatively characterize catholic theology from post-Trent up to the twentieth century. It seems no accident that the church would be in charge of mediating created grace, given the protestant theologies of immediate personal access to grace. As such, extrinsicism has political aspects to it.

To appreciate the distinction between de Lubac and Rahner’s retrieval of the supernatural, we will first offer a brief account of de Lubac’s position. To amend the mis-

138 Ibid.
139 Ibid.
understanding of “supernatural” and “grace” operative at the time, de Lubac returned to
the definitive theologian of neo-scholastic theology, Thomas Aquinas. De Lubac argues
that neo-scholastic theology was antithetical to Thomist theology on the “supernatural”
and “nature” and “grace.” Stephen J. Duffy argues that two positions are firmly stated in
the writings of Aquinas: “that the human being is marked with a natural desire for the be-
atific vision and that achievement of this destiny exceeds human being’s natural capac-
ties and resources.” Duffy continues, noting that though “the object of his desire eludes
human reach, the capacity for receiving the vision of God impinges on the human be-
ing.” The predicament of neo-scholasticism, Duffy maintains, is that the tradition
failed to keep both these teachings in conversation with each other.141

While critical of neo-scholasticism’s appropriation of Thomism, its equally fair to
say that de Lubac faulted Aquinas for the manner in which he transposed Aristotelian
philosophy into Patristic theology in a way that opened theology toward conceptual for-
mulations adopted by neo-scholasticism. Quoting de Lubac, Duffy captures the weight of
the accusation levied against Aquinas by de Lubac: “[Aquinas] baptized Aristotle but
‘like every baptism, the baptism of profane philosophers always leaves traces of sin.’”142
In this declarative language, de Lubac highlights what he perceives as a notable capri-
ciousness in the merging of Aristotelianism and Patristic theology. De Lubac’s reserva-
tion concerns the conceptual notion of being human found within Aristotelean philosophy
and its opposition to that contained within Patristic theology. The Patristic notion teaches
human beings are made in the image of God, while the Aristotelean notion of being hu-

140 Ibid, 298.
141 Ibid.

See Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae 3, q. 9, a. 3, ad 3.
142 Ibid., 299.
man teaches the human being as purely nature. At stake is a theology of nature and grace. Duffy captures de Lubac’s position as follows:

Whereas the Fathers distinguished human spirit and nature, with Aristotle one could speak of human beings as one did of everything else, viz., as being a nature, a principle of operations with a defined and limited set of powers. Thus the ‘nature’ to which Thomas refers, argued by de Lubac, even though spiritual, does not differ essentially from other natures.143

At the expense of a Patristic sensibility, the transposition of Aristotelean philosophy into theology effected an over-rationalization of the “mystery” affirmed by Patristic theology. Duffy, in defense of Thomism, argues that for Aquinas the desire to see God is natural and its fulfillment is supernatural.144 As de Lubac points out, however, Aquinas’ assertions did not prevent subsequent readers of his theology from falling into a misreading of his position. De Lubac’s concern is not so much the possible mutual complementarity between philosophy and theology. Rather, he objects to a union between both whereby one tradition neutralizes and co-opts the other tradition as a mere extension of itself. Duffy puts it this way: “Not that Thomas was wrong to root desire in nature, says de Lubac. Rather, problems arose because the Aristotelean lens he provided for viewing nature. Thus later theologians would reduce nature’s desire to just what is comprehensible in the Aristotelean view.”145 Certain neo-scholastic appropriations of Patristic theology

143 Ibid., 298.
144 Ibid., 299.
145 Ibid., 299.

De Lubac in The Mystery of The Supernatural challenges the theological correctness of certain commentators of Thomas. In particular, de Lubac the turning point in the history of Thomistic thought by the work of Cajetan (1468-1524) on understandings of “pure reason” cf Henri de Lubac, The Mystery Of The Supernatural (Palm Publishers: Montreal, 1976), 9-14.
intellectualized and naturalized desire within a framework that subsequently neglected gratuity of grace and undermined the supernatural order.\textsuperscript{146}

Consequently, de Lubac sought to reclaim the supernatural within social and cultural life of Christians. He held firm to the opinion that the dualism inaugurated by neoscholasticism reduced the supernatural to a marginal position in ordinary life, devaluing the natural and elevating the supernatural. In response, de Lubac suggested a relationship between the natural and supernatural that is not only complimentary but also necessary. De Lubac’s account of the mutuality of the natural and the supernatural means one cannot be explained without explaining the other. Recognizing the interrelationality of both “natural” and “supernatural”, Duffy suggests “for de Lubac, then, nature is made for the supernatural and is unintelligible without it.”\textsuperscript{147} De Lubac wished to avoid two positions with respect to the grace-nature debate; the first equated grace with nature, and the second separated grace from nature as two independent and distinctive things.\textsuperscript{148} Susan K. Wood presents de Lubac’s task as “safeguarding the gratuity and distinctiveness of grace, yet keeping it from being extrinsic to nature and thus to some degree superfluous to the needs of nature.”\textsuperscript{149} Toward this end, de Lubac locates his theology of grace within a his-

\textsuperscript{146} For a more extensive consideration of de Lubac’s opposition to the effects of Thomas’s theology on nature and grace cf Roger Haight, \textit{The Experience and Language of Grace}, 124.
\textsuperscript{147} Stephen J. Duffy, \textit{The Dynamics of Grace: Perspectives in Theological Anthopology}, 300.
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., 320.

Wood offers the following summary of how gratuity of grace was historically preserved: Traditionally, two approaches have been used to preserve the gratuity of grace. The first of these asserts a double gratuity: the gratuity of creation and the gratuity of supernatural ordination. This approach begins with the concept of pure nature to which an extrinsic, superimposed supernatural finality is added. The danger here is to see in the supernatural a mere continuation of the natural, insofar as nature and the supernatural are conceived of as two species of the same genus. A second approach distinguishes between a purely potential and hypothetical universe, in which God could have created intellectual creatures without
torical context. By doing so he avoids an understanding of grace as something in and of itself, separate from life or nature. Wood explains de Lubac’s theology of grace as avoiding a chronological understanding of the gratuity of grace. This position rejects a thesis that suggests the human person is a person devoid of grace until he/she is the recipient of grace through an external act of God. Counteracting the abstractions associated with such neo-scholasticism, de Lubac seeks a theology of grace that unites us with life.

In articulating a theology of grace intrinsically related to nature, de Lubac retrieves the primary Christian teaching that human beings are created in God’s image. Freeing the definition of the supernatural from its philosophical abstraction, de Lubac works to retrieve the theology of “Imago Dei” in ways that both links with the past and continues within our new historical context:

Although, as it seems to me, no change need be made in the general economy of past teaching, and although we can still adopt the idea our fathers have left for us of our fundamental relationship with our supernatural end, there is still much to be done in accordance both with our actual intellectual requirements and with the present state of theology, and in view of the difficulties which the development of thought has produced or accentuated there is a need to show more clearly how this idea remains completely in harmony with the demands of faith.151

For de Lubac, our destination is summoned by the Creator, in whose image we are all made: “The spiritual creature does not find its end in itself, but in God.”152 De Lubac’s treatment of nature placed the human person on a unique trajectory toward communion

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150 Ibid., 320.
152 Ibid., 129
with God. This particular understanding counters a neo-scholastic understanding of the human person as pure nature, separate from the world of grace. However, it must be noted that de Lubac’s position is known by many as having a peculiar weakness. As Raymond Maloney points out:

De Lubac's refusal to allow any significant reality to the notion of a purely natural fulfillment of the human race was unqualified; it was the kingpin of his rejection of the notion of pure nature and of any suggestion of its independence from the supernatural order. As this was the hub of his argument against the state of pure nature, so it came to be seen by many as the Achilles’ heel of his entire approach.  

It was at this point that his distinction between natural and supernatural, between the gratuitousness of creation and the gratuitousness of grace, runs into difficulties.

3.5 The Critique of de Lubac: His Rejection of an Natural Beatitude

One of the challenges with respect to de Lubac’s understanding of “nature,” according to Maloney, resides in de Lubac’s dismissal of a “natural beatitude” of human nature. Specifically, a “natural beatitude” of human nature holds that there is a natural end distinctive to human nature, an end free from any understanding of graced human nature. In rejecting the effects of dualism associated with a “natural beatitude,” de Lubac mystifies an understanding of the human person. De Lubac’s appropriation of the human person “fails to do justice to the more general meaning of human nature as a reality end and of itself, common to any order of things on earth and [is] in fact open to more than one kind of ac-

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154 Ibid., 513.
tualization, as the course of history shows." De Lubac’s mystical appropriation of the human nature is captured in the following:

God could have refused to give himself to his creatures, just as he could have, and has, given himself. The gratuitousness of the supernatural order is true individually and totally. It is gratuitous in itself. It is gratuitous as far as each one of us is concerned. It is gratuitous in regard to what we see as preceding it, whether in time or in logic. Further--this is what some of the explanations I have contested seem to me not to make clear--its gratuitousness remains always complete. It remains gratuitous at every stage of preparation for the gift, and at every stage of the giving of it. No ‘disposition’ in creatures can ever, in any way, bind the Creator.

De Lubac argues for the transformative work of the supernatural on the natural. Arguably the transformation is not just an impression upon nature or a working with nature, but a re-working of nature. In this way, his theological position morphs human nature from pure nature to a mystical-type nature. Questions around the autonomy of our final end seem redundant, as his transformative account of nature places it in God alone. While it is not within the scope of this paper to evaluate in depth the possible failures or successes of his contribution toward a new theology of nature and grace, it is however advantageous to make explicit his theological correction of neo-scholasticism in order to present a background for understanding the distinctive contribution of Rahner’s viewpoint.

3.6 Karl Rahner’s Break from Henri de Lubac: The Theological Conjecture of the Supernatural Existential

De Lubac sought to unify the natural and the supernatural in arguing that all humans have a natural desire for God. Rahner, on the other hand, introduces the term “supernatural existential.” Regan explains the term “supernatural” as a “theological hypothe-
sis that attempts to express the transcendental orientation of the human person.”

Rahner understands the “supernatural” in a non neo-scholastic way: “The doctrine that grace and fulfillment in the immediate vision of God are supernatural does not mean that the supernatural ‘elevation’ of a spiritual creature is added extrinsically and accidentally to the essence and the structure of a spiritual subject of unlimited transcendence.” Not only is grace a present and imminent reality, but humans are particularly graced creatures and willed as such by the Divine:

In the concrete order which we encounter in our transcendental experience and as interpreted by Christian revelation, the spiritual creature is constituted to begin with as the possible addressee of such divine self-communication. The spiritual essence of man is established by God in creation from the outset because God wants to communicate himself: God’s creation through efficient causality takes place because God wants to give himself in love. Grace, therefore, is not alien to the human subject or to the created world and the social relationships in which we live and have our being. Every turning is a graced act of faith, hope and love. Indeed, the “spiritual essence” of the humans is played out in the every day, where we are drawn toward God in a movement that displays an active and unrestricted eros for God as its fulfillment. Our desire, as such, is the effect of God’s lure. The everyday quality of grace and our movement toward God is a shared understanding of grace by both Rahner and de Lubac.

3.7 Nature and Grace: Conceptually Distinctive, While Joined Existentially

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159 Ibid.
160 Stephen J. Duffy, The Dynamics of Grace; Perspectives In Theological Anthropology, 302.
Rahner, however, breaks company with de Lubac on the question of gratuitous grace. Rahner is concerned that de Lubac and *Nouvelle Theologie* compromised an understanding of the gratuity of grace by reducing it to the gratuity of nature. De Lubac’s understanding of the gratuity of grace became exposed to claims of supernaturalizing human nature in such a totalizing way that it eliminated any natural end for nature, and placed nature on a predetermined itinerary toward the Divine.

As with de Lubac, Rahner holds that grace and nature cannot be understood separately. Particular to Rahner, nature and the supernatural existential must be understood separately. This separation is necessary in maintaining the autonomy of grace for the human being as a gift given by God. Understood separately, the “supernatural existential” carries within itself a more complete account of what it means to be human, and renders explicit what is implicit when understood without revelation in Christ. Its account is complimented through the interpretative lens of revelation, which affords a more comprehensive account than mere “pure nature” of what it means to be human:

This concept [of the nature of the human person] may largely coincide with the theological concept of man’s nature, in so far as without Revelation the greater part of what goes beyond this theological ‘nature’ is not experienced, and at any rate is not recognized as supernatural without the help of Revelation to interpret it. But in principle the content of this philosophical concept of man need not simply coincide with the theological concept of man’s ‘pure nature.’ It can in concrete fact contain more (i.e. something already supernatural, though not as such). When therefore one undertakes to state with precision what exact content is intended by such a concept of a pure nature, in particular as regards God and his moral law, the difficulties, indeed the impossibility, of a neat horizontal once again become apparent for us, as the history of theology shows only too clearly.

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161 Ibid.
Thus, Rahner states the matter of nature/grace with more conceptual precision than did de Lubac, by outlining what the Church can see through revelation as the human predicament. For Rahner, the supernatural existential concerns ordinary every day living:

Where life is a matter of the concrete yearning for eternal Truth and pure and infinite Love, of the inescapability of a free decision before God, of the pangs of birth, of concupiscence, labour, toil and death (hence of man’s real essence and its achievement), all this is unquestionably experienced by a man who (consciously or unconsciously) is subject to the influences of the supernatural existential (if not of grace).  

Rahner is suggesting here that the supernatural existential is open to grace. In this openness, the supernatural existential encounters ordinary living, from truth, to birth, to birth, to labour, to death and resurrection. In addition, its openness to grace reinforces and complements our understanding of a theology of grace in which the human person is the recipient of grace concretely in the here and now. As James C. Livingston summarizes, “the supernatural existential characterizes this goal of human nature as de facto created and intended by God.  

Rahner thus achieves a resolution between the Nouvelle Theologie and Neo-Scholasticism through a fuller examination and re-interpretation of the historicity of human nature. In reflecting upon one’s life, the human’s sense of self is consolidated through an encounter with the Divine.

Hence in this fundamental question of existence, which he has already answered subjectively [a ‘yes’ or a ‘no’ to God’s self-communication], he always remains ambiguous for himself in his reflection. He remains a subject who actualizes the subjectivity of his gratuitously elevated transcendence in his a posteriori and historical encounter with his world of persons and of

163 Ibid., 189.
things, an encounter which is never completely at his disposal. And he actualizes it in his encounter with a human thou in whom history and transcendence find their one actualization together in unity, and there he finds his encounter with God as the absolute Thou.\footnote{165 Karl Rahner, \textit{Foundations Of Christian Faith: An Introduction To The Idea Of Christianity}, 133.}

Rahner’s transcendental and existential analysis illustrates how it is possible to recognize the activity of grace in and through persons “reflecting” upon their experience. In such self-reflecting, the person is, furthermore, able to “actualize the subjectivity of his gratuitously elevated transcendence.” That is, a person can arrive at a certain metaphysical knowledge of God.

The person is not only a creature with an unlimited capacity for God; they are creatures with the potential for unique encounters with the Divine. The distinctiveness of our capacity for God and the particularity of our encountering God is not just an offer of divine grace to certain humans, but a reality for every one. Rahner’s method of understanding the person and revelation resists the neo-scholastic propensity toward propositions. In noting Rahner’s rejection of a propositional framework for understanding the human person and nature, Livingston suggests the following about Rahner’s distinctive way of relating the human and the divine:

Human persons as spiritual beings are constituted by their basic transcendental experience of God. They then interpret and express that experience in historical language and acts. Consequently, there comes to be an historical and categorical objectification of that transcendental experience. This objectification takes place through human history and culture and not along side of human history or independent of culture.\footnote{166 James C. Livingston et al., \textit{Modern Christian Thought}, 210.}
3.8 Conclusion

Rahner’s contribution toward a theology of nature and grace has particular implications for theology in the twenty first century. In the first place, his careful consideration of de Lubac’s response to neo-scholasticism involved a daring act of deconstruction. His deconstruction modernized Catholic theology in the twentieth century, moving it beyond propositional theology toward a theology rooted firmly in the preciseness of historicity. A concrete example of Rahner’s insightful theological development in the twentieth century is his open inclusivism. Reynolds offers the following summary of Rahner’s inclusivism, highlighting his affirmation of the salvific dimensions of non-christian religions:

Yet, for Rahner, it is the Christian revelation that ‘includes’ all other revelations and renders them ultimately salvific as the explicit manifestation of a universally present implicit grace. God is revealed and saves within non-Christian traditions, but definitively only through Christ, thereby enabling Rahner to call other faith traditions ‘anonymous’ expressions of Christianity. For this reason, Rahner’s position is often called ‘inclusivism.’

Rahner’s position was a watershed that not only recognized the reality of religious pluralism in our world, yet also sought to allow for the positive salvific significance of other religions via a Christian theological framework. To this end, Dermot A. Lane argues that Rahner’s positive appraisal of religious pluralism equally acknowledged the “other religions as lawful, as possible ways of salvation for their followers, and more significantly as [to quote Rahner directly] ‘positively included in God’s plan of salvation.’” Such a

viewpoint goes a long way toward building solidarity in the public sphere by producing good will toward others.

Whether or not there will be a Rahner renaissance within theology in the twenty-first century remains still to be determined. But such a renaissance is perhaps challenged by some significant absences within Rahner’s theological contribution, most notably his failure to deal with any specific historical reality, such as the holocaust. Yet his significant impact on the theology of grace and nature, with the introduction of the term “existential supernatural,” challenges all theologians today to engage theology with a eye toward the imminent reality of the divine in our world and encountering real persons in the preciseness of time and space. Perhaps the matter of whether there will indeed be a Rahner renaissance in Catholic theology and beyond is best surmised by Regan: “The future of Catholic theology worldwide may not be Rahnerian but there can be no significant developments in theological anthropology that bypass the contributions of Karl Rahner.”

Rahner’s contribution to theology lies both in its style and its content. Many commentators have weighed in on the content of his theology, often with a certain critical or dismissive perspective. While it has not been the purpose of this chapter to consider such objectionable claims to his theology, it certainly has been our purpose to highlight his style—Denkstil—of theologizing. His open and inclusive theology reminds us that the world is graced and every human is equally graced, even prior to their free response to such a graced gift. For Christians, he reminds us that Christianity is an open narrative and not the closed narrative so convincingly championed by neo-scholasticism for so

169 Ibid., 140.
many years. As Christians, we are called to relate to other persons within our community. Only an open narrative can best serve our purpose and participation in fostering solidarity, as both receivers and givers of solidarity. Rahner reminds all of us that we can participate in the life of God in participating in the lives of others. Valuing such participation, our next and final section will present participation as a key way for the Christian toward generating solidarity in the public sphere.
Chapter Four
Thomas E. Reynolds and Seyla Benhabib: Converging Christian Availability with Civic and Juridical Participation

4.1 Introduction
The twentieth century witnessed the collapse of religious and historical certainties in the public sphere: wars, capitalism and globalization have transformed how we imagine our place both in the world at large and in local communities. The Western world’s rejection of any preferential place for religion also coincided with an expectation that religion would be marginalized in political and public life. That expectation, however, which assumed religion would no longer be a force for change in our society, has not materialized. Yet neither have we returned to the “old days” where religion assumed an unquestionable place of privilege within political and ordinary life. What we have today is a complex political and religious reality. Recent remarks by Pope Francis on our throwaway culture and the viciousness of capitalism have placed religion, yet again, squarely within the political and public realm. Given the ongoing social, racial, gender and economic disparities felt by so many in our societies, many persons and groups correctly sense that there is a growing lack of solidarity between those who are privileged in our societies and those who are not. This chapter argues for a global solidarity that is practiced locally through a renewed understanding of hospitality and participation in the public sphere. In particular, this discussion concentrates on hermeneutics as a practice of hospitality and the participation of all in creating solidarity.

Contributions made by the Christian churches to a contextually framed but potentially universal understanding of human solidarity continue to be a fruitful and transformative contribution toward the common good. Building upon the notion of grace suggested by Rahner and outlined in the previous chapter, our reflections focus on such Christian
contributions in a way that recognizes solidarity as both a religious and human response to inequality and division in our society. As such, religious persons can take their civic responsibilities seriously, and in ways that honour their religious heritage. Toward this end, we utilize the contribution of Reynolds and Benhabib. The merit in employing both confessional and non-confessional contributors is that it assists our placing theology within a critical interdisciplinary discourse, thereby avoiding the temptation to view solidarity as distinctively Christian, or merely selecting theology as a singular and preferred solution to current questions of world inequality.

4.2 Historical context: hospitality as a duty of solidarity

One significant church man of the twentieth century, Pope John Paul II, offered a discursive bridge toward interpreting solidarity beyond just a Christian interpretation when he visited Latin American in the 1990s. On 9 November 1997, the Pope issued a message for World Migration Day, entitled *Solidarity With The Stranger*. In his message, he argued for an acceptance of and solidarity with the stranger as both a duty of hospitality and a demand of being Christian.170 His message reminds Christians that their extension and reception of hospitality is born out of a relationship that is rooted in God. John Paul II, however, is not a forerunner in proposing hospitality as a non-denominational or non-sectarian practice. Hospitality—as a duty of solidarity—is announced forcefully by John Paul II’s predecessor, Pope Paul VI, in his encyclical *Populorum Progressio*: “We cannot insist too much on the duty of giving foreigners a hospitable reception. It is a duty

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imposed by human solidarity and by Christian charity.”¹⁷¹ In identifying hospitality as a work of solidarity and charity, both Popes are highlighting our interdependence upon each other and how this interdependence extends beyond mere familial associations between persons. Because solidarity is related to charity, it is considered by both Popes to be a Christian virtue.¹⁷² Following Pope Paul VI’s identification of solidarity with charity, John Paul II, in addressing workers in Paraguay in 1997, expressed that “You must live together in solidarity, because solidarity is a Christian virtue which springs from charity.”¹⁷³

While solidarity is described as a Christian virtue, it can equally be understood and practiced as a broadly human virtue within the public sphere. Within the public sphere, human solidarity is not exclusively dependent upon a faith disposition or the referencing of one’s particular faith tradition. Within the Christian perspective, however, solidarity is rooted in faith and formed by charity. It is the Christian’s faith-perspective that makes solidarity profound for the Christian. For God’s grace, as Rahner suggests, is active in all persons, disposing the Christian toward receiving others as possible sites of God’s initiative in the world. From within such a perspective, hospitality then communicates deep theological insights of faith. Yet these two seemingly differing interpretations of solidarity need not produce two solitudes. Both a secular and a religious interpretation


¹⁷² John Paul II defines charity as self-giving love, which is rooted in the self-giving love of the Trinity. As well, the Holy Spirit is the gift (the mutual love between the divine persons of the Trinity). Thus charity is the gift of the Holy Spirit cf. John Paul II, “The Spirit is the Source of Communion” (general audience of July 29, 1988), The Trinity’s Embrace, 89-92.

of solidarity can together nourish a common practice of solidarity in the public sphere. Indeed, John Paul II’s nuanced and thicker redefinition of the concept of solidarity ought not to be seen as an awkward marriage of two definitions of solidarity at odds which each other, but rather of something shared among people from diverse traditions. Put simply, solidarity can neither be defined solely in terms of secular human actions, nor fully resolved in the exclusive terms of a theological interpretation. For the Christian, foregrounding a definition of solidarity requires full attention to both the secular and sacred dimensions of the term.

4.3 The Translational Model and the Conversational Model

Conscious of the need for a complimentary secular and theological redefinition of solidarity, our attempt here is to understand solidarity within wider cultural and theological discourses. As a means of doing so, it has been important to familiarize ourselves with some of the current positions on the role of religion in the public sphere. I have offered analyses of pertinent aspects of the work of Jürgen Habermas and Jeffrey Stout in earlier chapters, but now will briefly revisit them as a way of appraising their work vis-à-vis solidarity.

Habermas seeks to translate religious reasons for acting into public reasons that are in principle shareable by all members of society. Public reason, for him, constitutes an “ideal procedure for deliberation and decision-making” and comprises “rules of discourse and forms of argumentation that derive their normative content from the validity-basis of action oriented to reaching understanding, and ultimately from the structure of
linguistic communication.”

As we have seen, however, not all persons or groups find Habermas’s rationalistic conception of public deliberation a satisfactory one for forming a common good life within a pluralistic society.

Concerns about participating in the public sphere cannot be avoided if faith-communities are to engage productively in the world; this requires theology to dialogue outside of its own terms of reference. The ecological crisis is one example where theology and the various faith communities in Canada are making a significant contribution to public conversation about questions of human and environmental suffering, bringing these into dialogue with questions of ultimate meaning. Habermas’s model, as we have seen, would exclude contributions to ecology that are framed within a religious discourse of ultimate meaning. Many would argue that the current public debate on ecology would be short changed if religiously motivated persons or groups were rendered unable to bring to the public debate their particular perspective on the subject of ecology.

Stout’s conversational model is a potential alternative to Habermas’s translational model. Seeking by a different means to establish agreements on how to forge a common good life in the public sphere, the conversational model attempts to “take seriously the actual beliefs and practices of particular traditions as the basis for common public action.” Stout contends that within liberal democracy there is a significant danger that justice becomes what the strong determine. Such a threat to justice, in Stout’s estimation, is a threat to democratic tradition. To construct a more inclusive discourse within the public sphere, Stout argues against a secular imaginary that supports a separation of poli-

174 Jurgen Habermas, ”The Inclusion Of The Other” in Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought (Boston: The MIT Press, 2001), 245-6.
175 Ibid., 86.
tics and religion. Instead, he focuses on how both intersect, and how such intersections can contribute toward modern democracies.

There are, however, certain limitations to Stout’s understanding of a more inclusive conversation within the public sphere. Specifically, as Kristen Deede Johnson points out, Stout’s application of conversation “limits the application . . . of conversation to the exchange of ideas about issues that are of concern to the body politic.”\textsuperscript{176} Johnson proposes a corrective that widens the scope of conversation, an alternative that “also applies to the interactions between people with different beliefs and ways of life as they live together in our pluralist society; in this sense, it is more an ethos permeating our involvements than an idea that pertains only when we are engaged in explicitly political dialogue.”\textsuperscript{177} She offers the model of deliberative democracy set forth by Benhabib as one corrective model of democratic discourse that invites an open dialogue within the body politic and, significantly, amongst citizens and groups.

4.4 Hospitality & Participation Over Conversation & Translation

With an eye toward fostering such wider conversation, and as a step toward exploring Benhabib’s approach, we propose that “hospitality” and “participation” be seen as alternative discourses to both the “translational” and the “conversational” model of fostering solidarity in the public sphere. In supporting this alternative, the discussion will confront questions of what it means to be hospitable as a Christian within the public

\textsuperscript{176} Kristen Deede Johnson, \textit{Theology, Political Theory and Pluralism: Beyond Tolerance and Indifference} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 237.

\textsuperscript{177} Ibid., 237.
sphere and how our understanding of participation can be clarified and complemented by developments in current cultural theory.

In supporting hospitality as an alternative model of discourse we are agreeing with Bretherton assessment of the helpfulness of this model over other models. His thesis on hospitality represents “a specifically Christian theological approach and places the accent on common public action rather than dialogue or conversation between diverse traditions.”178 Locating hospitality, however, as uniquely Christian is where we part ways with Bretherton. Such ownership of hospitality as specifically—if not exclusively—Christian appears to lack the self-critical approach necessary for theology today. In effect, locating hospitality as uniquely Christian produces a self-referential frame of enclosure that ends up (ironically) preempting genuine engagement with the world ‘outside’ a Christian frame of reference. Attempting to offset this critical deficiency, we advocate a ‘correlationist’ method as best fitting for a Christian understanding of hospitality. In doing so, we will utilize the work of Reynolds, who argues for an understanding of hospitality with universal implications open toward other traditions. Reynolds resists any impulse to segregate hospitality within a sectarian framework.179 This will provide a springboard from which to engage the contributions of Benhabib.

178 Biggar & Hogan, Religious Voices In Public Places, 87.
While Bretherton takes a specific Christian appropriation of hospitality, it is argued elsewhere that notions of hospitality ought to be widened in a way that frames hospitality not just as a specific or localized as a specifically Christian theological approach. For a more inclusive account of hospitality as a resource for the Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions cf Reynolds, Thomas. "Toward a Wider Hospitality: Rethinking Love of Neighbour in Religions of the Book," Irish Theological Quarterly 75, no. 2 (2010): 175-87.

179 cf Thomas Reynolds, "Toward a Wider Hospitality: Rethinking Love of Neighbour in Religions of the Book," Irish Theological Quarterly 75, no. 2 (2010): 175-87
4.5 Hospitality: A Moral Disposition of Availability

Reynolds presents hospitality within a theological framework that takes seriously solidarity as both a human and a faith response to matters of injustice in our world. Drawing from continental philosophical traditions, he begins by offering an account of dialogical reason. Affirming and developing the dialogical capacity of reason, he argues that reason is characterized by availability for the other that is made manifest in hospitality. As a Christian theologian, he understands reason within a broader theological posture of eschatological hope, which as we shall see, anticipates an ideal future of maximal solidarity among all, a future of God’s kingdom. For Reynolds, the ethical contours of are drawn out in hospitality, which occurs in the praxis of sharing and participation. Thus, after a discussion of hospitality, we will supplement Reynolds’s understanding of participation with the work of Benhabib, whose development of socio-political sense of participation enriches our theological understanding of hospitality and solidarity in the public sphere.

Hospitality is generally understood as the practice of receiving and entertaining guests, visitors or strangers, with liberality and goodwill. Reynolds captures a specifically inter-relational dimension of hospitality, understanding it as availability for the other.\textsuperscript{180} For him, availability and its concrete expression with the practice of hospitality are extensions of what he calls dialogical reason.\textsuperscript{181} Availability is a conscious and willed moral

\textsuperscript{180} Thomas E. Reynolds, The Broken Whole: Philosophical Steps Toward A Theology of Global Solidarity, 130.
\textsuperscript{181} Ibid., 127.

Reynolds offers an explanation of rational discourse (translational model) at its best where by it promotes and practices “freedom-making potential to let-be differences.” In highlighting the valuable contribution of Habermas within the development of rational discourse, Reynolds equally cautious us on how rational discourse can become corrupted by an excessive emphasizes on rhetoric as well as the dangers of the discourse sliding into ideological distortions.

Reynolds proceeds to highlight the merits of a conversational model as a model that practices a “localized universality.” Here, Reynolds seems to be supporting Benhabib’s model of “interactive
posture and set of actions through which the theory of dialogical reason is transformed into practical social activity as a basis for change. Examples of such availability consist of practices of welcoming strangers as neighbours and fostering mutual recognition and respect among differences in a community. Dialogical reason, for Reynolds, “must not only construct communicative dwelling places of mutuality (resisting underextension) but also preserve the deconstructive power to name, counter, and transform those distortions of relationality that inhibit conversation by systematically seeking to alienate voices (resisting overextension).”\textsuperscript{182} Over-extension refers to how those with authority conscript sameness in our society, repressing individuality. Under-extension concerns the process whereby humans find their identity through an abandonment of their own identity and the subsuming of an external and/or dominant identity. Humans posturing toward overextension or under-extension, can result in horrific incidents of violence, he argues. Coloniza-

universalism,“ which we will consider in detail later in this paper. For the moment though, it’s worth noting that Reynolds—like Bretherton—issues a caution not only to a translational model but also to a conversational model. In recognizing that the feature of “localized universal” in the conversation model involves an instability in “having and not-having truth” Reynolds raises the caution level against this model in noting that the conversational model can “refuse its own contingency, its own finite locality and historicity, and fixate on a particular way of thinking and doing ‘as if’ this offered relief from its contingency, guaranteeing a secure or fixed framework of identity.”

As an alternative to both, Reynolds presents the merits of dialogical reason. 128-130. For him, dialogical reason takes the shape of a “localized universal” which “allows us to retrieve the dialogical capacity of reason to yield critical, self-reflective, and emancipatory results” (126). In addition, rational discourse reflects a “communicative openness orientated toward an ideal, a not-yet that is always grasped in finite ways as a possibility intrinsic to all particular conversational matrices” (126). For Reynolds, “dialogical reason is the source of its own transcendence in multiple voices, not in contradiction to some more fundamental unity, but in fulfillment of its own movement toward the truth of being-with” (216).

\textsuperscript{182} Ibid., 128.

Reynolds explains “overextension” as a ‘dominating and objectifying power over others is asserted that strategically serves the interests of those voices able to control the sway of conversation (128).’ This form of posture is noticeably, Reynolds argues, when the dialectic of the Enlightenment acts in preserving a totalizing identity of sameness, never allowing particular voices or languages expression.

“Underextension” Reynolds explains as displaying the opposite tendency of overextension. He notes that in underextension “one party takes refuge in, and gains identity from, the power of another as if it guaranteed security, thereby gaining legitimacy by ‘losing’ itself in the other.” Such an imbalanced identity forming orientation fashions inferior and dependent relationships.
tion, ethnic cleansing, segregation and anti-Semitism are some examples of the effects of alienation.\textsuperscript{183}

For the Christian, dialogical reason contains a theological currency to offset the abuse of power while at the same time preserving the Christian sense of religious identity. Dialogical reason as an expression eschatological of hope captures the theological currency operative within.\textsuperscript{184} His understanding of eschatological hope, however, is not a traditional concern with the Four Last Things.\textsuperscript{185} Locating eschatology within the performance of dialogical reason, Reynolds is utilizing a realized eschatology over a more traditional understanding. Such a realized eschatology takes on an anticipatory character that sees the ideal future as “always already but not yet”, realized partially or incompletely but nonetheless really and tangibly in concrete historical moments. The attraction of dialogical reason is in its “appeal to the potentially universal solidarity inherent in all communicative praxis . . . [f]or the hope . . . is to share differences, and this is of ultimate consequence for the way in which we live our lives together.”\textsuperscript{186} Within such an understanding of eschatology, there is a sense that our world is more accurately understood through the present reality and significance of the Four Last Things in the Christian life:

Because any communicative action always already anticipates the creative possibility of a universal solidarity, the power of sharing renews itself and rises here and there to transform communities of discourse into further and greater moments of universal openness intimated by their very intersubjective constitution, by their hope in the promise of meaningful vitality.\textsuperscript{187}

\textsuperscript{183} Ibid., 129.
\textsuperscript{184} Ibid., 130.
\textsuperscript{185} Eschatology is the department of theological science concerned with the four last things: death, judgment, heaven, and hell.
\textsuperscript{186} Thomas Reynolds, \textit{The Broken Whole: Philosophical Steps Toward a Theology of Global Solidarity}, 126.
\textsuperscript{187} Ibid., 130.
Reynolds theologically characterizes “meaningful vitality” as a grasp of the meaningful and vitalizing sense of things, an affirmation that the world is in some sense capable of bearing the hope we place in life.

Reynolds breaks from Habermas in how he understands reason. As noted previously, reason for Habermas is practically concerned with achieving consensus. For Reynolds, however, reason is more than consensus. As he explains, “[t]here is a telos immanent in the communicative praxis of all conversation, a kind of ‘tilt,’ one leaning toward the freedom-making mutuality of differences in solidarity, thereby directing us both to approximate the ideal of reconciling reciprocity [as solidarity] and to identify and overcome those practices undermining its possibility.”188 For Reynolds, there is a hope in anticipating how we ought to live together in the public sphere that is made manifest through localized dialogical gestures in a kind of universal momentum among human communities. As he points out, this hope is the “desire for reciprocity and inclusivity in dwelling together.”189 This hope is pursued in a process of dialogue. Its telos, echoing Habermas’ notion of communicative reason, is a form of dialogue free from distorted, agenda driven, or “instrumental” forms of direction. Instead, and using Gadamer to extend beyond Habermas’ notion of consensus, this style of dialogue aims at the goal “mutual understanding set before us all in the public space of the planet.”190

188 Ibid.
189 Ibid.
190 Ibid., 130.
Significantly, this style of dialogue promotes and fosters a universalism which values and includes particularity through the very praxis of solidarity: “In solidarity, particularity is included more than overcome, opening up universality as a possible dynamic of sharing understanding together in public spaces, rather than imposing it.”\textsuperscript{191} What is achieved, arguably, is a framework that neither denies nor subsumes differences. It moves beyond Habermas’ notion of translation and also Stout’s more politically invested notion of conversation to a wider moral sense of sharing life among differences. Reynolds’s proposed telos of dialogue not only puts forward the prospect of a universal solidarity, but also suggests the particular moral disposition for achieving this is availability for the other. Such availability, as he explains, is expressed through hospitality.\textsuperscript{192}

Availability receives the other in an act of recognizing the other as a brother or sister, in a mutual relation. As Reynolds notes, “In drawing-near and letting-be the difference of the other, availability cannot help but participate in and will the other’s good.”\textsuperscript{193} Equally, availability assumes a certain kind of affectivity, or what Reynolds calls a “readiness.”\textsuperscript{194} As a psychological and spiritual disposition, readiness has a dual mandate. It requires both a willingness to receive the other and a preparedness to learn from the other. Reynolds captures this dual dimension arguing, “availability plays out essentially as a

\textsuperscript{191} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{192} Ibid., 131. Reynolds understanding of availability is grounded in the theology of the Roman Catholic theologian, Gabriel Marcel. The latter understood availability as being disposed toward the other. As Reynolds explains, availability, marks a willingness to participate in the other’s difference, to be vulnerable to change, to risk being open to clash and conflict. Availability is manifested in the interested ‘drawing near’ of a question, which both signals and preserves an ‘orientation toward openness’ that pushes us into the ‘both-and’ of dialectical thinking—a fusion of horizons. Availability is a posture presupposed by the event of understanding. It means being exposed to the exteriority of the other’s call, being drawn out into the margin-dwelling openness of the ‘with’ in being-with. It means sharing differences (94).”
\textsuperscript{193} Thomas Reynolds, \textit{The Broken Whole}, 187.
\textsuperscript{194} Ibid., 188
self-surpassing readiness for the other” that also embodies “an acceptance of finitude and a willingness to live without self-security” in mutuality with others. Reynolds’s understanding of “ availability” suggests that there is no one person or religion that can automatically assume truth superiority over others. The “broken whole,” therefore, is the human family, not as a seamless unity of conformity but a partial and incomplete sharing among the various communities to which we belong. The whole is anticipated, but never realized concretely in history. Over the scattered and partial pieces arches an eschatological hope that anticipates what is always whole. What is whole is God alone.

Reynolds’s performative understanding of hospitality— as availability and readiness for the other— thus takes seriously the particularities of different traditions. In fact, what is essential in the dialogue between communities is our very availability to and readiness for each other. If truth is indeed relational, as Reynolds claims, the urgency of dialogue becomes all the more pressing and immediate. Specifically urgent in establishing solidarity is dialogue that promotes and manifests trust. Reynolds employs the metaphor of “embrace” to convey the step required in building trust with the other: “Embrace is not merely a generalized obligation or disinterested act, abstractly willing another’s good from a distance. It plays out locally as a loving care, an attentiveness to, and admiration of, this concrete other recognized as such in the relational context of . . . all potential others.” Indeed, an embrace is a typical salutation between friends. The manner of saluting can assume an utterance, form of words, gesture or movement, by which

195 Ibid.
196 Ibid., Reynolds argues the following: “I submit a thesis: if truth is relational, it plays out formally in a gesture toward meaningful vitality, and does so pluralistically in the diverse content-shapes of what can be called ‘localized universals’— that is, localized anticipatory grasps of a difference bearing whole, of one humanity and one history in a universal horizon of intersubjective corrigibility” (124).
197 Ibid., 190.
one person salutes another. It is at this point that the work of Benhabib can prove helpful. While Reynolds has stressed for us a hospitality that is both a moral and a religious priority in embracing our fellow brothers and sisters, Benhabib adds an equally important dimension to the embrace, a legal one.

4.6 From International Rights to Norms of Cosmopolitanism

In Another Cosmopolitan (a revised version of the Tanner Lectures), Benhabib considers how we govern ourselves—collectively—through our political and legal institutions. Her account culminates in cosmopolitan norms of justice, whereby the duty of hospitality is presented as a means of creating solidarity beyond boarders. Her reflections on a wider hospitality, through a concentration of political and legal institutions, nicely complements Reynolds’s more ethical considerations. Locating solidarity within a legal framework, Benhabib introduces cosmopolitan norms of justice by contrasting them with international norms of justice.

Cosmopolitan communities can be founded upon an inclusive morality, economic agreements or a shared political structure among different nation states. Significantly, cosmopolitan communities entail persons entering into relationships of mutual respect, despite their varying beliefs and geographical origins. Such relationships of mutual respect demand recognition of both the moral and legal status of the other. Attentive to this dual recognition of the human person, Benhabib argues that we have moved from a focus on international treaties to a more comprehensive employment of the norms of cosmopolitanism. Norms of international justice, she explains, “most commonly arise through treaty obligations and bilateral or multilateral agreements among states and their representa-
Further more, international norms of justice “regulate relations among states in multiple domains, ranging from trade and commerce to war and security, the environment, and the media.” Cosmopolitan norms of justice, however, do not necessarily emerge from preconceived legal origination, such as treaty-like obligations. Cosmopolitan norms of justice “accrue to individuals as moral and legal persons in a worldwide civil society.” What distinguishes them from norms of international justice is that “they endow individuals rather than states and their agents with certain rights and claims.” To sum up, Benhabib argues that cosmopolitan norms have come to replace the older international norms. Within this new reality a development occurs in how we understand our global civil society. Persons are now to be understood as persons both morally and legally, endowed with certain rights within a worldwide civil society. Cosmopolitan norms are “understood as international public law that binds and bends the will of sovereign nations.”

Yet the transition from norms of international justice to cosmopolitan norms of justice is neither smooth nor complete. While it is not our intention here to interrogate this transition, it goes without saying that Benhabib’s argument for cosmopolitan norms or laws raises complex legal questions. The complexity is not so much about rights themselves, but about how these rights are interpreted within sovereign states. The transition from international norms to cosmopolitan norms has also brought to the surface difficulties with certain terms we choose to express the transition from one to the other. For

199 Ibid.
200 Ibid.
201 Ibid.
202 Ibid.
Benhabib, terms such as “globalization” and “empire,” which are customarily employed to signify the transition from international norms to cosmopolitan norms, misinform and misguide persons as to the distinctiveness and challenges of cosmopolitan norms today. Cosmopolitan norms offers rights and protections to, as well as imposing obligations on individuals and not just states! In light of these difficulties, Benhabib notes, “Although the evolution of cosmopolitan norms of justice is a tremendous development, the relationship between the spread of cosmopolitan norms and democratic self-determination is fraught, both theoretically and politically.”

This challenging situation gives rise to questions: “How can the will of democratic majorities be reconciled with norms of cosmopolitan justice? How can legal norms and standards, which originate outside the will of the democratic legislatures, become binding on them?”

A classic example is the United Nations’ Right to Protect [R2P], where state sovereignty can be infringed upon by the international community if it fails to live up to its obligations to honour the rights of its citizens (in the cases of genocide, rights abuses and so forth. Both questions above indicate a two-pronged challenge to cosmopolitan norms: the matter of reconciling the will of democratic majorities with norms of cosmopolitan justice; and, secondly, the issue of whether cosmopolitan norms can become binding on, state legislatures. Benhabib’s response calls attention to the fact that as a collective we need to mediate questions of universalism contextually, within concrete situations, whether they be issues of refugee policy or the protection of minorities in the public sphere.

\[203\] Ibid., 17.
\[204\] Ibid.
4.7 Members and non-members

Mediation can be understood as serving as a means to an end. In this instance, it is an acting force between what is universal and particular. For Benhabib, cosmopolitan is a “philosophical project of mediations, not of reductions or of totalizations.”205 As such, it refers to norms or characteristics belonging to all parts of the world, not restricted to any one country or its inhabitants. Mediation seeks to address what Benhabib understands as the critical problem between democratic self-determination and cosmopolitan norms of justice. The problem, as she sees it, is the limitation in democratic forms of governance with respect to representation and accountability. This discrepancy, whereby insiders versus outsiders becomes an issue, is most manifest in the distinction between drawn members and non-members. Members hold a privileged position of participation over non-members. As such, she critiques our construction of “bordered communities.”206 One telling example of troubling distinction between members and non-members is the precarious positions of many immigrants to Canada. For example, access to Ontario Health Insurance Policy (OHIP) is regularly denied to many temporary workers, and many refugees to Canada are detained while their claims are processed, which often can take up to a year or more.

205 Ibid., 20.

Benhabib expands on her understanding of cosmopolitanism: “[I]t is not equivalent to a global ethic as such; nor is it adequate to characterize cosmopolitanism through cultural attitudes and choices alone. I follow the Kantian tradition in thinking of cosmopolitanism as the emergence of norms that ought to govern relations among individuals in a global civil society. These norms are neither merely moral nor just legal. They may be characterized as framing the ‘morality of the law’ but in a global rather than a domestic context. They signal the eventual legalization of the rights claims of human beings everywhere, regardless of their membership in bounded communities. Membership in bounded communities, which may be smaller or larger than territorially defined nation-states, remains nevertheless crucial (20).”

Given the discrepancy between members and non-members in our civil society it is not surprising that a transformed concept of history and society, based on a struggle for recognition by non-members, is urgent in our time. Benhabib aligns herself most closely with the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory in her efforts to respond to the inequalities of our time. Yet her alignment with this school, and in particular with Habermas, is not without critical judgment in appropriating its work. In particular, Benhabib argues that there is a deficiency in how the school deals with universalist norms mediated with the self-understanding of local communities. At stake is whether discourse-ethics can do justice to moral claims and their moral plight. Benhabib forcefully argues that “the moral interests of beings who are not full participants in moral discourses ought to be and can be effectively represented in discursive contexts through systems of moral advocacy.”

Thus, we capture the transformative dimension of her project: the promotion of a discursive model of public space in order to stimulate transformation on issues of the day when they arise.

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Zuidervaart presents Benhabib’s account of discursive scope as a response to what she considers is lacking in Habermas’s account of the public sphere. Firstly, Zuidervaart lays out some central concerns within the arena of cultural politics with Habermas’s account of the public sphere: “(1) The lack of attention to matters of culture and identity, leading to a misunderstanding of the public legitimate roles in consciousness-raising and need-interpretation; (2) a neglect of the role of social movements in redefining the issues and rearranging the voices in public debates; (3) a failure to analyze the internal organization of the public sphere, leading to a neglect of proletarian, ethnic, and subaltern publics.” Benhabib, for her part, is concerned with Habermas’s account of the public sphere. For instance, it is argued that his account—presupposing a prior equality of persons—presents a public sphere constituted by exclusions. Arguing that his account of the public sphere excludes some groups (gay and lesbian groups, and women), Benhabib responds to this through focusing on normative legitimacy of practical discourse. See pages 108-28 for a comprehensive treatment of Benhabib’s treatment of Habermas’s account of the public sphere.

4.8 Hospitality as a Legal Right

Toward supporting a space in which the concerns of marginalized groups can become “public” Benhabib advocates for a discourse model in the public sphere. She contends that such a model avoids a relapse into a strictly binary public/private construction of the public sphere. Her particular construction of the public sphere, however, is a subtle amendment of Habermas’. Lambert Zuidervaart explains the difference: “Her reworking of Habermas’s model ties the existence of public space (or public sphere) to participation in practical discourses. In a practical discourse, general norms of action are evaluated by all affected, subject to the moral principles of universal respect and egalitarian reciprocity.” One effect of Benhabib’s practical discourse is the treatment of hospitality as both a moral and legal responsibility. In its moral responsibility, she shares the same concerns as those shared by Habermas. Her inclusion of hospitality as being a legal responsibility, however, marks a distinctive and challenging account of hospitality.

The legal dimension of hospitality is framed within cosmopolitan norms so as to challenge and frustrate an interpretation of hospitality as state regulated or regulated by international treaties. One is therefore entitled to be a recipient of hospitality in every country and place by virtue of the fact that one is a citizen of the world. Such a re-

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209 Lambert Zuidervaart, *Art In Public: Politics, Economics and Democratic Culture*, 113. Zuidervaart supports Habermas’s discursive model as one which contains a “radical proceduralism” necessary for holding together public participation and normative procedure.

210 Lambert Zuidervaart, 110. Zuidervaart proceeds to explain the principle of universal moral respect and the principle of egalitarian reciprocity as follows: Benhabib defines the principle of universal moral respect as the recognition of ‘the right of all beings capable of speech and action to be participants in the moral conversation, etc.’ She defines the principle of egalitarian reciprocity as the symmetrical rights of all participants ‘to various speech acts, to initiate new topics, to ask for reflection about presuppositions of the conversation, etc.’ People can challenge these two principles but only from within a practical discourse. Benhabib’s model acknowledges ‘a plurality of public spaces emerging around contested issues of general concern (110).’ Zuidervaart, while favouring Benhabib’s model over other models, equally offers a critique of it cf 111-115.
imaging of citizenship attempts to place less weight upon the boarders of communities and more upon individuals and their plight. This shift in understanding membership is not so much about need for a thicker public conversation, but about a cosmopolitanism that is a “normative philosophy for carrying the universalistic norms of discourse ethics beyond the confines of the nation state.” In developing her case, Benhabib utilizes Kant’s notion of cosmopolitan right (Weltbuergerrecht) in its reference to the duty of hospitality. Kant argued for the right of persons to receive temporary hospitality and protection. Benhabib, however, takes Kant’s moral reading of the right of hospitality and extends that very moral right to a legal right of full inclusion of displaced persons into the daily life, political, social, and economic life of the nation state.

This slide toward hospitality as a legal norm does not eliminate the tension between constitutional universalism and territorial sovereignty. As Benhabib explains, within democratic state “democratic rule, unlike imperial dominion, is exercised in the name of some specific constituency and binds that constituency alone.” Consequently, she argues, persons “who are full members of the sovereign state are distinguished from those who ‘fall under its protection,’ but who do not enjoy ‘full membership rights.’” This precarious context results in two types of boundaries within the civic community. Ben-

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211 Seyla Benhabib, Another Cosmopolitanism, 18.
212 Ibid., 23.
213 Ibid., 33.
214 Ibid.
habib notes, “on the one hand, these boundaries define the status of those who enjoy second-class citizenship status within the polity but who can be considered members of the sovereign people in virtue of cultural, familial, and religious attachments.” On the other hand, a second boundary concerns “residents of the commonwealth who do not enjoy full citizenship rights either because they do not possess the requisite identity criteria through which the people defines itself, or because they belong to some other commonwealth, or because they choose to remain as outsiders. These are ‘aliens’ and foreigners’ amidst the democratic people.” These boundaries perpetuate the divisions between territorial sovereignty and democratic voice. Indeed, the rise of human rights discourse seeks to close in on such divisions. For Benhabib, a new politics of cosmopolitan membership “is about negotiating this complex relationship between rights of full membership, democratic voice and territorial residence.”

Cosmopolitan norms then are intended to become part of democratic practice in the public spheres of particular nations. Such integration is achieved through a process of mediation. Michael Blake, in a review of Benhabib’s work, ably describes the process of mediation:

In this, cosmopolitan norms become a part of the local, democratic practice. The very transparency and egalitarianism underlying democratic legitimization creates a place for the universalism of these global norms of mutual respect and hospitality. The process is described, following Derrida, through the logic of iteration; each repetition of the values of the universal becomes, in the particular instance, both a speaking of and a reply to the universal norms themselves. More prosaically, this process might be understood as a form of negotiation; the universal norms are challenged and given form by the specific challenges of the local political community,

\[215\] Ibid., 34.
\[216\] Ibid., 35.
\[217\] Ibid., 35.
whose self-understanding in turn is adjusted through the application of universal concepts in its political discussions.\textsuperscript{218}

Benhabib’s latter point here is key in the processes of discourse where universalist norms are mediated with the self-understanding of local communities through a process characterized by hospitality.

\section*{4.9 Interactive universalism that champions participationism}

Benhabib’s “interactive universalism” seeks to achieve, among many things, a “bases of solidaristic coexistence.”\textsuperscript{219} Her way of contemplating Habermas—along with others who are disenchanted with modernity’s individualism and exploitative expressions of capitalism—is not so much a concern with belonging or solidarity. For Benhabib, the significant challenge of our time is a loss of political agency and efficacy. The term participationist counteracts this loss. It is worth quoting Benhabib at length to highlight her speculations on the reasons for this loss:

This loss of political agency is not a consequence of the separation of the personal from the political or of the differentiation of modern societies into the political, the economic, the civic and the familial-intimate realms. This loss may be a consequence of the contradiction between the various spheres, which diminishes one’s possibility for agency in one sphere on the basis of one’s position in another sphere (as for example when early bourgeois republics curtailed citizenship rights on the basis of income and occupation and denied wage-earners a vote). Or it may result from the fact that membership in the various spheres becomes mutually exclusive because of the nature of the activities involved, while the mutual exclusivity of the spheres is reinforced by the system (take the duties of motherhood and public aspirations of women in the economy, politics or science, and the fact that public funds

\textsuperscript{218} Michael Blake, “Another Cosmopolitanism: Hospitality, Sovereignty, and Democratic Iterations” in Notre Dame Philosophical (2005.05.03). https://ndpr.nd.edu/news/25285-another-cosmopolitanism-hospitality-sovereignty-and-democratic-iterations/. To read Benhabib’s account of democratic iterations, please refer to pages 47-51 in Seyla Benhabib, Another Cosmopolitanism.

\textsuperscript{219} Seyla Benhabib, Situating the Self: Gender, Community And PostModernism In Contemporary Ethics (New York: Routledge, 1992), 2.
are not used to support better, more readily available and more affordable forms of childcare).\textsuperscript{220}

The participationist view, therefore, seeks not to homogenize or singularize public spaces to make up for the loss. Indeed, this view does not hold that differentiation within modernity is something that is to be overcome. It urges instead the “reduction of contradictions and irrationalities among the various spheres, and the encouragement of non-exclusive principles of membership among the spheres.”\textsuperscript{221} This model is more about having a voice in a matter of public concern, having the right to be consulted and the power to influence decisions. Benhabib is also aware of its limitations, stating unambiguously that “[p]articipationism is not an answer to the dilemmas of modern identity, estrangement, anomie and homelessness.”\textsuperscript{222} What seems of urgent concern for her is the ability to participate in the public sphere, as participation recognizes not so much an effort in social planning, but instead a recognition of our shared humanity which ought to be protected morally and ethically at local levels. In the participationist model, “the public sentiment that is encouraged is not reconciliation or harmony, but rather political agency and efficacy, namely the sense that we have a say in the economic, political and civic arrangements which define our lives together, and that what one does makes a difference.”\textsuperscript{223} Even if not focused on social harmony or reconciliation, the contribution here of “having a say”—within a public sphere defined by interaction—is a significant step toward building solidarity among all.

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\textsuperscript{220} Ibid., 78.
\textsuperscript{221} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{222} Ibid., 81.
\textsuperscript{223} Ibid.
4.10 Conclusion

The contributions of Reynolds and Benhabib emerge not only from the content of their language, but also from the force of their language. Both use language—eschatological hope and participation—as powerful and strategic tools toward narrating a new perception of what it means to be a human person within communities. Through their efforts we are offered a new view of how we stand in relationship to one another and how we stand in relationship to the institutions of the state. In doing so, contemporary concerns of universalism become addressed in ways that include particular contexts and voices from local communities. Their efforts in this regard carry considerable moral weight, casting discourse ethics as capable of producing a sphere of “interactive universalism.” Their manner of presenting their new discourse is styled in charity. Reynolds and Benhabib, collectively, suggest that both theology and cultural studies are complimentary contributors to the negotiations around resources for fostering solidarity in the public spheres. Significantly, their contributions toward fostering a solidarity that expresses itself in hospitality contributes toward a theological expression that is always concrete and particular. By implication, this style of theologizing which places theology in direct conversation with cultural studies ought to move Christians toward an examination of their concrete practices and beliefs and their role within the broader human community. The Christian discourse ought to be characterized by hope: We not only can welcome the stranger, but we must in order to live into a shared future of solidarity. Yet, we cannot take for granted that our discourse will be typified by hope. The shift toward a theology characterized by a hospitality rooted in solidarity is an expression of a greater innovation occurring in theology. Theology moves toward the ordinary person. Rahner himself anticipated the urgency and
necessity of the move toward the subject in his development of a theology of grace.

Reynolds and Benhabib have broadened our theological exploration of the subject, by means of the force of the language they use—moral and legal—in considering the work of solidarity and its subsequent expression in hospitality. The perpetual task before us now is to participate in the call to hospitality that is at the heart of solidarity.
General Conclusions: Toward Solidarity

As we consider the main developments of the thesis up to this point, four key components come to the fore. First, the argument suggests how internal motivation for Christians can be theologically framed to engage productively in public sphere. Second, the discussion shows how theories of the secular (Habermas, Stout and so forth) could be supplemented with a thicker account of public discourse, one that includes religious persons and communities. Third, the focus throughout seeks to better articulate pluralism as a solidarity of differences. Fourth, and finally, the thesis offers an alternative perspective to more strident theological visions, like those that Stout critiques (i.e., John Milbank, Stanley Hauerwas, Alasdair MacIntyre and so forth). Such theologies would set themselves against or over the public sphere as a productive site of engagement and participation. It is on these grounds that this thesis contributes to theological discussions focused on the public role of religion in a pluralist society as expressed in the practice of solidarity.

Solidarity as a practice in the public sphere not only expresses the readiness to engage the other in a conversation shaped by kindness and gratitude, even in disagreements. The thesis has argued for an open and meaningful conversation as we turn toward the thick histories and realities religious communities and individuals. At its best conversation is socially practical, systematically imaginative, theologically productive and public in its expression.

Solidarity is one way of articulating the protection and the dignity of the human person. It is not just about the provision for the minimal conditions necessary for human dignity. As Cathleen Kaveny notes about solidarity, “[by] standing with those who suffer, we can potentially help them reconstruct their identities, find a new wholeness in their
lives, and ultimately transcend the loss of their previous integrity.” The concrete language of solidarity—human rights, shelter and education—is not just a language of charity. Solidarity engages the “bodiliness” of Christianity, in that the ultimate justification for the practice of solidarity is the doctrine of Imago Dei. While Rahner did not engage explicitly with a theology of solidarity, his theology, with its serious attention to the graced character of human subjectivity in history, does indeed forge possibilities for attending to matters of solidarity in the public sphere from a theological vantage point. His theological anthropology contains implicit questions of solidarity at its heart, given the multidimensional nature of the human person as simultaneously oriented toward the world (and others) and the divine.

As a way of providing the backdrop for the argument, the thesis considered Habermas and Stout as two current styles of thinking that outline prospects for the contribution of theology to solidarity in the public sphere. Habermas’s theory of communicative action seeks to create a social consensus, inclusion, and solidarity. His work is popular in

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226 While Rahner did not develop an explicit social ontology, it is equally true to say that within his theological framework Rahner moved from an initial attention to the individual human being toward an attention to the interpersonal or relational dimension of being. His a prior openness to the other is captured in how one’s relationship to God is realized in the love of one’s neighbour, where by the “act of personal love for another is the all-embracing basic act of a person which gives meaning, direction and measure to everything else.” Karl Rahner, “Reflections On The Unity of The Love of Neighbour and The Love of God” in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 6, trans, Karl-H and Boniface Kruger (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1969), 241.
Western Europe, so much so that in 2002 he was invited into a public conversation with Joseph Ratzinger, the future Pope and bishop of Rome, Benedict XVI. The general theory of communicative action, however, expects religious claims only to be understood socially and scientifically, free of theological claims. Such a posture, however, removes from religious language, through a process of translating into a more secular and universal form of expression, the very particular and foundational claims that motivates religious persons toward trust and solidarity in our societies. While many suggest that Habermas’ perspective ultimately supports religion and recognizes its public value, the approach toward a universal language, in the end, fails to afford religion persons or religious institutions a formal public discourse that is inclusive of religious discourse, and human affectivity. Consequently, we proposed a discourse that positively estimates the place of faith histories and affirmations, which reference God and God-language, in conversations about matters of shared social concern.

Seeking to imagine languages that are more socially inclusive of theologies than Habermas’ perspective allows for, we drew on the work of Stout. His approach makes room for a more responsible and “thicker conversation” in public spheres. Given that religious viewpoints in fact exist within the public sphere, such conversations demand a self-conscious dialogical supplementation from theology. For religious perspectives might come to understand themselves as a robust part of conversation Stout’s. His discourse with the body politic, however, does not go as far as it should on Christian grounds.

There are Christian reasons for engaging in public conversation, rooted in a theologically conceived anthropological framework. On this basis, Christians today can both
be faithful to their tradition and engage in conversations within the wider human community. Rahner’s theological anthropology became at this point a significant feature of the argument of this thesis. His theology, with its thick histories and realities of religious communities and individuals, is helpful in creating a dialogical theology of mutual recognition within the public sphere, as it acknowledges the possibility of God’s work active in all human beings.²²⁷ His pastoral sensitivity is captured so well in a theology of grace contending that in the life of every human being God’s universal grace is at work. His contributions here moved our theologizing from a concern with the human-divine relationship toward an additional concern of the human-human relationship. For some Catholics, Rahner’s focus is a welcome alternative to a theology that stresses a primary importance of secure and certain foundations of knowledge through doctrine, dogma and an unquestioning obedience to authority. For Rahner, though, all human beings are fundamentally religious.

In contrast to Habermas, Rahner does not claim religious neutrality on matters of public import. Nevertheless, he takes great pains to show how a Christian person might constructively relate both to religious and non-religious persons alike. Rahner even argues that secular sciences, such as psychology and sociology, can contribute positively toward a fuller understanding of the human subject. Rahner, however, cautions that other sciences have a “tendency to formalize everything in humans and to lead back to abstract

structures so that the individual concrete human person disappears. Theological attributions are needed for a robust anthropology that takes account of the whole person. Thus, while his theological contribution does not address specific questions with which Habermas and Stout are wrestling, Rahner has something significant to offer Christians from his commitment to the anthropological turn in theology.

Of particular significance for this thesis has been Rahner’s theology of grace, which orients his theological anthropology. For him, the human subject is understood as having a fundamental capacity, divinely given, to reach out to the other in a welcoming and recognizing solidarity. Relatedness to others, for Rahner, is essential for human beings, grounding agency in both interpersonal and social concerns. This, as we have shown, opens prospects for a diverse public solidarity from within a Christian theological orientation. Key implications emerge for sustaining solidarity with respect to human rights in light of Rahner’s understanding. In particular, if we take seriously this understanding of a graced humanity and a graced world, we must also take seriously the creation of new public spheres built upon a hermeneutics that recognizes a graced order, that welcomes others as potential vehicles for learning and transformation. Through his method—transcendental in its approach and historical in its perspective—practical implications emerge that can fashion our way of engaging in dialogue in the public sphere. To this end we utilized the contributions of Reynolds and Benhabib.

In their respective approaches, they allow for a particularity of language that invites a strong participational format in the public sphere. Their understanding of universal language, for example, is more interactive and contextual than that of Habermas. They

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offer a key entry point to a hermeneutics that fosters solidarity in conversation with others, demanding of us an intellectual, ethical and religious sensitivity so as to be truly available for the other.

Like Rahner’s, the tone by which Reynolds and Benhabib engages significant questions of the day is one marked by an invitational quality that welcomes the participation of all persons—members and non-members—in societal formation. Such an open and respectful way of reading culture is in sync with how the later Rahner understands the Christian’s genuine engagement with the wider human community, as evidenced by Rahner’s own interest in public theology and interreligious dialogue.

The kind of anthropology presented by Rahner—which highlights all people as reflective of the “Imago Dei” and possible sites of divine action in grace—reaches out toward universality, toward all of humanity. Within the academy many subjects in the humanities and social sciences frequently reach into the area of anthropology as a means of seriously considering important themes and questions of the day. Our making explicit the anthropological significance of Rahner’s theology of grace makes explicit not only the value of anthropology for theology, but the we have also communicated the influence of such theology on the relationship between social practice and religious belief. This current trajectory within theology might very well place theology as the science of conscience within the academy, albeit in ways that reflect more styles of partnership than privilege. Our investigations of the contributions of both Reynolds and Benhabib, encourages Christians toward solidarity without claiming a singular universal voice for all people, and thus opens to engaging others in a pluralistic public sphere. In the end, we explored and supported expressions of theologizing open to God, to the world and to the
other. Our explorations within this thesis—from cultural theorists of Jürgen Habermas and Jeffrey Stout; to the theology of Karl Rahner; and, to the complimentary work of Thomas E. Reynolds and Seyla Benhabib—have illuminated how theologians can partner with cultural practitioners within our public spheres in both promoting and sustaining solidarity.
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