**Overture**

Trinity!!

Higher than any being, any divinity, any goodness!

Guide of Christians in the wisdom of heaven!

Lead us up beyond unknowing and light, up to the farthest, highest peak of mystic scripture,

where the mysteries of God’s Word lie simple, absolute and unchangeable in the brilliant darkness of a hidden silence.[[1]](#footnote-1)

At the first glance, what else could theological inquiry possibly be besides remaining a hostage to the chronic condition of a certain daunting altitude sickness regarding its *telos* of elucidation – never cured, never resolved, never absolved of unknowing and unsaying? It is as if the only non-idolatrous posture of a creaturely activity in encountering, knowing, and speaking of the uncreated God would be to repeat with stubborn and somber dedication the opening lines of Arnold Schönberg’s *Moses und Aron*: who else can monotheistic theologies be properly concerned with than the “*einziger, ewiger, allgegenwärtiger, unsichtbarer und unvorstellbarer Gott?*”[[2]](#footnote-2)All the while professing the irreducibility of ontological “height” – together with Moses and Pseudo-Dionysius – of the One Who Is, it is the equally irreducible duty and joy of a Christian theologian to simultaneously profess the divine incarnation as the *Ur*-source of all things Christian, including the practices of liturgy, sacraments, theology and service of vicarious responsibility toward the grace-permeated wellbeing of God’s creation. And yes, then there is the Trinity: the creator and sustainer of a supremely relational ontology, that God who is a particular configuration of trinitarian relationality, in whom and by whom a contrapuntal simultaneity of togetherness and otherness exemplifies and inaugurates the economy of creation as an economy of salvation by and through the incarnation. It is the always consummate coincidence/co-presence of both the divine transcendence and the divine immanence in the Word who became embodied human person or “flesh”[[3]](#footnote-3)and through the Spirit that is the ever perplexing site of rendezvous between the triune God, who remains hidden even amidst benevolent self-revelation,[[4]](#footnote-4) and theological reflection which bodies forth from this rendezvous. Theology, then, is a rather scandalous enterprise of “sinning,” as it were, indeed very boldly through the divinely instigated audacity to think, love, speak, resent, praise, and act upon the Word that we as human beings can never say unto ourselves by ourselves alone. In other words, theology is what emerges when the enmattered human persons encounter the divine otherness as the most radical otherness, yet not as a hegemonically reified and un-relational otherness. The incarnational rendezvous is not the interface of isolated asymmetrical aseities jealously competing, indeed clashing, over a limited supply of power and glory within the same undifferentiated chronotope of being. The incarnation inaugurates the omnipresent precedence of the mystery of “both” over a secluded transparency of “either/or.” In Christian theology the irrevocable and dramatic otherness of God is always co-sonorous with an equally dramatic affirmation of God’s real presence. As Susan A. Ross has insightfully emphasized, it is “in the scandalous *particularity* of the Incarnation” that the all-embracing relevance of divine otherness is found since “it is not maleness, or Palestinian-ness, but human bodiliness that is so scandalously particular.”[[5]](#footnote-5) Ross highlights the linkage between the indispensable apophatic reserve and the equally indispensable concentration on the incarnation as having taken place in the body of a woman, on the one hand, with sacramental theology, focusing precisely on “God’s refusal to be wholly absent and wholly other and rather to be historically, and thus partially and fragmentarily present to us in our embodiment.”[[6]](#footnote-6)

In the Christian theological milieu, relationality – among the divine and human other(s), among ideas, images, affections, virtues, practices, mindsets, values – is an incarnational as well as a sacramental notion. Rooted in the incarnation, the theological discourse scored in the key of sacramentality seems to offer a most fitting imaginative interface to reflect on the promises and conundrums of relationality. The incarnation grounds and orchestrates the divine itineraries of redemptive self-disclosure and salvific presence through sacraments. Classically, “that which till then [Christ’s ascension] was visible of our Redeemer transitions into sacraments.”[[7]](#footnote-7) In the incarnational economy of salvation, sacramentality denotes, on the one hand, the very possibility and relational locus for the incarnation of Christ. But the sacraments, in turn, come to existential and imaginative fruition as the consequences of the incarnation. The incarnate Word is the prototypical relational mystery and the apogee of sacramentality.

Specifically, it is the vigor and vibrancy of the “coupling and crossing of the outward and inward,”[[8]](#footnote-8) and of the uncreated and the creation, that carries the interpretive and performative thrust – and risk[[9]](#footnote-9) – of the sacramental discourse. Sacramentality, from this perspective, denotes the interface of relationality among the uncreated and the created. In the epistemological sense of the word, sacramentality is like, to borrow a most prominent notion of Emmanuel Levinas, as an “optics”: it is the optics of relational and asymmetrically interdependent life, having been created *ex nihilo*, to actually exist as an image and, proleptically also as the likeness, of the triune God. During modernity, sacramental theology has often been (mis)perceived as a discrete and even obsolete sub-field of among marginal disciplines in theology and currents of spirituality. Yet that is only one way of looking at sacramental thought in the age of late postmodernity and postcoloniality. Theology scored and performed sacramentally is not so much a distinct theological discourse, I submit, but rather signals a particular methodological slant, an “optics,” that is particularly, perhaps extremely, loyal to the exigencies of incarnation as the pivotal revelatory event. Slightly paraphrasing Mara Regina Schwartz’s description of sacramental poetics, it could be said that sacramental theology, as I conceive of it, is not singularly preoccupied with the Eucharist or baptism or any other sacramental rites as discreet themes so that such a theme would automatically make a theology *per se* sacramental. Sacramental theology “is not a poetics” – in this case, a theology – “of a theme”[[10]](#footnote-10) alone. As Aidan Kavanagh argued, “sacramental discourse is not a mere garnish to a dull dish of Gospel,” but instead the “sacrament is to Gospel what style is to meaning.”[[11]](#footnote-11) Whenever and wherever sacramental theology, predominantly as a method[[12]](#footnote-12) or a style of theologizing has been ostracized, or reified into unmoored and patriarchally sedimented ritualistic rubric, or fatefully forgotten altogether, theological and confessional traditions have only managed to bring upon themselves more of the momentous difficulties of dealing with the struggle for the mystery of salvation to be embodied in the interpersonal relations of routine living – socially, politically, and culturally.

**Sacraments and Sacramentality**

It is certainly necessary to further specify what is intended by the notions of sacramentality and sacrament. Above all, a sacrament is neither an objectified product of certain approved consecratory formulas nor an exclusive medium of divine grace trickling down into an otherwise pure and graceless nature as a presumably beneficial yet intrusively colonizing intervention. Rather, a sacrament is an ecstatic aural, intellectual, visual, emotional, tactile, voluntary, olfactory and gustatory interaction, on both individual and social levels, of the uncreated God with human persons in, through, with, and under the perceptual signs of non-assimilative communion. As Peter C. Bouteneff has suggested regarding the intersubjective dimension of sacramentality, “sacraments … are all about the intersection of the human and the divine… about uniting the earthly with the heavenly, the time-bound with the eternal, the spatial with the non-circumscribable.”[[13]](#footnote-13) Sacraments – precisely as inter-actions and intersections – are mysteries. It is not the question of a mere preference of Greek since μυστήριον is the Greek term denoting mystery, i.e., both the incomprehensible divine hiddenness and salvific providential ordering of economy of incarnation in the New Testament. In the course of Christian history, μυστήριον has been the principal Eastern Christian term for the sacramental rites and liturgical actions called “sacraments” (the Latin *sacramentum*) in the West. The pivotal mystery of Christianity is not God or human person or the whole creation alone in their splendid isolation: rather, it is the intertwinement and the coalescing concurrence of both precisely as incarnational communion. Indeed, “there is no greater mystery than the communion of man with God, however mediated.”[[14]](#footnote-14) Now within the interface of incarnational and sacramental relationality as perceived as communion, neither divinity nor the world, nor more specifically humanity, is required to execute or undergo any detraction, diminishment, invasion or assimilatory conquest. This structure of relationality can be texturized as sacramental precisely because it does not obliterate differences in order to unite most intricately and intimately. The sacramental relation allows and accommodates a coexistence of transformatively engaged yet unviolated realities. Relationality perceived as sacramental “is not a thunderous clap from the beyond that flattens the listener into shock,” but rather gestures toward an interaction which always remains a “conversation, not a devastation, and not the kind of overwhelming ravishing that crushes” precisely as rooted in the incarnation and the Eucharist – both being a “mystery of this conversation ‘according to our proportion’.”[[15]](#footnote-15) Sacramentality grounds and disseminates the incarnationally configured template of relationality as “likeness-in-the-very-difference between that which sanctifies (God) and that which is sanctified (creation), between uncreated and created.”[[16]](#footnote-16) Epistemologically speaking, the sacramental tonality of theological imagination recognizes that “human beings find God not by leaving or denying the world, but by becoming immersed more deeply in it” to discover God’s mysterious presence as “shot through the world, in the minute as well as in the monumental, in the particular, and always in ways that escape exact classification.”[[17]](#footnote-17) In this sense, sacramentality is “constitutive of revelation.”[[18]](#footnote-18) Sacramentality, thus conceived, is indeed “the theological ground and liturgical foundation on which all liturgy … is based.”[[19]](#footnote-19) Yet not only liturgy – but also theological mindscape or method – can body forth sacramentality as its performed preferential option for intertwinement and interaction through the reciprocity of both/and rather than the fragmentation of either/or.

What about the sacraments as rites and as repetitively and variably performed liturgical actions in relation to sacramentality? Sacraments – the sacramental rites and liturgical actions, and other non-ritual and inter-personal actions[[20]](#footnote-20) through which the Kingdom of God makes a grace-filled apparition – are relational and communicative events. Sacrament, as Jean-Jacques von Allmen puts it, is not a “thing” (*une chose*) but a “‘situation’ *(une situation*): it is where our world is visited, or better: it is inhabited and transformed by the presence of the future eon.”[[21]](#footnote-21) The sacraments are, as it were, apparitions in the “situational/inhabiting” sense suggested by von Allmen because in them, with them, and through them, in the power of the Spirit, the redemptive *opus* of the triune God appears within the historical materiality of life. Yet the apparition, as I suggest it here, is more heard, felt, and being touched by rather than solely seen. To use a musical analogy, the *opus Dei* appears in, with, and through the sacraments somewhat like the opaquely proximate acoustic emergence of the divine μυστήριον in Olivier Messiaen’s *Apparition de l'église éternelle*. In Messiaen’s *Apparition* a virtually hyper-lucidtransparency co-inheres with the densest accumulation of luminous texture and power in an unceasing and uncontainable presence which indwells the senses but evades their complete grasp. Above all, sacrament is the “situation” wherein the supremely physical and multisensory “already” of human reality is sonorously touched, individually and socially, by the most eschatological “not yet” in an opaque foretaste of the glory divine – the grace-filled *salus* of wellbeing, reconciliation, liberation, justice, peace and wholeness of the entire creation.

Recognizing the recent valuable emphasis on historically and contextually enacted sacraments, it remains true, as Joyce Ann Zimmerman argues, that “sacramental reality is far more comprehensive than its ritualization. In fact, the reality of sacraments is not coextensive with their celebration. Liturgy explodes the cultic occasion.”[[22]](#footnote-22) As unfashionable as as it may seem in this day and age to write about sacramental relationality as the interface of co-presence and co-inherence without immediately invoking specific eucharistic formulations, I believe there is a pertinent reason for following this route here. Namely, to avoid intimations of nominalistic sacramental occasionalism to which Protestant traditions are especially prone and with which my interrogation of the modern Western theological mindscape is most critically concerned. Among its most notorious victims is the reciprocal relation between the sacraments as specific and intersubjective liturgical rites and sacramentality as the ethically inflected ontological constellation of incarnational relationality. This is a symptom of the dissolution of the economy of salvation as sacramental in favor of a resolutely disenchanted, extrinsic and forensic commerce between competing dualistic and “pure” identities locked in, as it were, a combat between totally supernatural “grace” and resentfully self-sufficient “nature.” Herein abides the vintage problematic of the modern Western cultural, political, as well as theological worldview – the rationale of competitive binarity. The dualistic rationale of binarity perceives difference as substantialist, atomistic, and hegemonically exclusive as it brings to a crescendo the Aristotelian metaphysical conception of relation as accidental and ethically marginal.

One itinerary of healing modulation beyond the modern Occidental rationale of binarity is Christological. A pivotal locus of the intrinsic connectivity between sacramentality and the sacraments can be found the person of Jesus Christ as the *Ursakrament*[[23]](#footnote-23) of the triune God. For example, within the horizon of Chalcedonian Christology, Christ as the Son and the second person of the Trinity,

…the only-begotten Son [of God] must be confessed to be in two natures (ἐκ δύο φύσεων [ἐν δύο φύσεσιν]), unconfusedly (ἀσυγχύτως), immutably (ἀτρέπτως), indivisibly (ἀδιαιρέτως), inseparably [united] (ἀχωρίστως), and that without the distinction of natures being taken away by such union, but rather the peculiar property of each nature being preserved and concurring (συντρεχούσης) in one Person and subsistence (ἓν πρόσωπον καὶ μίαν ὑπὸστασιν), not separated or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son and only-begotten, God the Word, our Lord Jesus Christ…[[24]](#footnote-24)

The hypostatic union without confusion, without change, without division and without separation in the person of Jesus Christ as the *Ursakrament* is the “paradigm of all sacraments” and “the paradigm of the union of divine and human in all sacramentality.” [[25]](#footnote-25) Christ is the ultimate μυστήριον or the paradigmatic patterned intensity of relation without extrincisist division and annihilating fusion as “the antinomical ‘holding together’.”[[26]](#footnote-26) So sacramentality, on the one hand, is the particular, divinely inaugurated, interface of divine-human relationality which is the enabling structure/order of the incarnation. At the same time, the hypostatic union is not only the most fitting sign, “at once inside and outside the sign system,”[[27]](#footnote-27) of the sacramental relationality but also, paradoxically, the origin of the enabling structure/order itself. Within the incarnational imaginary, Christ as the *Ursakrament* of the triune God is the perfect score of the sacramental relationality, which in turn, is consequently and subsequently performed in, with, under, and through all the sacraments, preeminently the Eucharist. The Eucharist, or the Holy Communion, or the Last Supper, or the Mass is, then, where sacramental economy is audibly, visibly, olfactorily, and tangibly enacted as a particular lifeworld amidst socio-political arena of human life.

**Eucharist as the Sacrament of Incarnational Style**

If there is a kind of enduring “categorical imperative” for Christian theology, it seems that only the incarnation would deserve this eminence precisely as the originary and redemptive constellation of relationality, mirrored *par excellence* in and through the Eucharist. The Eucharist entails a “whole economy,” not an isolated cultic moment.[[28]](#footnote-28) Against the background of Chalcedon, a certain parallax view of the mysteries of the incarnation and the Eucharist emerge, like the one advocated by Martin Luther: “Thus, what is true in regard to Christ is also true in regard to the sacrament… Both natures are simply there in their entirety… both remain there at the same time.”[[29]](#footnote-29) Hence, to theologize about the Eucharist is not limited to an elucidation of a single liturgical or sacramental theme, important as it may be. It is so because the Eucharist, in a panoramic view of Alexander Schmemann, is

…not merely one possible relationship with God. It is rather the only possible holding together – in one moment, in one act – of the whole truth about God and man. It is the sacrament of the world sinful and suffering, the sky darkened, the tortured Man dying: but it is also the sacrament of the change, His transfiguration, His rising, His Kingdom. In one sense we look back, giving thanks for the simple goodness of God’s original gift to us. In another sense we look forward, eschatologically, to the ultimate repair and transfiguration of that gift, to its last consummation in Christ.[[30]](#footnote-30)

The Eucharist – as the primary sacrament of the true *Ursakrament*, the Incarnate Word – conveys the interface of divine-human relationality. But if so, what would the methodological implications for the practice of theological reflection be? Here I find the stance of Yngve Brilioth insightful far beyond his era: “For the central secret of genuinely Christian theology is the holding in combination of the two contrasted opposites of God’s Transcendence and Immanence; and precisely at this point the eucharist is the surest safeguard of a sound theology.”[[31]](#footnote-31) Thus there is no surprise that Brilioth consistently – in a book on the eucharistic life of worship! – refers to the elucidation of eucharistic theology as one of the most important tasks of *systematic* theology rather than a sub-specialized sacramental/liturgical theology.[[32]](#footnote-32) The Eucharist as a sacrament and as the matrix of all liturgy and liturgical rites is not a matter of (marginalized and exoticized) liturgy or worship alone. Instead, the Eucharist is “a meeting-point on which all the issues of theology converge.”[[33]](#footnote-33) In this sense, as Catherine Pickstock has emphasized, “the eucharist is neither instrumental nor pedagogic appendage to the Cross and the empty tomb. Instead, the eucharist and the events of the *Triduum* … compose one single formal ‘abstract’ picture of the single and simple divine action which is the imparting of himself as love.”[[34]](#footnote-34) In this trajectory of theological thought the Eucharist functions like a *breviatum verbum[[35]](#footnote-35)* in the sense that in the Eucharist “the content of the whole Christian faith of the revelation of the Creator who is also the Redeemer is focused with unique intensity, and proclaimed with uniquely eloquent brevity.”[[36]](#footnote-36) All that being said, this dissertation is a witness to a theological style grounded in the Eucharist as the *breviatum verbum* of the mystery of salvation.

 **Eucharist as the Sacrament of Communion With and Within Christ**

Sacramental relationality is a diffusive relationality. As an interface, it obtains in various sites of divine-human interaction with infinitely varying degrees of intensification. The Eucharist as a sacrament – not as a static and magic object or “thing,” but as a relationally and doxologically embodied event, a “situation,” i.e., a liturgy – appropriately marks the relentless co-inherence and co-iteration of God’s presence and absence in their sacramental “intensification of signification to an extreme of plenitude.”[[37]](#footnote-37) Human participation in the Eucharist is multi-pronged as it simultaneously facilitates two mutually resonant unions: the union with Christ and the union in Christ. Thus “through union with [Christ], in the fellowship of the brethren, [human individual] becomes partaker of the salvation that [Christ] has won.”[[38]](#footnote-38) But not only that – “sacramental unity is not only unity with God in Christ, it is unity with each other, unity with all that exists, in Christ.”[[39]](#footnote-39) Instead of positing a relation of hegemonic unilateralism, the sacramental interface of the Eucharist inaugurates and accommodates, by an analogical interval, similar styles of reciprocally resonant relationalities – divine and human alike. In the classical formulation by John of Damascus sacramental relationality clearly conjoins the eucharistic body and blood of Christ with the church as it is being born, as well as transformatively and redemptively sustained in and through the Eucharist, as a union encompassing both unity and/within diversity. Thus sacramental communion

… is an actual communion, because through it we have communion with Christ and share in His flesh and His divinity; yea, we have communion and are united with one another through it. For since we partake of one bread, we all become one body of Christ and one blood, and members one of another, being of one body with Christ. (…) For if union is in truth with Christ and with one another, we are assuredly voluntarily united also with all those who partake with us. (…) ‘For we are one body because we partake of the one bread,’ as the divine Apostle says (1.Cor.10:17).[[40]](#footnote-40)

The communion in question is by no means a purely cultic and ritual communion between Christ and an individual pious interiority. It rather resonates back to the diffusive latitude of the incarnation where the communion with God is always crossed by and coupled with the communion among human persons. The crossing and coupling within the sacramentally configured relationality is, by analogy of the hypostatic union of the incarnation, non-coercive, non-hegemonic, and non-detractive. In other words, the quiddity of this relation is ethical insofar as it is sacramental, i.e., analogically incarnational. It is in this sense that sacramentality “conjures something quite particular about the level of connection or the quality of relationship between self, community, earth and God that the word ‘liturgy’, with its associations of doing work, does not.”[[41]](#footnote-41) Nevertheless, it is in liturgy – as “thickly”[[42]](#footnote-42) defined as possible – that sacramentality as the pattern of ethical relationality is performed, enacted, and opened up to human participation. Moreover, liturgy as sacramentality *in actu* bodies forth far beyond the enthusiastic cultivation of a privatized pious interiority. Precisely in light of Damascene’s concurrent relationalities among the divine and human others in the Eucharist, the full force of Don Saliers’ insistence on the eucharistic liturgy being a “rehearsal of being eucharistic in the world” and of “the way we are to become related to one another”[[43]](#footnote-43) can be discerned. Being eucharistic in the world is nothing less that being a participant in the salvific *opus Dei* – synergistically, contrapuntally, vicariously, and indeed truly *liturgically* in the thickest, deepest and broadest sense of the word.

**Eucharist as the *Ur*-source of Liturgy**

I have so far travelled along an expository path which I already admitted was a bit awkward. Namely, it is somewhat awkward to reflect about sacramentality before the sacraments, and even more so – to ponder sacramentality and the sacraments before liturgy. It is time to dispel some of the awkwardness by re-situating and re-joining all three interdependent rudiments of the sacramental discourse. To speak about the interface of divine-human relationality as sacramentality is to speak most likely too schematically, knowing all too well that such an effort is like trying to keep a wave upon the sand. Yet it is the very impetus of this project to entertain the imaginary of re-engagement of things that are habitually and comfortably viewed as mutually un-engaged and sometimes even conscientiously and profitably dis-engaged. Sacramentality as an ethical configuration of relationality is performed and enabled in, through, and as liturgy. It is in liturgy – λειτουργία – with both its ritualistic yet also originally non-cultic connotations as a work toward or service benefitting the common good, that sacramentality materializes within and through particular sacraments as liturgical events. Liturgy is sacramentality enacted and embodied as it keeps appearing in, with, under, through, and alongside the sacraments as relational events and rites. Liturgy is *opus Dei* before it is anything else within the sacramental economy of redemptive sustenance and redemptive struggle, from the creation until the eschatological transfiguration of the distorted divine image into the divine likeness, when God will be all in all. Liturgy is also concurrently, without competition, the participatory work of the human persons, empowered to become and to enact sacramental signs of witness to the redemptive *opus Dei.* The Eucharist, as the sacramental rite and liturgical action *par excellence,* that is the prototype of all incarnationally, and by extension sacramentally, scored human action and inter-action, both within the convocations[[44]](#footnote-44) of worship and, even more compellingly, wherever the “liturgy after liturgy” may take those who partake in the Eucharist in this so poignantly un-sacramental and inequitable world. I will return to the “liturgy after liturgy” later and in far more depth in this project – many times. For now it must be noted that from a perspective of sacramental theology to speak about liturgy is to speak about sacramentality and the sacraments *in actu*. Liturgy is coterminous, even though not identical, for all possible purposes, with the sacraments as enacted and relationally configured liturgical actions. All the time, however, it has been strikingly obvious that to speak about liturgy sacramentally is to plunge voluntarily into the discourse of sacramentality as a problem, indeed *the* problem, theologically defined, of the (post)modern Occidental cultural imaginary. And, by extension, as a problem for all those others conscripted or cross-fertilized into the Occidental (post)modernity as a constellation of knowledge and power shaped by “the most profound principles of Western epistemology: its passion for boundaries, its cultural and imaginative habits of enclosure.”[[45]](#footnote-45) During a whole epoch these imaginative habits of enclosure have tended to regard relationality as accidental. But relationality, as I have suggested, abides at the very ethical crux of all things in relation to God – and among themselves – considered sacramentally. Thus the fate of sacramentality is conjoined to that of liturgy – and both are now navigating through troubled waters. Yet before briefly surveying the greatest challenges, there is another loaded question in need of a brief elaboration.

**Which Eucharist? A Hybrid Eucharist!**

Since the days of uncomplicated appeals to a virtually universal eucharistic “shape” or *ordo* which was supposed to structure a uniform liturgical practice are thankfully gone, what can I possibly mean by speaking frequently about “the Eucharist”? In addition, how legitimate are my appeals to situate such speech in a mutually inconsistent variety of sacramental liturgical and theological traditions – Lutheran, Eastern Orthodox, and Roman Catholic? Undoubtedly, the benefits of historically positivist research of liturgical histories do appropriately problematize the relationship of some particularly monolithic and monochromatic productions of *ordo* vis-à-vis their doctrinal and ecclesiastical endowments. The recently recovered and re-appreciated history of liturgical diversity has become instrumental for discerning the genealogies of contemporary and liturgical-sacramental theologies. That being said, when the idealistic exaggerations of the desired ahistoric permanence of an allegedly pure liturgical *ordo* are tamed, there nevertheless remains a sinuous equilibrium of shared patterns of liturgical actions and dispositions in the practices of eucharistic worship, at least among the so-called liturgical traditions. Of course, not all Christian traditions today are liturgical – at least in the “thin” sense of the term – and not all of them are eucharistic. What I must say at this juncture, however, is that a diasporic sacramental-liturgical imaginary is an imaginary of multiple belonging – not uniquely so yet perhaps more acutely so. As already mentioned in the Introduction, the polyphonic cultural, linguistic, political, liturgical, and theological context of my inhabited experience in Eastern and Western Europe, as well as in North America, effectively affirms the co-habitation of variously – sometimes conflictually – invested theological and liturgical sensibilities, lineages, and allegiances. The lived reality of multiply colonized cultures, such as my own Latvian culture, is that of a creolized lifeworld with creolized life forms. Liturgy is not an exception – my theological and liturgical tradition is polyphonic to the point where Wittenberg, Rome, and Moscow all coalesce in Rīga only to obtain even more nuanced texture through Stockholm and Oxford all the way into the current diasporic emplacement in Philadelphia and Atlanta. And yet there is an *ordo* – a creolized *ordo* with palimpsestically inscribed motives of Lutheran, Reformed, Catholic and Orthodox spiritual traditions all sounding together.

Admittedly, the theo(ideo)logies of confessional purity or authenticity, including the liturgical terrains, do have considerable analytical value as they are applied in historical and doctrinal research. Yet, they are seriously deficient, indeed reductive, beyond their role as analytical tools if they are indiscriminately applied to the complex existential engagements mired in hybrid constellations of influence, endurance, mutation, and cross-fertilization. The *ordo* of such hybrid liturgical constellations seems to be polyvocal and prone to theological code-switching. Namely, Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox and even indigenous traditions of worship and wisdom coalesce in my hybrid Latvian *ordo* as it traverses, acknowledges, and negotiates versatile theological and cultural legacies. But even more generally speaking, no culture – including theological and liturgical cultures and discourses – are spatially incarcerated, no matter how “native” it may be presumed to be, especially at this historical moment of remarkable global migration and transculturation. All liturgies “is always culturally embedded and embodied.”[[46]](#footnote-46) To insist on both tight confessional univocity and absolute difference among various Christian traditions to the point of denying any common structures of Christian eucharistic worship is to promote what Arjun Appadurai in another context described as the “language of incarceration.”[[47]](#footnote-47) It amounts to purposefully confining theological and liturgical traditions to the immobile circumstantiality of a geo-confessional location for the sake of (desired) confessional authenticity. Appadurai, among others, sagaciously concludes that “groups unsullied by contact with a larger world, have probably never existed,”[[48]](#footnote-48) and I submit that the same obtains in the world of theological and liturgical practices as well. Perhaps even more so in the present era of an unprecedented human migration. Even more ironically, if it would be accurate that culturally and theologically “native” discursive practices could indeed be incarcerated in uncontaminated localities – in this context, the locality of a doctrine or a rite, – then the present Latvian Lutheran liturgical universe attests to the possibility of not merely of a polyphony, but occasionally an outright heterophony. And it is in that heterophony that the presumed purely “local” authenticity resides.

The most recent Latvian Lutheran Interim Handbook for Divine Service (*Rokasgrāmata dievkalpošanai LELB un LELBĀL draudzēs*, 2003) for the worldwide Latvian Lutherans is the “Temporary Agenda.” It is called “Temp-(A)-genda” (*Pagenda)* with quite some exasperation due precisely to the unquenchable heterophony of theologies contained therein. It is designed for the Latvian Lutherans both in the homeland and in the worldwide diaspora. It features an amusingcollage of liturgical rites, exhibiting the most prominent theological variety precisely in the eucharistic liturgies. Side by side there are liturgies composed of diverse elements of the Lutheran Reformation as well as Roman Catholic tradition alongside with subsequent mutations through the various eras of colonial apartheid into the present. Besides the typical *ressourcement* gestures of contemporary liturgical movement, there are also Reformed influences reminiscent of the neo-Protestant era German Lutheran liturgical developments. There is quite a polyphony at the level of liturgical texts and rubrics, but even more so at the level of liturgical practices, such as postures, gestures, the use of incense and chrism, to name just the most glaring ones. And then there are the clergy vestments ranging from austere black Protestant preaching robes to fashionable cassocks and colorful chasubles purchased in Rome, different styles of wearing the stole ... The introductory “Structure of the Holy Communion Service (*dievkalpojums*)” helpfully provides a concise bilingual outline of the main movements of the divine service in Latvian and in Latin.

Speaking of liturgical texts, the “Temp Agenda” contains versions of the *Confiteor* that would sound equally in place in Rome as they do in some locations in Rīga; then there are versions that would sound more “native” in Berlin or in Chicago respectively. There is a version of the eucharistic liturgy with *Fractio panis* and a sung Latin *Kyrie,* and there is a version without them. And then there is a whole section of occasional services in the old Gothic script, visually and semantically signaling its origins in the early 20th century, a presumed golden age of liturgical authenticity in some circles while being the object of ridicule in others. On the top of it all, local (and in the case of the Latvian diasporas in North and South Americas, various European countries, and Australia “local” effectively stands for “glo-cal” even when admitting so invariably invokes the accusations of “inauthenticity”) cultural and linguistic idiosyncrasies add even more liturgical variables to increase the range of differently configured creolizations to the already multivalent textual codifications.

Now which Eucharist is it then? For all practical purposes it is a hybrid Eucharist of the already inherited historical palimpsest in an ongoing dialogue with the new layers of migration, displacement and emplacement. If this Eucharist is locally incarcerated than its confinement is one of a relentless polyphony and its creolized *ordo*. It definitely is not a Eucharist of some fetishized multiculturalism at the whim of a dandyish postmodern *bricoleur*. The hybrid Eucharist of a diasporic Latvian Lutheran finds its location of enunciation in the interstices of the structural terrain of the notorious “Temp-(A)-genda.” On the one hand, it aligns more deeply and enduringly (not, however through defensive exclusivism) with the Western Christian patterns of sacramental rites present and performed in traditions such as Swedish *via media* Lutheranism and the so-called Anglo-Catholicism, both of which have influenced my theological disposition rather profoundly. On the other hand, it is marked primarily yet fluidly by the counterpoint of certain Lutheran and Eastern Orthodox theological trajectories which value the promise and prudence of the imaginary of opaque eucharistic consubstantiality as the template of grace-filled interface of relationality between God and creation, and among and within the creation itself. This Eucharist may not be sufficiently “pure” according to certain canons of official confessional authenticity. Hence the integrity pertinent here is an “interstitial integrity”[[49]](#footnote-49) of a complex theo-historico-cultural counterpoint. Rather, it lives and moves within the equilibrium of certain veridical plurality.[[50]](#footnote-50) It may even be viscerally, for the lack of better expression, resonant with the diasporic *habitus* – a skill of life and survival[[51]](#footnote-51) rather than a fashionable postmodern luxury – of paradoxically holding together experiences, domiciles, languages, loyalties, sensibilities, in a fragile and hybrid equilibrium of lived existential actualities. But is not paradox, as M. Jamie Ferreira contends, precisely the “ability to live together what we cannot theoretically unite?”[[52]](#footnote-52)

**Sacramentality Among Wandering Signs**

It may have appeared that the most convoluted one among the modern and postmodern theological *loci* – sacramentality – has been enjoying an idyllic honeymoon so far. But rather the opposite is true. This project is a constructive interrogation of what kind of imaginary of relationality – a tremendously problematic issue in the late postmodern context – could be possibly conceived in the context of the Western cultural entanglement with hegemonic unilateralism and the coloniality of power in divine and human action. My claim here is that a fruitful imaginary resides in the notion of sacramentality. With the same breath, however, I must note that the appeal to sacramental discourse does not advocate a nativist quest for the elusive golden age of seamless sacramentality to which one must (impossibly!) return. Most importantly, it is the very possibility of sacramentality and liturgy that was most enthusiastically challenged in the modern era. So enthusiastically, in fact, that

sacramental discourse is often thought of as theological adiaphora best practiced by those with the taste for banners, ceremonial, and arts and crafts. It is regarded as an academically less than disciplined swamp in which Anglican high churchmen, Orthodox bishops, and many, if not all Roman Catholics and others are hopelessly mired.[[53]](#footnote-53)

Evidently, much more is at stake here than mere aesthetical addictions. As Schwartz observes, the “sacramental thinking is completely alien to the way modern secularism has conceived matter, space, time, and language, in a sense that it had to be almost dismantled for modernism to be born.”[[54]](#footnote-54) She points to the Reformation as the enabling “surge of iconoclasm” which “chipped away at sacramentality until the body of sacramental experience was reduced beyond recognition, and, for some, this meant that God might be leaving the world – yet once more.”[[55]](#footnote-55) According to both Alexander Schmemann and Catherine Pickstock, secularism as modernity’s hallmark is precisely a liturgical, i.e., sacramental, and not a general problem of religion. For Schmemann secularism definitely does not equal atheism, but is the negation of liturgy and sacramentality as non-accidental and as a configuration of relationality with both God and other created beings and the whole universe within a sacramental ontology.[[56]](#footnote-56) Pickstock argues that modernity is most precisely “characterized by the refusal of liturgy” – refusal of the liturgical life-world – which renders the modern anti-liturgically inscribed secularism “the pre-condition for a capitalist, bureaucratic and technocratic order, however much this issue may be evaded.”[[57]](#footnote-57)

Others trace the genealogy of un-liturgical immanentist modernity even further back into the stirrings of the medieval voluntaristic nominalism which facilitated the emergence of sacramental occasionalism in the then emergent imaginaries of creation as “pure nature” juxtaposed to pure divinity in “jealous autonomy,”[[58]](#footnote-58) both competing on the same terrain of the newly postulated univocity of being.[[59]](#footnote-59) The analogical ontology of participation and the correlative sacramental realism whereby a sacrament, i.e., sign participates in the signified as it effectively signifies without becoming identical to the signified – to put it in terms of Neoplatonic logic – is transmuted towards the dissolution of the analogical transparency into what Graham Wards calls the “opacification of nature” which “prepares the metaphysical grounds for the secular, demystified world-view (and later the scientific world-view and the capitalist cult of worldly goods).”[[60]](#footnote-60) Consequently, an aporetic space opens between the subjectively atomized human person and the objectified sacrament which “the dualisms of modernity, establishing the instrumentality of reasoning, attempt to span. Dualistic thinking substitutes for mediation.”[[61]](#footnote-61) Certainly, in the modern world signs or symbols can be subjectively chosen to be trusted through a deliberating value-judgment (this is what most modern Protestant sacramental theologies have preferred) or not, since the “modern secular thinking is founded upon this ability to doubt.”[[62]](#footnote-62) Within this worldview the sacramental presence is domiciled within the arbitrary experiential interiority of the modern subjectivity who can choose to – increasingly contradictorily under the auspices of modern *Entzauberung* – make a discrete and relationally secluded space for sacramental moments amidst the dominating reality of mechanistic science, pure economic reason, and the deep suspicion of the aesthetically shaped modes of knowing, feeling, and acting.

However, what Ward has called “opacification of nature” did not seem to have been an univocal process. Concurrently, as the analogical and participatory sacramental transparency recedes, the “rupture of power and love” into “a loveless power and an impotent love” becomes a prominent modern variant of relationality within which the “submission to an inscrutable divine will meant that an extreme, although distorted, piety which stressed God’s ability to change things and work miracles itself encouraged a new cult of power in every domain of human life.”[[63]](#footnote-63) A new transparency quest ensues, however, as a quest driven by the ideal/idol of a mastered transparency emerges from the crucial modern “desire for an all-encompassing mastery of reality by rational and/or scientific means.”[[64]](#footnote-64) This mastered transparency is the full, stable, secure, clear, and potentially and progressively penetrable transparency, throbbing in impatient and eager excitement for the next discovery. This version of transparency is the epistemological ideal/idol of the dominant modern rationalities in the penetrating light of which – thankfully on the one hand and regrettably on the other – contemporary sacramental reasoning is bound to interrogate both this very transparency itself and its own nostalgic temptations. For it is unavoidably true that underinterrogated pre-modern notions of sacramentality can no longer be proliferated as accountable to and healing for the reality wherein “the redemption [is] manifestly lacking in an unredeemed world” and thus sacramentality should perhaps most fruitfully be represented as opening up “precisely that unredeemedness, that moment of interruption, to which no hegemonic narrative does justice.”[[65]](#footnote-65) Perhaps.

As far as the nostalgic temptations are concerned, there has already been a massive postmodern wandering among the (empty) signs to signal the dedication to fight them relentlessly. According to Georges de Schrijver’s observation, the postmodern sacramental (dis)engagements highlight the conviction that “every ready-made transparency that comes forth must be scrapped, again and again, as false, as a fake transparency that must be unmasked as such.”[[66]](#footnote-66) Hence the postures and gestures of “‘a-sacramentality’ as an iconoclastic service to the truth,”[[67]](#footnote-67) since “the postmodern a-sacramentality is a protest against the demonization of a sacramentality oriented toward humanity:”[[68]](#footnote-68)

…one can only be faithful to God by persevering in a situation of brokenness. Contact with the sacred can only be effected via uninterrupted wandering. Only a fragmentary life expresses faith in a sacrality that exists only as a lost paradise. (…) our images of the holy are culturally mediated, and how much special interest groups have thereby played tricks to manipulate the holy.[[69]](#footnote-69)

Against this background, I submit, a useful way to proceed is neither a nostalgic return by pure *ressourcement*, nor a pure *aggiornamento* with (post)modernity. Rather I envision a contrapuntal and fluid re-engagement with both from within an ethically concerned postcoloniality. Indeed, any sacramental imaginary without attending to the ethical universal of human suffering – the only universal worth being generously lenient with in this era sometimes called post-metaphysical and allergic to obsolete grand narratives– is nothing else than a “truncated sacramentality,”[[70]](#footnote-70) no matter if it is premodern, modern, postmodern, nostalgic, or iconoclastic. As de Schrijver incisively observes,

God’s light is… obscured in a twofold way: through the desperation of wandering have-nots, and the excess of possibilities of free-wheeling tourists. As long as this split remains there as an open wound, the presence of God – and of life as a gift, for that matter – shows only its disfigured appearance. I can scarcely imagine an abundance of sacramental presence in a world at large, in which on the one hand excessive glamour neutralises God’s light, and dire misery, on the other hand, cries out for mercy. [[71]](#footnote-71)

Those who have not experienced gratuity in real life can hardly be expected to understand the meaning of divine gratuity expounded in learned discourses.[[72]](#footnote-72)

In other words, sacramentality is not an intra-ecclesial issue. By no means is it an adiaphora, at least within an incarnationally grounded theological discourse. Sacramentality as enacted in liturgy poses a question about the quiddity, or the “ethics,” of the human social and political life while it never ceases to be, at the same time, the question about the quiddity, or the “ethics,” of the interface of divine-human relationality. For, theologically speaking, there always abide “these three: Word, Sacrament, and suffering human beings”[[73]](#footnote-73) on this side of the beatific vision – and an ethically inflected theology abides in sounding them always and everywhere together, tenaciously and contrapuntally.

1. Pseudo-Dionysius, “The Mystical Theology,” *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*. The Classics of Western Spirituality (Colm Luibheid, trans., Paul Rorem et al., eds.; New York, Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1987): 997A, 135. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. I am referring here to Arnold Schönberg’s opera, *Moses und Aron*, Act 1, opening scene. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας. (John 1:14) The Word becomes flesh (σὰρξ) as Jesus Christ not only in the primary sense of full material incarnation, but also to locate the hypostatic union within the real and sinful world of human alienation, injustice, and suffering. Human body in its materiality is the site of incarnation and salvation, or “the hinge of salvation” in the words of Tertullian, “On the Resurrection of the Flesh,” 8, *PL* 2: 852. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Pseudo-Dionysius, “Letter Three to Gaius,” *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*: 1069B, 264. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Susan A. Ross, “Feminist theology and sacramental theology: old and new challenges,” *The Gestures of God: Explorations in Sacramentality* (Geoffrey Rowell and Christine Hall, eds.; London and New York: Continuum, 2004):114. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Leo the Great, Sermon 74, “On the Lord’s Ascension.” I partially use the loosely translated text of *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*: *Series II*, vol. 12, ed. Philip Schaff, available at <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/360374.htm>. Accessed February 12, 2009. Literally, Christ’s incarnated and visible presence has after Ascension “transitioned into the sacraments” (*Quod itaque Redemptoris nostri conspicuum fuit*, *in sacramenta transivit*). Leo’s sermon joins the post-ascension sacramental presence of Christ with faith by repositioning the focus from “sight” to “faith,” which in this situation expresses the mutually interdependent activities of Christ in sacraments and faith as the gift of the Holy Spirit, enabling human persons to discern and relate to Christ across the interface of sacramentality. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. I am borrowing here the delightful expression by Edward J. Kilmartin, *Christian Liturgy: Theology and Practice. I Systematic Theology of Liturgy*, Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1988): 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Rowan Williams alertly warns about the vacuity of a loosely imaged “sacramental principle” with its “rather bland appeal to the natural sacredness of things that occasionally underpins sacramental theology,” in “Sacraments of the New Society,” *On Christian Theology* (Oxford and Malden: Blackwell, 2000):210. Williams insists, with a slight occasionalist twist but perhaps more with sagacious caution, that to begin “with some general principle of the world as ‘naturally’ sacramental or epiphanic” might result in “pot-pourri of Jung, Teilhard de Chardin and a certain kind of anthropology, sometimes invoked as a prelude to sacramental theology, will run the risk of obscuring the fact that signs and symbols are *made* – even if in response to some sense that the world itself is charged with glory,” in “The Nature of a Sacrament,” 201. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Mara Regina Schwartz, *Sacramental Poetics At the Dawn of Secularism: When God Left the World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008): 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Aidan Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology* (New York: Pueblo, 1984): 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Thus Herbert Vorgrimler, for example, speaks about “sacramental thinking” as “a way of understanding,” *Sacramental Theology* (Linda M. Maloney, trans.; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992):27. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Peter C. Bouteneff, “Sacraments as the Mystery of Union: elements in an Orthodox sacramental theology,” *The Gestures of God*, 96. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Yngve Brilioth, *Eucharistic Faith and Practice: Evangelical and Catholic* (A.G. Herbert, trans.; London: SPCK, 1965): 285. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Mara Regina Schwartz, *Sacramental Poetics At the Dawn of Secularism*, 131. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. John Chryssavgis, “The World as Sacrament: Insights into an Orthodox Worldview,” *Pacifica* 10:2 (1997): 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Susan A. Ross, *Extravagant Affections: A Feminist Sacramental Theology* (New York: Continuum, 1998):35. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Kevin W. Irwin, *Models of the Eucharist* (New York and Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2005):43. Moreover, the sacramental imaginary celebrates the redemptive “sacramental permeability” of the creation: “sacramental permeability means that physical matters and actions such as eating and drinking can becomes vehicles that make transparent the Holy One who gives birth to the Eucharistic life” as Andrea Bieler and Louise Schottroff argue in *The Eucharist: Bodies, Bread, and Resurrection* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007): 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Leonardo Boff’s reminder that contemporary Christians must be educated to see the sacraments “as rites that signify and celebrate the breakthrough of grace into their lives and communities, ” as acts of life above and beyond the officially approved numerical organization of seven, or two, sacraments, has not lost any of its critical purchase over the last two decades. Even though I am hesitant to employ the language of breakthrough, interruption, disruption, etc., in relation to sacramental discourse too liberally for reasons outlined in Part I, Ch.1, Boff’s point deserves a special acknowledgment. See Boff, *Sacraments of Life, Life of the Sacraments* (Beltsville: The Pastoral Press, 1987):5. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Jean-Jacques von Allmen, *Prophétisme sacramentel* (Neuchatel: Delachaux et Niestle, 1964): 13. Von Allmen links this understanding of the sacraments with the re-presencing of Christ as the *Ursakrament*: “…il y a sacrament là où le sacrament par excellence, le Christ incarné, se re-présente,” *ibid.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Joyce Ann Zimmerman, *Liturgy as Living Faith: A Liturgical Spirituality* (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 1993): 78. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. I am referring to the terminology of used by Karl Rahner and Edward Schillebeeckx, which in German usually receives the compact expression as *Ursakrament* and/or *Grundsakrament.* [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. The Definition of Chalcedon, at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf214.xi.xiii.html>, accessed August 4, 2008. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Bouteneff, “Sacraments as the Mystery of Union,” *The Gestures of God*, 97. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Alexander Schmemann, “Worship in a Secular Age,” *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2000):129. Schmemann elsewhere specifies that *mysterion* entails “the holding-together, in a mystical and existential, rather than rational, synthesis of both the total *transcendence* of God and His genuine *presence*,” in “The ‘Orthodox World’, Past and Present,” *Church, World, Mission: Reflections on Orthodoxy in the West* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1979): 60. It is not clear if the notion of “synthesis” is the most helpful term here, yet it does suggest a dimension of relation. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Kevin Hart, *The Trespass of the Sign: Deconstruction, Theology and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991): 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Gordon W. Lathrop has used this expression to conceive the Eucharist as the foundational liturgical *ordo* in terms of complex juxtaposition within “the whole economy of word set next to meal, texts set next to preaching, thanksgiving set next to eating and drinking, which makes up the deepest ecumenical pattern for celebration. Eucharist is the every-Sunday assembly for doing this word and meal event set next to the recurring human experience of the week,” in *Holy People: A Liturgical Ecclesiology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999): 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Martin Luther, “The Babylonian Captivity of the Church,” *Luther’s Works.* Vol.36, Word and Sacrament II. (Abdel Ross Wentz, ed., and Helmut T. Lehmann, general ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959): 35. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Alexander Schmemann, “The World as Sacrament,” *Church, World, Mission,* 225. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Brilioth, *Eucharistic Faith and Practice*, 274. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. *Ibid*., 144. Brilioth adds, sarcastically, that systematic theology will accomplish such a task “if only it will condescend from its sublime heights to tackle problems such as these,” the problems here consisting in offering a modern presentation of the “spiritual realities which Luther desired to guard” in his *via media* sacramental doctrines vis-à-vis other currents of the Reformation theology. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. *Ibid*., 1. Brilioth appears to hint, in an understated manner, at something akin to what many years later was proposed by Louis-Marie Chauvet as “a fundamental theology of sacramentality which would permit a global reinterpretation of Christian existence” through the articulation of “a sort of law of the symbolic order, which is valid over the entire territory we propose to cross,” in *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence* (Patric Madigan, S.J., and Madeleine Beaumont, trans.; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1995): 548, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Catherine Pickstock, “A Poetics of the Eucharist,” *Telos* 131 (2005): 90. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. *Breviatum verbum* or the “abridged word” is a term occasionally used by patristic writers to denote summaries of faith and the Scriptures, such as the creeds understood as symbols of faith, to express briefly the crux of longer texts or teachings. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Brilioth, *Eucharistic Faith and Practice*, 283. Also, “the eucharist sums up the Christian faith and the Christian religion with a fullness which verbal definitions can never adequately express,” 54. Brilioth’s argument is consonant with the early Martin Luther’s reflections on the role and significance of the Eucharist as the “testament” or the “short summary of all God’s wonders and grace, fulfilled in Christ,” for example, in Martin Luther, “A Treatise On the New Testament, That Is, the Holy Mass,” *Luther’s Works,* Vol. 35, Word and Sacrament I (E. Theodore Bachmann, ed., and Helmut T. Lehmann, general ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960): 84. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Oliver Davies, *The Creativity of God: World, Eucharist, Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004):131. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Brilioth, *Eucharistic Faith and Practice*, 54. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Bouteneff, “Sacraments as the Mystery of Union,” *The Gestures of God*, 95. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. John of Damascus, “*De Fide Orthodoxa*,” in “Exposition of the Orthodox Faith,” *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*. Vol. 9 (Philip Schaff and Henry Wace,eds.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark and Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997): 84. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Siobhan Garrigan, *Beyond Ritual: Sacramental Theology after Habermas* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004): 202. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. I find David Fagerberg’s distinctions between liturgy in the “thick” and “thin” sense helpful and generally follow them. Liturgy in the “thick” sense is the participatory work of Christ on behalf of the whole humanity. The Church – constituted precisely through liturgy – performs liturgy as the work of Christ. In this context, liturgy is both what the people of God do and yet it is all God’s work for the benefit of many. The “thin” sense of liturgy refers to the order, the etiquette, and the ceremonial protocols of public worship, see his *Theologia Prima: What is Liturgical Theology?* Second edition(Chicago and Mundelein, Il: Hillenbrand Books, 2004): 10-12, 110-111, 222, 228. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Don E. Saliers, *Worship as Theology: Foretaste of Glory Divine* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994): 102-103. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Robert F. Taft, “What Does Liturgy Do? Toward a Soteriology of Liturgical Celebration: Some ‘Theses’,” *Beyond East and West: Problems in Liturgical Understanding*. Second revised and enlarged edition (Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute, Edizioni Orientalia Christiana, 1997): 242. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Bill Ashcroft, *Post-Colonial Transformation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001):15. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Saliers, *Worship as Theology*, 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Arjun Appadurai, “Putting Hierarchy in Its Place,” *Cultural Anthropology*, 3:1 (1988):37. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. *Ibid*., 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. I borrow this accurate and helpful expression from Rita Nakashima Brock, “Interstitial Integrity: Reflections Toward an Asian American Woman’s Theology,” in *Introduction to Christian Theology: Contemporary North American Perspectives* (Roger A. Bradham, ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997): 183. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. I am indebted here to Sandra Lubarsky’s notion of “veridical (from *veritas*) pluralism” in the context of interreligious dialogue, which “affirms the idea that there may be real and important differences between traditions” yet goes “beyond the fact of plurality to a judgment about the plural forms that fill the world,” in *Tolerance and Transformation: Jewish Approaches to Religious Pluralism* (Cincinnati: Hebrew University College Press, 1990): 6. Lubarsky’s veridical pluralism advocates inclusive and tolerant openness and coexistence of difference for the sake of truth, not for the sake of decadent and indiscriminate tolerance. Lubarsky employs the concept of non-contradiction asserting the truth, yet insists that various traditions may seem to be in an apparent conflict due to the fact that all religious traditions are but partial and particular truths. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Beyond the literal meaning which I fully intend here, I also underscore the connotations of “survival” in the Bhabhian sense as “a way of living on … not living in seclusion but a living on-ness and a living on the borderlines. Survival, in that sense, is the precariousness of living on the borderline” and it is also “living in the ambivalent movement in between …these seemingly contradictory or incommensurable moments,” see “Surviving Theory: A Conversation with Homi K. Bhabha” by Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks in *The Pre-Occupation of Postcolonial Studies* (Fawzia Afzal-Khan and Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks, eds.; Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000): 373, 379. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. M. Jamie Ferreira, *Transforming Vision: Imagination and Will in Kierkegaardian Faith* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991): 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology*, 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Schwartz, *Sacramental Poetics*, 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Alexander Schmemann, “Worship in a Secular Age,” Appendices, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2000):118-124. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Catherine Pickstock, “Liturgy, Art and Politics,” *Modern Theology* 16:2 (2000): 167. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Henri de Lubac, “The Mystery of the Supernatural,” *Theology in History* (Michael Sales, ed.; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996): 290. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Catherine Pickstock notes that the nominalist assertion of the metaphysical priority of “Being” over both uncreated God and created world conscripts God to be “in the same univocal manner as creatures” distinguished only by the “intensity of being.” While this seems to confer a degree of proximal relation, the result is the opposite as “univocity unmediably separates the creation from God” and the real ontological difference previously permitting creaturely participation in the divine life issues into an undifferentiated distance between the infinite and the finite, a distance which is a quantified abyss. Instead of participation, the relation between God and creation becomes unbridgeable and thus contractual, see Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998): 122-123. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Graham Ward, “The Church as the Erotic Community,” *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context* (Lieven Boeve and Lambert Leijssen, eds.; Leuven, Paris, Sterling: Leuven University Press, 2001): 179. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. *Ibid*., 184. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. *Ibid*., 183. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Pickstock, *After Writing*, 157. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Gavin Hyman, *The Predicament of Postmodern Theology: Radical Orthodoxy or Nihilist Textualism?* (Louisville and London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001): 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Lieven Boeve, “Thinking Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context: A Playground for Theological Renewal,” *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context*, 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Georges de Schrijver, “Experiencing the Sacramental Character of Existence: Transitions from Premodernity to Modernity, Postmodernity, and the Rediscovery of the Cosmos,” trans. Susan Roll, *Questions Liturgiques* 75 (1994): 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. *Ibid*., 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. *Ibid*., 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Georges de Schrijver, “Postmodernity and the Withdrawal of the Divine: A Challenge for Theology,” *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context*, 61. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. *Ibid*., 62. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. *Ibid*., 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Saliers, *Worship as Theology,* 230. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)