**Chapter 3**

**The Counterpoint of Liturgy and Ethics: Rewriting the Paradigmatic Last Chapter Diasporically**

Where does liturgy meet ethics? Where does the ritualized and contemplative space of holy things and holy words meet the grind of routine living amidst geopolitical interests, cultural differentiation, and economic maneuverings? One of the clearest, if visceral, answers to these questions struck me in the form of an embodied, as it were, line out of Dante’s *La divina commedia*, Inferno, Canto 1: *Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita*… Indeed, in the middle of the path of our life! And where did it strike me so unforgettably as it suddenly surfaced from the depths of my memory? It happened in the Caribbean and it happened twice in almost similar situations and locations when some years ago together with my husband we visited St. Michael’s Anglican Cathedral in Bridgetown, Barbados, and then some days later again found ourselves in the Cathedral of St. John in St. John’s, Antigua. The fleeting reminiscences of Dante’s words shot through my mind while I realized that there was yet another theological reason for my enduring attraction to Paolo Veronese’s *Feast in the House of Levi*, originally known as *The Last Supper*. What I saw in both cathedrals was a liturgical space – altar, chancel, vestment, candles, – literally in the middle of the daily paths of people in both cities, who appeared to use the isles of the sanctuaries as walking shortcuts through the city. We were in Bridgetown and St. John’s on workdays. No organized liturgical action was taking place in either cathedral. It was almost as hot inside the cavernous buildings of the colonial era as it was outside. It did not feel like one had entirely left one world and entered an altogether different one as most doors and all windows were open. It was warm and muggy under the old arches. The familiar ecclesiastical smell of beeswax and that omnipresent mixture of spilled wine, mothballs and simply old age of practically everything except the sound system captivatingly mingled with unidentifiable wafts of flowery aromas from the outside. The sounds of human voices, cars, and birds penetrated the hushed church environment from the outside. Oh, the birds! In fact, it was not just their chirping and screeching that poured into the hallowed walls of some old cathedrals in the Caribbean through doors and windows. Another year, we again found ourselves in the Caribbean, this time in the completely deserted – by humans, that is – old Catholic Church in Marigot, St. Martin, at the high noon of an exhaustively hot and cloudless day. There were no local people, no tourists, no staff, just dozens and dozens of pigeons perched all over the church, enveloping the whole sanctuary in a dense and loud concerto of cooing. New pigeons kept flying in through the open windows and doors while others left the same way. Some flew in circles around the altar and back and forth across the nave, the flutter of their wings erupting unpredictably as a cracking coloratura above the incessant *obbligato* of the enthusiastically cooing assemblage of birds. In the muggy air of the sanctuary, amidst the sacred paintings, altar cloths, pews, fluttering pigeon wings, and soft breezes of hot air coming through the open windows, there was something bizarrely pentecostal about the church virtually turned into an aviary. The wind and the birds came and went, and moved around without constraint, without boundaries, palpably there yet not to be captured and pinned down. So did memories, too. This was the most massive and overwhelming pigeon cooing that I had ever heard (outdoors or indoors!) since my childhood in Rīga, Latvia, where pigeons pretty much meant *the* birds for an urban girl and, like it or lump it, were always around. But within the walls of the old Marigot church I did not experience a shade of annoyance at the boisterous flock – there was just the savoring of liturgical space so empty and yet so full of life, so recklessly open to whatever and whoever cared to come or fly in, so much on the threshold of temporalities, histories, and varieties of created life.[[1]](#footnote-1)

In Bridgetown, however, it was far from listening to a bird symphony since occasional virtuoso stretches of live organ music filled the muggy high-vaulted spaces as an organist practiced at St. Michael’s. The sounds and activities commingled in a lusciously contrapuntal way with no clear distinction between outside and inside. People respectfully came in through a side door, passed right in front of the altar, some bowed their heads while walking, some genuflected slightly, some paused for a short moment, some gazed intently toward the altar as if in swift prayer, some seemed to strike up a quiet conversation with others, only to continue their commute moments later by leaving through the other side door or through the main entrance.

Now these Caribbean cathedrals “in action” on an ordinary workday did not exactly resemble the sumptuous proceedings of Veronese’s *Last Supper*, or any festive Eucharist for that matter, yet the spaces and itineraries of mundane human life and liturgy intersected there so palpably and so unpretentiously, and most importantly, without competition. And this was what again brought Veronese’s painting to my mind with its seemingly “inappropriate” assemblage of parrots, dogs, cultural pariahs and ordinary people with bleeding noses, all mixed in among the inner circle of Jesus at the Last Supper. The liturgical space was large enough to accommodate the crisscrossing paths, the comings and goings of the locals, as well as the intermittent presence of tourists. If ordinary life walked in the liturgical space with the locals and tourists and wafted in with aromas, insects and an occasional fluttering bird, then liturgy perhaps also walked out of the cathedrals after those brief pauses and prayers in front of the altar with unassumingly bowed heads and knees. And all of that without much ado and without a feeling that something was being artificially and presumptively set up! With this kind of palpable relation between liturgy and life making relentless apparitions in my memory and mind, I suggest that the relation of liturgy and ethics can be fruitfully heard and then played off each other together as sacramental in that particularly contrapuntal way that unites without division, distinguishes without separation, and relates without hegemony or detraction. When I pondered over this aural, visual, motional, and olfactory counterpoint of the curiously porous liturgical space, I was struck by the realization that my lingering within the experientially fluid walls of the old Caribbean cathedrals, anchored so painfully ambivalently amidst the paradigmatic postcolonial archipelago, had stirred up a spontaneous resonance, rather poignantly and perhaps even somewhat uncannily, with what I previously espoused as a diasporic subjectivity and imaginary. And what else is that, indeed, if not a penetrating and enduring sensibility (including a theoretical sensuality!) of living together what one cannot abstractly reconcile with precision and transparency under the barren hegemony of that aging Occidental demigod of rationality and imagination alike – the idea of dualistic non-contradiction?

1. **Theological Method: A Relationally and Ethically Accountable Mindscape**

But what, indeed, do old Mannerist paintings once in trouble with the Holy Inquisition and some bird-friendly colonial era cathedrals reactivating old childhood memories in the postcolonial Caribbean archipelago have to do with theological method? After all, and with good dose of irony precisely in a postcolonial context, this project is a discourse on method! Is not the preoccupation with method, let alone the “right” method as “Eurocentric” (“the one big fat Greek method”[[2]](#footnote-2)) and as “modern”[[3]](#footnote-3) as it gets? Is not concern for theological method as abstract and as removed from concrete ways of moral life as one can imagine? Even though it may not seem obvious, the answer that can reach beyond the chronic binary opposition of thought (“method!”) and practice (performance), as well as of worship and socially responsible action, is precisely to interrogate theological method as a mindscape of perceiving and conceiving God, the world, and human life. For what is theological method if not the *practiced* habits of reflection, as it ebbs and flows in a deep consanguinity with affections and imagination, on all things in relation to God? In other words, theological method is something that is actually practiced as a habitual style of comportment toward reality as it bodies forth particular theologies of salvation, sin, power, knowledge, relationality, and values. “Method” then is the crystallization of cultural imaginary, the mindscape of the patterns and practices of religious knowing, and finally the axiological structure of culturally and historically embedded organization of knowledge.

The recent emphasis on the “primacy of practice” throughout humanities and social sciences highlights the importance of the deep attitudinal and axiological habits of social conviviality and cross-cultural communication. The spotlight in this context is aimed at the culturally embodied and embedded habits of social interaction rather than some highbrow principles about the good and the true in relation to variously raced, gendered, and classed human persons. In the context of ethics, as Kwame Anthony Appiah contends, the primacy of practice mandates the recognition that “as Faust said, in the beginning is the deed: practices and not principles are what enable us to live together in peace.”[[4]](#footnote-4) However, Appiah also insists that transformative engagements with the experiences and identities of others start with “conversations” – imaginative engagements that may inaugurate perspectival shifts and most importantly, a change in our habits.[[5]](#footnote-5) Most certainly, our habits of imagination and reflection – particularly ethical imagination – do not always seamlessly and necessarily coincide with the lived narratives and experiences of human life. Mercifully, there are times when unjust and oppressive axiologies of virtue and value do not automatically translate into oppressive social relationships. Regretfully, there are also times when admirable moral imaginaries are so devoid of performative efficacy that they indeed remain abstract and “theoretical” in the most sterile and lifeless way. Moreover, such moral imaginaries are most often than not unable or unwilling to acknowledge their internal disavowals and abjections. Ethical imagination alone is not automatically redemptive. Similarly, an ethically inflected theological method does not guarantee an ethically responsible and fruitful discipleship intellectually or socio-politically. Without doubt, it is not the same to imagine and to contemplate justice and liberation and to do justice and liberation – philosophically, politically, economically, or theologically.

Yet the difference between the ethical practices of contemplation and action is not an unbridgeable chasm. For thinking, imagining, and doing justice are *all* practices of justice – versatile, interlaced, and mutually answerable. Hence an ethically inflected interrogation of theological methodology as culturally and historically embedded mindscape, with all the countless personal variations within it, calls into question the habits of imagination and thought precisely as indispensable components of the totality of human life. Contemplation and imagination ought not to be juxtaposed to some “real life” as if the alleged “real” and “practical life” with all its moral dimensions would entail neither reflection nor imagination. Thus the relation between method as a historic-culturally embedded mindscape and imaginary on the one hand, and lived interpersonal conviviality on the other, is neither a perfect harmony nor a necessary and unavoidable discord. What is unavoidable is the very interrelation between the habits of thought and deed. Both are relational practices and both are ethical practices since the field of ethics is the whole of human life throughout its reciprocal intertwinement of reflective and praxeal aspects. According to Kathleen Higgins,

Ethics … is concerned with thought-mediated human behavior. The range of behavior involved extends from action chosen as a result of detailed deliberation to habitual, even ‘mechanical’ behavior, but in all human behavior, thought or attitude plays some causal role. Ethics uses reflective consciousness to influence our behavior. Ethics is also the practice of self-consciously cultivating attitudes and habits, *including habits of thought*.[[6]](#footnote-6)

Theological method as the habitual mindscape of reflection on and imagination of all things in relation to God and as ordered toward God is ethically accountable precisely as the crystallization of sustained, enduring, and recurring practice. It is at this juncture that I emphasize again that a postcolonially colored theoretical sensibility can add a fruitful nuance to the perceptions, critiques, and re-envisagements of modern theological methodology and its whole epistemological imagination. Theological imagination is embedded and embodied in historical beliefs as well as cultural practices. Theological imagination feeds on the mutual intertwinement of beliefs, doctrines, liturgies, cultural, and economic practices. The intertwinement can be harmonious or discordant, but it is intertwinement nevertheless. Recognizing this pivotal intertwinement, among the most widespread perceptions of theological imagination in modernity is the envisagement of the divine transcendence as competitively juxtaposed to the immanence of human freedom as if in an irresolvable oppositionality of the “either/or” logic. To be almighty, the Almighty has to be, as it were, an enemy of the natural, the finite, the fallen, the not-yet-redeemed. It is as if the divine grace cannot redeem unless it rapes the nature into justification and salvation through displacement, dislocation, and detraction. It is as if the relationship of the divine and the human, or more precisely, the uncreated and the created, is gridlocked in an adversarial dialectic of Manichean intensity. The habit of dualistic imagination is not limited to but is particularly thriving during colonial modernity. It continues to influence theological inquiry into the present day. Be it gender dualism or the competitive and hierarchical oppositionality of body and soul, spirit and flesh, private and public, rational and emotional, visual and aural, written and spoken word, worship and socio-economic life, – the dualistic rationalities and imaginaries privilege the logic of “either/or” in all of these contexts.

Now to ascribe such an inherently competitive stance to the whole of the modern Western theological imaginary would be, of course, an exaggeration and misrepresentation. There are internal dissentions and critiques of the dualism, to be sure. Yet, widespread modern envisagements of the relationality between a transcendent God and the created world as a dualistic zero-sum competitive construct[[7]](#footnote-7) signal a tremendously unproductive perception of relationality. What dualistic and competitive perception of relationality entails is a notion of divine identity and agency that operates out of its absolute sovereignty through arbitrary (presumably benevolent and salvific) fiats of displacement, clearing off space, and absorption without residue. The divine agency emerges as competitive and, in order to establish an allegedly sustainable and harmonious conviviality, subsumes human otherness, freedom, agency, and empowerment to purify the deficiencies ingrained in the human condition. What obtains here is a monochromatic dialectic of the presence and absence, plenitude and deficiency, holiness and depravity. How difference is perceived and tackled has never been an easy question. How relation is perceived and struggled with has never been an easy question for the Western cultural milieu since the ancient Greeks. As the African theologian Anthony Balcomb has observed, the paradigmatic Western preference for disengagement, which then predictably problematizes and marginalizes relationality, spans across the broadest terrains of life as “disengagement of time from space, individual from society, the spiritual from the material, and the personal from the cosmic.”[[8]](#footnote-8) When disengagement and disenchantment are installed as epistemological necessities – as they were during Western modernity according to Balcomb[[9]](#footnote-9) – then the apogee of Western proclivity to a non-participating epistemology is effectively reached. But it is also important to notice the particular *modern* twist to this trajectory of alienation and disengagement. As Kathryn Tanner argues, in the broader context of Western modernity and its theological creativity, the modern epistemological and ontological imagination is distinguished by “the degree to which difference takes on the character of mutual exclusivity.”[[10]](#footnote-10)

Theological imagination that feels at home among dualistic juxtapositions resonates rather forcefully with the dialectics of displacement. In order to safeguard the purity and autonomy of (modern) sovereign subjectivity – divine or human, individual or corporate – difference is perceived as being in need of such intensification which requires the depotentiation of any presumable human competitor. In such circumstances, difference is perceived via gestures of dualistic, even Manichean, detraction. It is nurtured by an “either/or” kind of logic of displacement, which routinely reifies difference competitively and issues in proliferation of unrelational and hierarchically tilted binaries such as spirit/body, black/white, male/female, ethic/aesthetic, private/public, civilized/barbaric, West/non-West, vision/sound, autonomy/subjection, activity/passivity, and also liturgy/ethics and so forth.

Theological imagination cannot be detached from philosophical, social, and political imagination. Ethical responsibility goes together hand in hand with embodied actions and sincerely held convictions in philosophical and political space, but so do religious beliefs and habits of theological imagination as well. It is from this perspective that the interrogation of the dualistic and competitive relation between the divine and the worldly obtains a particular axiological significance in the postcolonial context. In this context the ethical accountability of even the loftiest cognitive and affective envisagements cannot escape being evaluated particularly doggedly in terms of their impact upon the historical materialities of suffering and injustice. Theologically (in)formed conceptions, sentiments, and habits are not incarcerated in segregated “sacred” or scholarly spaces, as the modern fiction of neatly separated spheres of “the sacred” and “the secular” aspired to inculcate. Rather, they naturally can, should, and do leak into a multitude of terrains of human life. Therein reside their transformative as well as their harmful potentialities.

The problematic consonance between theological envisagements and colonial cosmologies of power and meaning is not limited to the unholy “synergy of Christ, commerce and conquest” on a purely economic or socio-historical plane. It reaches deeper than that. William Placher judiciously observes (while also typically for a mainstream Western theologian failing to mention the colonial and imperialistic underpinnings involved) that modernity

… was a world of terrible injustice and violence, and some aspects of its theology both reflected and even contributed to those horrors. Christian theologians supported oppressive social structures and all sorts of bigotry; the male bias of the tradition is only one of its most obvious faults.[[11]](#footnote-11)

As accurate as such an acknowledgment is, what is in need of emphasizing is the role of binaristic epistemological imagination, so prominent during the colonial modernity, in the enmeshment of those allegedly “abstract” or “theoretical” mindscapes with the popular ideologies and policies of colonialism and imperialism. The historic-cultural configuration of rationality and imagination that routinely prefers dichotomous allocations that rapidly spiral into reciprocal exclusivity, is underwritten by a whole sensibility of detraction that perceives difference through the dialectic of competitive displacement throughout modern theological imagination. Is is then a mere coincidence that modern colonial imaginaries and ideologies often conceive of cultural, racial, religious and ethnic difference in similarly allergic terms, reminiscent of preemptive animosity as the habitual order of relationality? As Placher’s theological analysis accurately suggested, the impact of these seismic cultural shifts facilitated the emerging perception of theology as the enemy of science, of the divine grace as the enemy of human freedom, and finally, of God as the enemy of transformative justice.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Here, then, is the crux of the whole issue of the unholy “synergy of Christ, commerce, and conquest” in relation to theological method: namely, theological imagination cannot be detached from moral, philosophical, social, and political imagination. The dominant modern theological imaginary of relational interface between God and world, or the whole relational ontology as dualistic and competitive uncannily resonates with the practices of the modern colonial “Western spectacle.”[[13]](#footnote-13) The greatest concern is about the influential amalgam of cultural, philosophical, and theological imagination that is implicated in the formation and justification of arrogant hegemony, competitiveness and coercion as allegedly workable models of relation – between God and the world as well as among human persons, societies, races, genders, classes, and cultures. Juan Louis Segundo’s old liberationist adage still expresses the problem in a nutshell as uncomfortably as it sounded decades ago: “Our falsified and inauthentic ways of dealing with our fellow men are allied to our falsification of the idea of God. Our unjust society and our perverted idea of God are in close and terrible alliance.”[[14]](#footnote-14)

But what is really at stake here is not just academic nomenclature and its turf wars, but the role of theological discourse as the enabler and sanctifier of a detrimental view of socio-political reality. If theological imagination – textual, visual, aural, verbal, olfactory, tactile and degustatory – is instrumental for the formation of affective and intellectual dispositions exercised in the socio-political arena far beyond breviaries and catechisms then it does matter what kind of relation is envisaged to convey the fundamental God-world relationality. When jealous competition and animosity is already inscribed in the most fundamental perceptions of relation between God and the world in the modern colonial theological imaginary, it enables the proliferation of such models of relation across the multitude of social and political relations within our common planetary life. The integrity, freedom and full self-realization of one party is envisioned as jeopardized by the integrity, freedom and full self-realization of another as they carve out space for themselves in the arena of ceaseless competition. The power of one presupposes the powerlessness of the other as if to be oneself means to perceive the other as a potential enemy, or competitor to say the least. But powerlessness, as Achille Mbembe notes, is a conduit of violence, at least in this palpably unredeemed dispensation that we presently inhabit: “For it is precisely the situations of powerlessness that are the situations of violence *par excellence*.”[[15]](#footnote-15)

Where do we go from here? The epoch of postcoloniality – being so many different things to so many different people – is not the milieu of pure resolutions, simple syntheses, and returns to fabricated “golden ages” of uncomplicated reconciliation. In the long posteriority of colonialism, the conundrum of relational difference endures.[[16]](#footnote-16) Yet, to indict the enmeshment of the Western modern Christian theological imaginary – itself an amalgam of the Greek, Jewish and certain indigenous European religious, intellectual, and socio-linguistic traditions – with the colonial “Western spectacle” is not to demand a complete *damnatio memoriae* of the Western Christian theological creativity. The answer here cannot be not so naïve. Moreover, no historical era and no culture are totally and preemptively beyond redemption. The intricacies of non-hegemonic and non-coercive living with otherness are not uniquely Western or exclusively modern problems. Nevertheless, what is somberly captivating for theological inquiry is the degree of uncannily intimate entanglement of epistemological imagination, socio-political action, and theological tradition throughout modernity that has been producing countless real victims and immense real suffering across the globe. And all of that happened because, theologically speaking, the problem of the “I” of others includes, or may have even originated with, the problem of the “I” of the Almighty Other – in a most tragic way.

Theological method as reflective and imaginative mindscape and habit *in actu* – as a practice – no longer can be perceived as ethically anything less than intrinsically intertwined with and inexcusably accountable before the existential actualities of human life and, above all, human suffering. Precisely as an intellectual and imaginative practice, despite the illusions of professional detachment, theological method matters since for “intellectuals … morality starts with their activity in this secular world of ours.”[[17]](#footnote-17) Pondering over how we reason, intuit, enact, and imagine all things in relation to God is that very intellectual practice which at this moment in history cannot do otherwise but submit itself to the ethical authority of what Edward Said called the “main issue for the intellectual today, which is human suffering.”[[18]](#footnote-18) Hence, “indeed the intellectual vocation essentially is somehow to alleviate human suffering...”[[19]](#footnote-19) So the way forward methodologically seems to lead through the modulation of the rationale of binarity into a peregrination toward an imaginary of relationality where there is a “place for all in the *rendezvous* of victory” (Aimé Cesaire).

1. **Sacrament as a Template of Relationality: Hybrid, Contrapuntal, Ethical**

The more I looked into the Western modern theological history the more it fascinated me how liturgical theology offers a particularly striking example of how the rationale of binarity functions in both formal and material sense. The routine disengagement between liturgy and ethics has lead to the situation where the emphasis on one almost by default is perceived as detracting from the significance, autonomy and integrity of the other. Precisely as an issue of theological method, this disengagement reflects the impoverishing Occidental dualistic logic of “either/or” in a glaringly notorious brevity.

The Occidental cultural imaginary has consistently gravitated toward dualisms in its theories and practices despite sporadic internal critiques and contestations of such inclinations. Among these critiques, sacramental discourse has been pivotal in calling into question and subverting the rationale of binarity, especially during the modern period. Additionally, sacramental discourse has been no less pivotal in modulating certain prominent strands of the Greek cultural imaginary of late antiquity into what is today known as the “Eastern/Greek/Slavic Christianity/Orthodoxy,” resulting in Eastern Orthodoxy’s striking divergence from the Occidental dualistic proclivities. In this context, I share the ambivalence expressed by Kevin Vanhoozer in his reflections on the “one big fat Greek method” in the present era of global and postcolonial Christianity regarding the accuracy of identification of the Occidental theological thought as “Greek.”[[20]](#footnote-20) “Greek” thought is not simply geo-culturally “Western,” despite its dominant influence in the Euro-Atlantic cultural orbit. On the other hand, ancient Greek cultural imaginary has also not been seamlessly blended with the all the minute aspects of the internally versatile Eastern Christianity. All the geo-cultural and historical intricacies notwithstanding, as my engagement with the thought of Alexander Schmemann and others in this project has shown, Eastern Orthodox epistemological imagination profoundly upsets the central methodological certainties and inertias of the Occidental theological discourse, especially in their modern inscriptions and through their dependence on precisely those elements of the ancient Greek thought that are most dualistic. In the Eastern Christian tradition, the Greek legacy has been transmuted into a theological imaginary that privileges the principle of “both/and” in Christology, soteriology, and eschatology, thus effectively vectoring all of these branches of theology toward the mode of sacramental reasoning. Arguably, therein resides Eastern Orthodoxy’s most creative promise – which has not yet come to fruition in either the “East” or the “West” – constructive Christian theology at the present moment. On the other hand, while the Occidental sacramental theology has indeed preserved the most subversive potential vis-à-vis dualism it also undoubtedly has a rather ambivalent relation to the Greek legacy as far as dualism is concerned. Thus, Susan Ross rightly points out that even “sacramental theology has inherited and absorbed the classical dualisms of western thought (our legacy from the Greeks) by seeing them as based in nature and, by extension, in the will of God.”[[21]](#footnote-21)

What could sacramentality as an imaginary of relationality bring to the methodological modulation of the contemporary Occident theological inquiry away from the rationale of binarity in the present era of the convoluted postcolonial globality? The Eucharist, to underscore once again, is the mystery of a non-hegemonic and non-coercive union. It is the paradigmatically fecund sign of life-giving and life-affirming impurity of “both” and “and” rather than “either/or.” The sacrament denotes the mystery of simultaneously perceiving, living, thinking, feeling, tasting, and acting out the divine transcendence and worldly immanence alike as irrevocably related across the interface of sacramentality which itself is the locus and fruit of the incarnation. The Eucharist transforms this world through a contrapuntal or palimpsestic plenitude rather than from an austere and transparent simplicity. Sacrament as liturgy and liturgy as sacrament is always more than purely one thing in their “many-sided glories.”[[22]](#footnote-22) Thus it is merely fitting that the Eucharist has many names, many agencies, many effects, and many temporal inscriptions simultaneously. This multiplicity of relations, agencies, and identities might appear messy and frustrating, as all sacramental discourse usually does. But the world as we know it is messy and frustrating in its density of relations, and precisely as such is found fitting by God to be the natural habitat of sacramentality. Most importantly, as the paradigmatic theological dictum on the simultaneous multiplicity of sacramental relations by John of Damascus in *De Fide Orthodoxa* suggests, the union of human person with Christ in the Eucharist is concurrently and non-competitively also a union with all other human beings partaking of the Eucharist.

Communion, too, is spoken of, and it 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 this union is effected voluntarily and not against our inclination. *For we are one body because we partake of the one bread*, as the divine Apostle says (1.Cor. 10:17).[[23]](#footnote-23)

Damascene’s words may well be the most famous on the subject. Yet they hold together a whole tradition of eucharistic imagination wherein multiple unions overlap and intertwine in a dazzling hybridity: the union of bread and wine with Christ’s glorified body, the union of individual participant of the Eucharist with Christ’s body, the union of Christ’s sacramental body with ecclesial body, the union of all participants of the Eucharist with one another in and through Christ and all of that through the work and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. If this is not a problematization of the rationale of enclosed boundaries and dualism as this problematization typically obtains in sacrament – a certain hybridity! – it is hard to imagine what then could be! The Eucharist as the prototypical mystery of relationality underwrites the template of ethical relationality in which identity and difference cohabit in an apparently impossible simultaneity. This pattern of ethical relationality – without detraction, coercion, annihilation – is disseminated through entanglement, opaque transparencies, fluid interactions, asymmetrical give-and-takes, with beauty and utility intermingled – as in the lived tensions of routine living, at least for those of us who are “not purely one thing.”

With regard the modern Western theological ethos of disengagement, the template of sacramental relationality provides a fruitful avenue to modulate its dualistic habits “in consonance with the Eucharist” (Irenaeus of Lyons) and thus, I submit, without competition, without hegemony, without coercion. Pivotal here is the linkage of divine-human and inter-human relationality. *Theologia* (sacramentality) prefigures *oikonomia* (ethics) in the sense that the eucharistic relationality can maintain its performative efficacy and integrity only if it is ecstatically and synergistically transferred into the terrain of human relationships. The sacramental prefigures the ethical yet the ethical safeguards the sacramental. The methodological *raison d’être* of the Eucharist is to be a way of life, a way of relation, a way of signification, a way of rationality, a way of imagination – a way of *imitatio Christi*, i.e., a humanly conditioned participatory performance of *opus Dei* potentially across all the terrains of human life. Hence, the sacramental relationality can be fruitfully perceived as the template of all ethical relationality.

Above all, the sacramental is the ethical as the distinct pattern, or the quiddity, or the *how*-ness, of relationality from the Trinity all the way into the existential actualities of the liturgies of praise, lament, service, and justice as their many-sided glories are lived out in this world of the cultures, politics, and economics. Sacramentality is a multipolar and polyvocal constellation of relationality wherein identities, relations, agencies, empowerments cohabit and interact asymmetrically and symmetrically, yet always reciprocally. Reciprocity is the key to the relational intertwinement of the sacramental and the ethical. A certain tension here is possible, indeed inescapable, yet tension is not the sole *desideratum* of this relationality and neither is it the sole reliable assurance against idolatry and against the negligence toward human suffering as the condition of all truth. All that said, sacramentality as a configuration of relationality is consummately ethical only in an eschatological sense, only as “already” divinely inaugurated through the sacraments as embodied relational events, “but not yet” realized in all the existential actualities of this world. Nevertheless, with due eschatological reserve, a sacramentally scored methodological imagination bears the potential of rekindling a re-engagement of liturgy and social ethics as reciprocally responsive and responsible. Re-engaged, they can sound together, “in consonance with the Eucharist,” to nudge theological imagination to peregrinate beyond reductive disengagements, dualistic gridlocks, and the perennially seductive pull of simple reversals. From such a perspective, how, to choose the seemingly most contrastive comparison, would a Schmemanian larger than life liturgy sound together with a Levinasian larger than life ethics without mutually allergic suspicion?

1. **Liturgy and Ethics in Sacramental Counterpoint: Beyond Aestheticized Oblivion and Liturgical Pelagianism**

The relation between liturgy and ethics as a methodological question concerns itself with what Don Saliers so aptly has called the “internal, conceptual link between liturgy and ethics.”[[24]](#footnote-24) Saliers clearly indicates what is at stake here: the linkage “is not causal and extrinsic, but conceptual and intrinsic. Our problem is how to articulate this without doing injustice to the complexity of other relationships between liturgy and ethics…”[[25]](#footnote-25) Of course, the dominant solution to the habitual disengagement between liturgy and ethics has been precisely to attempt re-engaging them as two distinct and mutually extrinsic discourses with all the accompanying perils of dualistic and competitive juxtaposition. As Western modernity marched on, the competitive juxtaposition (Part 1, Ch. 1) between liturgy (worship) and ethics (life) reflected the paramount tendency toward binarism and fragmentation of reality, of which colonialism with its racial and religious policies is the most sinister expression. In their dealings with this gridlock, some theologians have found peace by conceiving liturgy as an individualistic retreat-like province of the “aesthetic” order that can resist or at least navigate within (post)modern fragmentation, alienation, instrumentalization, disenchantment and reductive techno-science, and still offer an alternative for a certain wholeness of life and thought. The greatest merit of this approach is the rehabilitation of the “aesthetic” – but often painfully narrowly understood – as an order of knowledge and action hitherto adiaphorized in Western modernity. The other avenue of (post)modern tackling of the gridlock is to dialectically – romantically? – insist on the necessity of unrelenting and uncomfortable tension (Louis-Marie Chauvet and others) between liturgy and ethics to dramatize the constant oscillation (Geoffrey Wainwright) between them. Others have suggested (while steering clear of ontological language in this allegedly post-metaphysical era) that liturgy is an *ordo* signifying and revealing a whole eucharistic economy, conceived in terms of tension-sustaining juxtapositions of liturgical actions and symbols (Gordon Lathrop). The goal of these theological visions is to remedy the modern adiaphorization of both liturgy and ethics in theology and to respond at once penitently and creatively to the ethical conundrums of North Euro-Atlantic postmodernity with its terrifying memories of the Holocaust.

The rightly unacceptable reduction of liturgy to ethics (or vice versa) remains the perennial obstacle only when ethics and aesthetics, as well as contemplation and praxis, among many other things, remain gridlocked in the outlook of competitive fragmentation of reality and the economy of salvation. For example, in his recent elaborations on the ecumenical significance of the Eucharist and, specifically, on the possibility of a Niebuhrian eucharistic transformation of culture, George Hunsinger advocates for the importance of eucharistic ethics as the foundation of peace and justice. Yet he nevertheless feels compelled to distance himself from the “instrumentalist” pitfall. This pitfall, as Hunsinger succinctly states the concern shared by so many theologians, consists in liturgy, as it is idolatrously

…being portrayed as the means to an end. The eucharist is depicted as a ‘source’ or ‘influence’ that has (or ought to have) beneficial social consequences. Social ethics becomes the overriding goal to which the eucharist is subordinate. Human agency and and social influences end up dominating the discussion, with Christ being relegated to the shadows. Though Christ’s eucharistic “presence” is never denied, his unique saving work gets short shrift, and the eucharist is not valued as an end in itself.[[26]](#footnote-26)

Beyond doubt, reductive instrumentalism of any kind is the last thing that Christian theological creativity at this time in history needs. Yet the problem of “instrumentalism” or “liturgical Pelagianism” as stated here again only succeeds in restating the habitual dualism of Western modernity. The binaristic disengagement between liturgy and ethics cannot be modulated into something theologically, epistemologically, and ethically fruitful by engaging in a mutually exclusive fight for either liturgy or ethics to occupy the first chapter of liturgical theology with the loser inevitably relegated to the last. Such a fight is ultimately uninteresting and practically useless for the life of faith. Now the (artificial) boundary between an allegedly purely non-utilitarian conception of sacramental liturgy and allegedly utilitarian/instrumentalist liturgy can be re-envisaged as rather porous if liturgy is seen in a Schmemannian way as the epiphany of sacramentality.

To to put it bluntly, a Schmemannian liturgy can not only coexist peacefully with a Levinasian ethics, but, indeed, it requires nothing less than a Levinasian ethics to be faithful to itself and to its own *theological* integrity. Why and how?

Schmemann insists on the sacramental relationality as a dually vectored relationality. Sacramentality – which is performed and embodied in liturgy – is “the only possible holding together – in one moment, in one act – of the whole truth about God and man.”[[27]](#footnote-27) Liturgy as enacted sacramental relationality is the mediating interface of God’s salvific transfiguration of the whole creation. Liturgy is concurrently the glorification of God in praise and thanksgiving as it also is the transfiguration of the created reality toward salvation and deification. There is no contradiction, conflict, or competition between these objectives. Sacrament and liturgy are a passage, transformation, transition toward eschatological transformation for Schmemann.[[28]](#footnote-28) At the beginning of this transformation, through the sacrament of baptism, the whole human life is transformed into liturgy, passing beyond

the pseudo-Christian opposition of the ‘spiritual’ and the ‘material’, the ‘sacred’ and the ‘profane’, the ‘religious’ and the ‘secular’ is denounced, abolished, and revealed as a monstrous lie about God and man and the world. The only true temple of God is man and through man the world. Each ounce of matter belongs to God and is to find in God its fulfillment. Each instant of time is God’s time and is to fulfill itself as God’s eternity. Nothing is ‘neutral’.[[29]](#footnote-29)

Participation in liturgy is a transformative participation in the work of Christ wherein the eucharistic life of thanksgiving, service, and sacrifice is “constantly transformed into the *liturgy* – the *work* of Christ.”[[30]](#footnote-30) Through liturgy human life has the potential and vocation to become “the sacramental sign.”[[31]](#footnote-31) As Schmemann sees it, liturgy is the conduit or interface of transfigurative sanctification, or *theosis*, precisely as “the slow transformation of the old Adam in us into a new one;” it is “the slow victory over the demonic powers of the cosmos, the ‘joy and peace’ which *hic et nunc* make us partakers of the Kingdom and of life eternal.”[[32]](#footnote-32)

Even though Schmemann does not (very regrettably) venture in this direction, relying on his cosmic liturgical imaginary both liturgy and ethics can conceived of as playing off one another with only a provisional shadow or privilege similarly to how musical voices can play off one another independently and yet interdependently. Especially from a diasporic point of view, there is no high drama or heresy involved in experiencing liturgy as Janus-faced: namely, as rites of praise, prayer, proclamation, and thanksgiving, but also as a participatory performance of *opus Dei* through human *opera* as far as these *opera* participate consonantly in the cosmic sacrament of redemption. Obviously, this imaginary of liturgy goes far beyond confining liturgy to the textually canonized rituals of public worship as I already suggested in Part I, Ch.1. It refers to liturgy as the effective and celebratory way of performing sacramental relationality among God, Christian convocations of discipleship, all human persons, and the whole creation. Of course, the Eucharist remains the source and summit of all liturgy and all rites of individual and collective worship. But liturgy is, above all, what God does in and for the salvation. As such it is *opus Dei* yet it is a participatory *opus*, or as Robert Taft has put it, “liturgy is the saving deeds of God in the actions of those men and women who would live in him.”[[33]](#footnote-33)

Liturgy writ large – as the performance of sacramental relationality – from a Schmemannian perspective describes the process whereby the whole human life is transformed into liturgy, passing beyond, as Schmemann so stubbornly maintained, “the pseudo-Christian opposition of the ‘spiritual’ and the ‘material’, the ‘sacred’ and the ‘profane’, the ‘religious’ and the ‘secular’.”[[34]](#footnote-34) Such a dualism amounts to a “monstrous lie about God and man and the world” because in this worldly reality “nothing is ‘neutral’.”[[35]](#footnote-35) If liturgy indeed conceives and reveals all material creation as the sign and means of the divine presence and love, and if the purpose of this liturgy is to sweep the wholeness of human and planetary life into the rhythm and scope of the triune *opus Dei*, then to remain true to its self-acknowledged vocation such a liturgy cannot avoid entanglement in the whole work of Christ. The work of Christ in which, according to a Schmemannian view, Christians are called to be God’s co-workers undoubtedly stretches beyond ritual gestures and chronotopes into the world of routine suffering perpetuated by systemic injustice, poverty, imperialism, racism, sexism, obsessive violence and all the other myriad ways of evil that humans are mightily capable of bestowing upon each other. The incarnation and sacramentality as its locus and accomplishment reveals most fundamentally the disposition of “trust in the power of the divine to work through failing flesh.”[[36]](#footnote-36) The work of Christ as sacramental transfiguration is not exhausted by strictly ritual or textual gestures of eucharistic signification. The work of Christ, precisely if it entails our human participation in it as in “one all-embracing eucharist” in which we are called to perform the priestly function within the economy of “this cosmic sacrament,”[[37]](#footnote-37) obviously demands the commitment to participate in the redemptive transformation of the deepest and most minute interstices of the material creation. Eucharistic worship of the convocations of discipleship takes place in the mutually liminal spaces of liturgy and “liturgy after liturgy” if and when they intertwine to the point of fecund and delightful confusion. Both perform, in different yet contrapuntally consonant keys, the same *Leitmotif* of sacramental relationality. The “higher,” theologically speaking, the understanding of liturgy as cosmic and transformational, the heavier and more audacious is its burden of ethical responsibility to embody the sacramental relationality in as many minute acts, thoughts, relationships, and decisions of routine living as possible for a fallen human nature nevertheless suspended in grace. The “higher” the liturgical imaginary in which nothing is “neutral” or theologically irrelevant, the more explicit is the obligation to admit being suspended in the sacramental analogy of relating to human others and the whole creation similarly to the way of relating to Christ. Precisely because, as the matter endowed to be a sign and a medium of sacramental relationality, the whole creation down to its most worldly and minute social and political relationships matters and matters more imperatively for this kind of theological imaginary than many others.

In this sense and in this context, Emmanuel Levinas’ dictum that “the vision of God is a moral act”[[38]](#footnote-38) not only does not clash with the perception of liturgy as participation in the salvific *opus Dei* and as participation in the one, all-embracing cosmic sacrament, but rather resonates with it in a most innate way. The liturgy for which nothing in the realm of the created world is “neutral” cannot, if it aspires to remain at least reasonably faithful to its own theological height, function as a “liturgy” that accommodates a self-designed transcendence of escape from ethical responsibility into aestheticism or rigid doctrinal purity as protocols of choice against idolatry. In a sacramental theological imaginary of “both/and,” Levinas’ insistence that “the ethical order does not prepare us for the Divinity; it is the very accession to the Divinity”[[39]](#footnote-39) only highlights, from a perspective of a relative outsider, the inherent social and political consequences of liturgy. It does not detract from liturgy, but rather elaborates the sacramental relationality between praise and service within liturgy. For what is service under the auspices of *opus Dei* if not praise viewed from a parallax position? The ethical conversion or translation of praise and thanksgiving from the “academism of the spiritual”[[40]](#footnote-40) within the “amorous dialogue”[[41]](#footnote-41) beyond the reduced interiority of ritual into the healing work of the whole sacramental economy of salvation is precisely what happens in liturgy as one, all-embracing sacrament – if indeed, nothing is sacramentally “neutral.” Ethics as the vision of God, not its mere corollary, does not need to, theologically speaking – *pace* Levinas – enforce the binaristic gridlock vis-à-vis liturgy if liturgy is understood as the performance or enactment of the sacramental relationality between God, humanity, and the whole creation. Sacramental relationality, as I argued above, is an ethical relationality. Liturgy as sacramental relationality *in actu* – and this is most definitely not Levinas’ deservedly blasted “liturgical enthusiasm” of amorous ritual hothouse – is what Levinas’ “religion” is all about – the multipolar interface of relations. Levinas wrote about religion “before being a confession” as “the very pulsation of life in which God enters into a relationship with Man, and Man with the World.”[[42]](#footnote-42) Now liturgy as exposed here and Levinas’ intrinsically relational ontology of religion as “determined by the exact range of the ethical”[[43]](#footnote-43) resonate more harmoniously than it might appear from the first rhetorical glance. The range of praise is the range of service if both are conceived of as interlaced in a sacramental counterpoint – without detraction, coercion, or competition. They play off each other and sound together to perform in contrapuntal synergy the eschatologically vectored concert and order of the only non-idolatrous doxology that is soundly incarnationally possible: the doxology of right relationality in which every relation in this interdependent world counts as eligible for non-neutrality, from high altars to detention centers, and from suburban bedrooms to nuclear submarine fleets. The doxology of right relationality cannot be otherwise than synergistically contrapuntal in its quiddity. Namely, the triune God is faithfully praised only when the spiritual reciprocity and circularity obtains of both adoration and service. Thus the range of the ethical is the range of the socially and politically incarnated components of *theosis* and thus, of liturgy as its vehicle.

Most certainly, this kind of liturgy is a work. It is the work of God *par excellence* in the asymmetrical reciprocity with the synergistic work of God’s people. It is indeed a work conceived radically, as Levinas would put. But more needs to be said here. Levinas’ inexhaustible suspicion toward what he called the “aesthetic” or “poetic” depravity of egoistic inwardness of Christian liturgy, deserved as it is, only exacerbates the rationale of binarity as it empties liturgy of the aesthetical, the ritual, the tactile, and the interpersonally reciprocal in his idea of human subjectivity as an ethical hostage. Levinas’ drama of ethical reversals and Kantian ideas of self-denying disinterestedness do not preclude his notion of liturgy to be useful in less de-aestheticized milieu, however. Thus, the concerns about aesthetically anorexic liturgy notwithstanding, the core notion of liturgy as the gratuitous movement of radically conceived work toward the O/other within the order of an eschatology that is not an egoistically profitable teleology suggests the hybridity of agencies and objectives of liturgy.[[44]](#footnote-44) Levinas suggests that “liturgy, as an absolutely patient action (*action absolument patiente)*, does not take its place as a cult alongside of works and of ethics. It is ethics itself (*elle est l’éthique même*.)”[[45]](#footnote-45) What is fascinating here is the idea that liturgy can coincide and overlap with ethics to the point of productive confusion or indiscretion that does not require extrinsic and accidental re-linking of two previously disjointed orders of agency and motivation. This liturgy, a hybrid of agencies and objectives, specifies the broader theological axiom that “there can be no ‘knowledge’ of God separated from the relationship with men.”[[46]](#footnote-46) The eschatological hope of this liturgy, it seems, escapes the Christian – according to Levinas’ judgment – simultaneous predicament of overestimating or underestimating

…the weight of the reality which it wants to improve. It overestimates it because it sees in it a total resistance to human action. The relationships that man entertains with himself and his neighbors seem to him fixed, unalterable, eternal. He underestimates it, for he hopes that a miraculous intervention on the part of divinity will transfigure this brutal weight.[[47]](#footnote-47)

The methodological question about the “conceptual”relation between liturgy and ethics, especially within the contrapuntal synergy of Schmemanian and Levinasian visions, grapples with a greater reality than tension alone. Indeed, must unrelenting tension always be the paradigmatic envisagement of ethically fruitful relationality? Could tension, seen as the premier dialectic figurality with all its modern and romantic allusions of drama and struggle, be a transformatively constructive – not just descriptive – envisagement of relationality that yields performative efficacy within precisely those overwhelming lived tensions of existential actualities among which so many people are already forced to live? Is tension not too “sublime”[[48]](#footnote-48) a value in the present planetary lifeworld of already exhausting tensions across the intersections of postcoloniality, imperialism, economic inequities, religio-cultural fundamentalisms, global migrancy, and environmental dangers to name just a few? Is the surest way to avoid idolatry or at least decadence[[49]](#footnote-49) – in this case, the particular idolatry through absorbing worship of the triune God in ethics or through absorbing ethics in worship and thus perverting both by promoting one while the other falls into oblivion – by installing tension as the methodological *desideratum*?

There are other avenues for theological creativity that gesture beyond mere reversals and beyond uninteresting competitive juxtapositions. A theologically appropriated hybridity here suggests a “conceptual” relation in which identities and boundaries do not disappear yet are worked into a laborious stretch of overlapping and intertwining in search of a curative and then also a thriving consonance – without being absorbed in a hegemonic monophony of the strongest. The fruits of such laborious stretch again frustrate the desire for purity and offer instead the same copious entanglements as sacraments do: identities are unsettled but not dissolved; the motion of transformation proceeds by unceasing *crescendo/diminuendo* without the jerky extremism of controlling *fff* vis-à-vis a totally depleted *ppp*. Sacramentality as ethical relationality *in actu*, i.e., liturgy, can be mobilized as the most powerful imaginary and practice of faith which simultaneously sustains the communion with God and fellow human persons for re-conceptions of theological method as well as particular applied theological narratives. Sacramental relationality with God can obtain only if and when it is fully materialized, namely, if and when it enables and nurtures a contrapuntal reconciliation and cohabitation among human others in all areas of life together – in the ever present dimension of social relations or politics. Ethics, as far as it is a particular quiddity of relationality, does not merely indwell an isolated realm of cultivating private pious interiority; it is always and already social and political. It makes all spheres of life, the human life in its entirety, into a borderzone of the private and the public and of the sacred and the secular. This borderzone entails the most intricate intersections of the public and the personal, and the life of faith intersects all of them. But what is the public if not the very ontological terrain of social relationality which “signifies the world itself, in so far as it is common to all of us and distinguished from our privately owned place in it” and “where people are with others and neither for nor against them – that is, in sheer human togetherness?”[[50]](#footnote-50) The political arena itself, following Hannah Arendt, is then nothing more or less than “the sphere where I am always together with others.”[[51]](#footnote-51) Theologically speaking, the pragmatics of everyday social life participate in the same sacramental interface of relationality that liturgy does – or at least it could and should. Otherwise the Eucharist remains a fetishized dogmatic principle and the pinnacle of ritualistic aestheticism begging, as it were, its own adiaphorization. Theologically speaking, to relate to God in one way and to relate to God’s creation in a way that does not analogically and vicariously perform the very sacramental relationality with God is to undermine the whole economy of salvation. It is to pervert the pivotal sacramental relationality by alienating compartmentalization of the relational interdependence in the economy of incarnation and salvation. Of course, it is a chronic temptation as old as Christianity itself as Paul’s indignation about the eucharistic liturgical practice in Corinth testifies (1. Cor.11). Without doubt, such a compartmentalization accommodates particularly well the modern Western proclivity toward rampantly individualistic piety within the larger context of its embodied and politically enacted confrontational dualism between the public and the private as well as the sacred and the secular. Some see in this the core deficiency of the Western Christianity, still very much gravitating in the orbit of its modernity. Katharine Jefferts Schori recently called it “the great Western heresy” – the habitual assumption

that we can be saved as individuals, that any of us alone can be in right relationship with God.  It’s caricatured in some quarters by insisting that salvation depends on reciting a specific verbal formula about Jesus.  That individualist focus is a form of idolatry, for it puts me and my words in the place that only God can occupy, at the center of existence, as the ground of being.[[52]](#footnote-52)

While not entirely limited to the Western modernity and its imaginative habits of enclosure and passion for boundaries, the compartmentalization of the human reality has been a fertile ground for what Nikolai Berdyaev called the “minimalist religious ethics of transcendent egoism” and “the aristocracy of salvation.” This concern explicitly resonates with Emmanuel Levinas’ (see Part II, Ch.2) indignation about the oblivious *Schwärmerei* of privatized liturgical piety and, of course, with Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s way too belatedly recognized insights about theological and liturgical imperatives of ethics. For Berdyaev, the minimalist ethics of transcendent egoism

…calls human person to comfortably find their place alongside the misfortune of others in the world, it rejects the universal responsibility of all concerning all, it rejects the unity of the created world, the unity of the cosmos. In the spiritual world there is no such thing as an enclosed and separated personality. The ethics of personal salvation leads to the distortion and perversion of the idea of paradise and the Kingdom of God.[[53]](#footnote-53)

This line of argument unmistakably resonates with Damascene’s famous adage. To highlight the intrinsic and irrevocable intertwinement of these two simultaneous relationalities, divine and human, as sacramental first of all amounts to recognizing the theological deficiency of all liturgical discourses that produce the illusion of adequacy and even staunch doctrinal orthodoxy by keeping themselves insulated in a voyeuristic praise and thus detached from what really matters amidst the lived tensions of life. Namely, what matters is the salvation of *this* world and all the politically, socially, economically and culturally inscribed material dimensions of created life. And the salvation of this world in its totality is the *opus Dei* of the triune God. It is the work of transformative *theosis* in synergy with all those human persons whose creaturely agency is suspended in grace yet empowered without detraction to “work out your own salvation” since it is “God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure (εὐδοκία)” (Phil. 2:12-13). Theology “in consonance with the Eucharist” ought to be less fearful about moving beyond exaggerated disciplinary purity as a skewed attempt to combat idolatry but be more concerned about what the context of the crucial *theosis* text in the New Testament underscores instead – namely, being “ineffective and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2. Pet. 1:8).

Theology “in consonance with the Eucharist” conceives liturgy as both doxology and as embodied prolongation of redemptive revelation through mercy and justice rendered in Christ’s name and through Spirit’s power to the fellow creatures of God. Both vectors of the whole liturgy, i.e., the “whole ‘work of the people’,”[[54]](#footnote-54) are fittingly joined in a contrapuntal hybridity of purpose – to praise God and to serve neighbor “through reference to God.”[[55]](#footnote-55) Liturgy’s equipmental status is therefore celebrated as God’s redemptive and deifying service to us and as our service to God in both a humble doxology of adoration and a vicarious doxology of service. If the beauty of liturgy is purposive, this purposiveness does not detract from the only proper objective of praise and worship – the triune God. Freedom from liturgical idolatry is not achieved by an action being simply useless for and unrelated to anything else under the sun. The salvific and transformational utility of the eucharistic liturgy, that is, the divinely initiated sacramentality *in actu* or the whole eucharistic economy in motion, is rather the celebration of its “many-sided glories.”[[56]](#footnote-56) All of these mutually overlapping “glories” of sacramentally configured (ethical!) relationality together form the Body of Christ – the bread and wine, the convocations of discipleship, and ultimately the whole transfigured creation. If liturgy is equipmental in facilitating the salvific transfiguration then it is such in the same peculiarly “instrumental”[[57]](#footnote-57) way as Christ’s humanity has been in the hypostatic union, and as bread and wine are in the eucharistic union. This relationship, however, is as far from a reductive *Zwekrationalität* as the synergy of *theosis* is from a colonizing disempowerment of hegemonic unilateralism. Even more, I suggest that precisely as sacramental, as bodying forth sacramentality as the pivotal constellation of right and just relationality, liturgy underscores the reciprocal, interdependent, and irreducible union of worship and life in a counterpoint of relational hybridity. The sacramental prefigures the ethical and the ethical safeguards the sacramental. Together, contrapuntally, they compose both the first and the last chapters of liturgical theology.

If viewed primarily as sacramentality *in actu*, then liturgy can be envisioned as a hybrid enactment of the many-sided doxologies – through adoration, supplication, lament, and equally so through the ministry of service and justice. None of them detract from or compete with the others – unless they are made to do so. Their boundaries endure but remain porous; the boundaries do not disappear but are “problematized” through cross-pollinations, echoes, analogies, resonances, dissonances, and harmonies; agencies and powers are incommensurate yet always affiliated and reciprocal; harmony among differences is not fixed or fated but is being worked out ever anew as they play off one another amidst shifting historical materialities. There is no theological necessity to juxtapose liturgy and ethics in a dualistic gridlock of “either/or” according to the pattern of competitively juxtaposing God and creation, divine agency and human agency, soul and body, male and female, white and non-white, Western and non-western – and so *ad nauseam*. Hence, neither liturgy belongs in the last chapter of a systematic theology nor ethics belongs in the last chapter of liturgical theology in a truly incarnational, i.e. sacramental, imaginary. Both, together and simultaneously, with reciprocally contested boundaries, in synergistic interaction without fated results and without patronizing benevolence play off each other to advance a contrapuntal concert and order of the triune *opus Dei* where beauty does not preclude utility and where power does not eliminate freedom. To envision the sacramental counterpoint of liturgy and ethics is not to claim that it does and will automatically obtain as soon as one thinks or writes about it. Yet what such envisioning surely does is this: liturgy as work, as *opus operantis* – as a sacramental counterpoint of relationality in action – puts both the eucharistically constituted ecclesiastical and the individual “me into question.”[[58]](#footnote-58) Hence it is a certain way of thinking, feeling and being, “distinguished from games and from calculation, [it] is being-for-beyond-my-death”[[59]](#footnote-59) – collectively and individually, in life and in theological writing.

Liturgy and ethics can sound together in a sacramental counterpoint wherein both liturgy and ethics are interwoven in one single score of synergistic *dievkalpojums/ Gottesdienst*/богослужение *–* the divine service. But, diverging from the competitive dualism and the paranoia of liturgical Pelagianism accompanying the dominant Protestant liturgical and sacramental imaginaries[[60]](#footnote-60) throughout modernity, a contrapuntal envisagement of the divine service insists on synergistic reciprocity – asymmetrical as it always is. The divine service is above all, a work, an effort, a vicarious action. It is both God’s work and the work of the people sounding together, permeating one another, and playing off one another in the incarnationally grounded sacramental counterpoint. In other words, as the Anglican Norman Pittenger suggested, “Christian is himself a liturgy – that is, as the Greek word *leitourgia* would show, a publicly manifest expression of God in Christ to the world.”[[61]](#footnote-61) Liturgy obtains as performed sacramental relationality precisely as “the Divine Action in human action.”[[62]](#footnote-62)

Divine service is that theological space whose spiritual cartography re-charts not only the present ecclesial body but, proleptically, the body of the whole world and the whole humanity as the Body of Christ in the final salvific *rendezvous* of victory. The Eucharist is an eschatological anticipation of the resurrection and the full “face to face” union with Christ in the Spirit, so “that which is accomplished in the sacrament will be accomplished, at the end of the time, in the whole world, which is the body of humankind. And the latter is the Body of Christ.”[[63]](#footnote-63) If theology can be reconciled to the idea that things that are assumed to be theoretically irreconcilable in a sleekly modern manner can still be lived together at least in a messy sacramental manner, such a sacramental counterpoint of liturgy and ethics, as well as of many other things in the heaven and earth of theological imagination, at least can be dreamt of. The sooner the scramble for dominance among *lex orandi*, *lex credendi*, and *lex agendi* (*vivendi*) transfers into the intellectual ruins of Occidental modernity, the better for an emergence of a “*rendezvous* of victory” as a methodological victory over the resilient inertia of fruitless imaginative habits of dualism and enclosure. But this polluted itinerary of hybrid and simultaneous *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*, nevertheless presents at least one fruitful avenue to uphold the imaginary of sacramental counterpoint as a meaningful possibility for reinvigoration of the current Western theological inquiry. Such reinvigoration would certainly resist its being curved into itself alone as if in a detached ivory tower of purely speculative decadence. That being said, it is also worth keeping in mind that, particularly in the postcolonial context, it is prudent to acknowledge the rightful limits of theological creativity even in its most politically conscientious state: “Ethical, epistemological, aesthetic, metaphysical, spiritual, and allegorical resolutions of political problems can at best function as sublimations; but they cannot take the place of real solutions.”[[64]](#footnote-64) All of the above aspirations, of course, cannot directly inaugurate the final goal of the diasporic peregrination through the inner sanctum of modern Occidental theological method. Aware of the limits, the final aspiration of theological creativity, in Edward Said’s words, nevertheless remains to ultimately “search for knowledge and justice, and then perhaps also for liberation”[[65]](#footnote-65) through sacramental reflection on and re-imagination of all things in relation to God.

1. **The Sacramental Counterpoint as Theological Method in a Diasporic Imaginary: A Postcolonial Nuance**

When almost all is said, what then, finally, constitutes the diasporic twist of this project, let alone its elusive postcolonial nuance? What about the hazardous non-Western “sense of specialness”[[66]](#footnote-66) that a diasporic “voyage in”[[67]](#footnote-67) the inner sanctum of theological method inescapably invokes in the present Northwest Euro-North Atlantic cultural orbit? What is the desired (and loathed) “difference” of such postcolonially colored diasporic “voyages in”?

Above all, a diasporic imaginary will utterly disappoint if what one desires is something akin to the planned authenticity of an absolute, agonistic, and automatically antagonistic difference. First of all, postcoloniality that surrounds my location of enunciation is “a form of double consciousness, not as an act of secession from the metropolitan regime.”[[68]](#footnote-68) On top of that, diasporic imaginary, to reiterate, is an imaginary of hybridity, of “both” and “neither/nor” rather than “either/or.” It facilitates multiple belongings and allegiances held together by a certain homing desire within an intricate equilibrium of interstitial integrity. Diasporic experience is a performed cultural, material, historical, and intellectual hybridity. It is not a sphere of being simply “outside” or “over-against” the dominant culture of its present domicile. The experiential amalgam of cultures, languages, politics, racial and economical legacies translates into similarly configured intellectual and critical affinities. Diasporic subjectivities and imaginaries are then Janus-faced, being poised between overlapping and sometimes contestatory cultural legacies and moral as well as political imperatives. In this sense, diasporic imaginary is “fuged,” as I have noted before. It abides as an ongoing texture of sometimes hardly bearable polyvocality that is “homing in” toward a wholesome harmony without coercive inclusion and without the hegemonies of “either/or.” But the diasporic fugue is not the triumphantly elective polyphony of the beloved Occidental postmodernist *bricolage* although certain secondary similarities are undeniable. The diasporic “pollution,” as exposed in this project, is not exactly a matter of calculated choice out of an abundance of equally appealing and feasible options but rather the lonely “looser temporality”[[69]](#footnote-69) of nifty survival, embellished with a rather awkward set of “the pleasures of exile” as Edward Said called them.

For diasporic experience and imaginary the conundrum of difference resides in the borderzone of authenticity/originality and inauthenticity/mimicry. As far as the tricky axiology of difference is concerned, Trinth Min-ha’s observation still holds true for those who do not organically and univocally belong in the Occidental metropolitan cultures:

My audience expects and demands [difference]; otherwise people would feel as if they have been cheated: We did not come to hear a Third World member speak about the First (?) World, We came to listen to that voice of difference likely to bring us *what we can’t have* and to divert us from the monotony of sameness. They, like their anthropologists whose specialty is to detect all the layers of my falseness and truthfulness, are in a position to decide what/who is ‘authentic’ and what/who is not.[[70]](#footnote-70)

Interestingly, the Occidental inertia of conceiving difference according to the image and likeness of competitive binarity perseveres in the treasure hunt for authenticity – be it the “Third World,” the Native American, or the postcolonial, or the diasporic authenticity. What is reflected in such a problematic demand for “authentic,” immediately obvious, and blunt difference is the same dualistic rationale that postcolonial hybridity challenges since “differences made *between* entities comprehended as absolute presences – hence the notions of *pure origin* and *true* self – are an outgrowth of a dualistic system of thought peculiar to the Occident (the ‘onto-theology’ which characterizes Western metaphysics).”[[71]](#footnote-71) In this context, diasporic imaginary cannot fail but to disappoint the longing for *pure* difference since the “spirit of diasporic thought” reflects resistance to “absolutist demarcation between authentic and inauthentic, pure and impure, real or fake.”[[72]](#footnote-72)

In what (pleasurable?) predicament does a diasporic imaginary embroil a theologian who cannot write herself out of the inerasable history of linguistic, cultural, political but crucially importantly, also ecclesiastical and confessional code-switching? The exposure to various theological traditions, theologically and culturally syncretistic environments of religious practice from the postcolonial and post-soviet Baltic all the way into the economical and intellectual metropolises of the late modern Occident, has resulted in a certain attunement to all of these experiences, legacies, traces, and itineraries at once. This, somewhat chaoplexic, attunement I find impossible to discard in favor of a singular and ensconced allegiance – culturally, politically, or theologically. “Pollution” and “impurity” then is not a studied posture, but rather an instinctual habit that customarily neither hears nor speaks in one language solely or even predominantly. It is, however, an acquired instinctual habit, or to risk an even stronger word, it is a forced habit, not chosen among other equally thrilling options. It decenters identity regimes, including ecclesiastical, without, however, discarding them or without declaring them entirely obsolete. Consequently, this diasporic imaginary is translocal[[73]](#footnote-73) and polycentric not only as a way of life but also as a way of theological creativity. That means letting all of the experiential “footprints” play off one another in the method as well as the substance of theological arguments. That also means answering the question “which liturgy/doctrinal tradition are you exactly speaking about?” with a hesitant pause while trying to desperately surmise how to say several things in one breath and in one utterance with at least some grammatical integrity. It means presiding and participating in any particular Eucharist or any other liturgical act with all of the various legacies, knowledges, and experiences shaping every thought, action, word, and gesture. The same happens in every scholarly endeavor – such as the present project. Is that hybridity in action? Probably. The contextual integrity involved here can only be, in Rita Nakashima Brock’s phrase, an “interstitial integrity.” Now integrity indeed “has to do with moments of entireness;” but in a diasporic life it comprises “the monumental task of making meaning out of multiple worlds by refusing to disconnect any of them, while not pledging allegiance to a singular one.”[[74]](#footnote-74) The crux of the theoretical sensuality that is grounded in an interstitial integrity of life abides in recognition that “interstitiality is not an integrity of yes or no despite the context, [it is] not a sense of honor that guards the self from relational influence that might corrupt its purity.”[[75]](#footnote-75) What is usually called “context” or simply, lived experience, with its myriad of existential engagements from theological aesthetics to global politics, transmigrates into the realm of cognitive models and habits of epistemological imagination to be held together within that looser temporality by interstitial integrity. Thus this project is a “litany of pollution” (Paul Gilroy) as it traverses the varied worlds of theological, philosophical, historical and literary sources, norms, methodologies. Obviously, no less polluted is its jagged linguistic incarnation in a language which happens to be my current step-mother-tongue with constant slippages into other linguistic systems and styles without pride but rather with a good dose of resignation. In short, this project is an attempt to write down an itinerary of one of such transmigrations.

Like the infamous Latvian Lutheran “Temporary Agenda” (or “*Pagaidu Agenda*,” see the Overture) with its awkward medley of cultural and ecclesiastical genealogies of cultural memory as well as teleologies of current liturgical desires, postcolonial migrancy is a condition of “betwixt- and-between” lived out across the thresholds of other cultures, languages, and homelands.[[76]](#footnote-76) A diasporic imaginary – of which I offer here only one stanza out of a host of existential actualities and imaginative possibilities – is a whirlpool of legacies, sensibilities, and allegiances vis-à-vis which a jumbled mess of syntax represents just the tip of the iceberg. But the postcolonial nuance of this diasporic imaginary is the clear recognition that hybridity is its *forced* natural habitat, its *poétique forcée* (Édouard Glissant).

Consequently, the objective of this project has been to interrogate arguably the most detrimental conundrum of the modern Occidental theological rationality – the rationale of competitive relational binarity as it manifests through the disengagement of liturgy/worship and ethics/life as a question of theological method – from within a diasporic imaginary. Besides critique, a certain constructive modulation of the dualistic epistemological imagination according to the model of synergistic relationality conceived as sacramental counterpoint was offered drawing from theological history of Western and Eastern Christianity, postcolonial theory, diaspora discourses as well as musicology. But – regardless of its theological merits and pitfalls, is such a model anything “new,” meaning, anything original, anything postcolonially and diasporically authentic and unprecedented? In other words, is the voice of this itinerary “natively informative” enough, exotic enough, different enough?

Here another possible disappointment may beckon. For no diasporic imaginary today can be either completely inside or completely outside the Occidental cultural and intellectual milieu. Furthermore, to explicitly locate it within the postcolonial chronotope is to remember that “the general mode of the postcolonial is citation, reinscription, rerouting the historical.”[[77]](#footnote-77) Hence, diasporic critiques and constructive envisagements offer a methodological borderscape of “newness” that Salman Rushdie memorably characterized emerging through “hybridity, impurity, intermingling”[[78]](#footnote-78) rather than through antagonistically pure and geo-culturally incarcerated gestures of reversal. Indeed, already Edward Said asked with a great apprehension – is the “*voyage in* retributive” and how can it avoid “fall[ing] into the trap of being mainly reactive?”[[79]](#footnote-79) Without doubt, for some, the hybrid “newness” of postcolonially colored diasporic imaginary appears to be *a priori* “fated to unoriginality,”[[80]](#footnote-80) in Derek Walcott’s memorable phrase. Indeed, the presumed unoriginality has been acknowledged in postcolonial theory as stigmatizing and as the “curse of ‘derivativeness’.”[[81]](#footnote-81) What is at stake here is the issue of legitimacy in relation to non-Occidental and marginally Occidental people to merit respect for their creative and scholarly endeavors if they trespass beyond the confines of their supposedly “pure” and “authentic” cultures and knowledges. Thus, if one is a Nigerian, only Nigerian sources and references will do similarly as for a Latvian only Latvian sources and references will make the cut to satisfy Trinth Minh-ha’s lamented Western demand for the diversion from the monotony of sameness. And so it goes with the rest of us in the category of “not quite” this or that. Even more, is this still powerful (while more skillfully camouflaged) desire for diversion not precisely “a fulfillment of anthropological fantasy to condemn the native to some indigenous or autchtonous content and in the process den[ial to] her the formal or fictive freedom to invent her own realities, affiliations and narrative trajectories”[[82]](#footnote-82) to emerge from the ghetto of exoticized authenticity?

To move beyond adversarial, indeed binaristic, constructs of authenticity and originality is to hear and to sound all of them contrapuntally, since the “great imperial experience… is global and universal; it has implicated every corner of the globe, the colonizer and the colonized together.”[[83]](#footnote-83) The contrapuntal approach, according to Said should be anything but “a blandly uplifting suggestion for catholicity of vision” since what it highlights is precisely the need to “reaffirm the historical experience of imperialism as a matter first of interdependent histories, overlapping domains, second of something requiring intellectual and political choices.”[[84]](#footnote-84) As theories and knowledges “travel” through diverse geo-historical arenas, and as variously colored diasporic experiences “voyage in” the Occidental cultural edifice, the interdependence and the hybridity crescendos rather than diminishes. What emerges here is “the wobble of assimilation or alterity”[[85]](#footnote-85) on the the part of those who “voyage in” as well as, to a certain degree, of those fully Occidental theoretical and ethical axiologies that “travel” into locations and mindscapes previously seen as primitive, marginal, exotic, and at best derivative. However derivative and unoriginal such a hybrid commerce may be, in the postcolonial milieu it may well be the surest way home as it was, for example, for the mid-twentieth century Afro-Caribbean poets in an ironic yet transformational conversation with Euromodernism. As the investigations of Jahan Ramazani suggest, it is not a story about Euromodernist wannabes. What happened there is rather emblematic for many forced colonial contexts, reaching far beyond the Caribbean archipelago. Namely, an uncanny appropriation and a subtly complex process of selective and critical reinvention through non-identical repetition “has helped the postcolonial poets encode aesthetically the intersections among multiple cultural vectors,” and by redeploying modernism, they also refashioned it in order to resist “local and imperial monisms.”[[86]](#footnote-86) The fruit of such strategic redeployment is a vintage postcolonial hybridity which

‘confirms yet alters’, reworks yet revalues… Only by breaking out of exclusionary models of tradition as either Eliot’s ‘mind of Europe’ or its postcolonial obverse (‘an autonomous entity separate and apart from all other literatures’) can we begin to grasp the continuous remaking of ‘traditions’ by one another across the twentieth century and beyond, the mutually transformative relations between the poetries of metropole and margin.[[87]](#footnote-87)

The subtle ambiguity of nuances as well as meticulously timed quotations may suggest that postcolonially scored diasporic imaginaries are inauthentic, dull, and weak. That they can be and are often perceived so cannot be denied. However, such a perception also completely misses, in particular and on top of everything that has been said above, the female diasporic subject’s ethical right to narrate and her enunciative agency as

…multiply located, always doubly displaced, and having to negotiate an ambivalent past, while holding on to fragments of memories, cultures, and histories in order to dream of a different future. Such a female subject may not easily find a language with which to speak […] A diasporic consciousness finds similarities and differences in both familiar territories and unexpected corners; one catches glimpses of oneself in a fleeting moment or in a fragment in someone else’s story.[[88]](#footnote-88)

In addition, diasporic “newness” can be also rejected as useless in the still reigning modern drive for precise, literal, transparent and almost mathematically simple representations in creative thought. Yet, it is hard to resist here the apologetic diasporic temptation to invoke the postcolonial “right to opacity.”[[89]](#footnote-89) Particularly, the hybrid diasporic proclivity for probing the quiddity of relations as a matter of survival, emerges as a sort of visceral antagonist against the modern shift of signification in the direction of “flattening”[[90]](#footnote-90) toward literalism, univocity, competitive non-contradiction, and the anatomized panoptical vision of reality of anything or anyone. On the flipside, can it emerge as a sort of visceral friend of the sacramental imaginary which has suffered invasively during the prime of Occidental modernity and continues to do so in its imperial ruins? As far as sacramental imaginary is a discursive and imaginative space of mediation, relation, interpenetration, interdependence, and of polyvocal “pollution” across the boundaries of the uncreated, the created, the spiritual, the bodily, the individual, the communitarian, the cerebral, the affective, the visual, the aural, the tactile and the degustatory, an affinity with a polyvocal and polycentric diasporic experience seems possible and probable, even though not necessary.

Of course, this project is an interrogation of such a possibility. The result is a peregrination in writing through some of the critical and constructive methodologies in search for fruitful theological envisagements of ethically “right relationality.” The search for mutually consonant and resonant models of relationality among the divine and the human, and among the multitudes of humanity, from discursive thought to ethical action, continues to be the great challenge for theological integrity in this era of late modern postcoloniality. To participate in this quest, I have scored – or mired? – my project in two resilient compositional keys.

First, it is the loyalty to what I called the incarnational style (Overture) in theological inquiry. The incarnational style expresses an enduring loyalty toward the paradigmatic lineup of relational mysteries at the core of the Christian lifeworld. For it is always a relational μυστήριον that shapes the identity of the Christian revelation and salvation: God as Trinity, the incarnation as hypostatic union, and the sacraments, as all of these together engender the redemptive ecology of *theosis*. For a theology of the incarnational style, the Eucharist remains as that distinctive locus of encounter in which all vectors and themes of sound Christian theology converge.

Second, the inescapability of my diasporic location as a burden of never being able to see or hear one thing only and say it without the concurrent presence of other, sometimes rather dissonant, experiences and traditions of thought and faith. For my diasporic experience and subjectivity I have not found a better theoretical elaboration than the figurality of postcolonial counterpoint as intimated by Edward W. Said in his postcolonial investigations but also (implicitly) through his critical engagement with Theodor Adorno’s philosophy of music. The analytical or critical thrust of this project has been to interrogate the convoluted methodological habits of disengagement between liturgy and ethics as a pivotal issue of modern Occidental theology. That has led me, from the context of a marginally European but then also a Euro-Atlantic diasporic experience, and in the fascinating companionship of postcolonial theory, to the interrogation of the foundational rationale of binarity, with which the dominant mainstream of modern Occident theology has been infatuated. The constructive thrust of this project has been to hover, betwixt-and-between, among disciplinary domains, methods, homes, and languages and to suggest that the notion of postcolonial counterpoint can serve as a fruitful contemporary elaboration of what constitutes the ethical nature of sacramentality as the divinely inaugurated interface of divine-human relationality; and by extension and in the same breath – it has to be written in one sentence no matter how long it is – as the analogical interface of interpersonal human relations without detraction and competition between both, not even in a misguided fight against idolatry. It is not an accident, therefore, that counterpoint as precisely sufficiently complex and, indeed, sufficiently opaque sonic terrain has attracted the attention of postcolonially colored sensibilities. To stretch it even further, postcolonial counterpoint can also serve, analogically, to re-envision a transformation of relations between fragmented theological disciplines, such as liturgical theology and ethics.

All of these explorations have proceeded in conversation with the Eastern Orthodox notions of sacramentality, *theosis*, and synergy since postcolonial counterpoint has the breadth to address and to benefit from theologies that remain generous toward the potential goodness of human agency even amidst its fallenness. Evermore, all these peregrinations have also proceeded through brusque conversations with post-Holocaust Jewish religious thought on ethics and liturgy through the work of Emmanuel Levinas and even more implicitly, again, Theodor Adorno. Theirs are the indirect voices speaking out of the long shadow of the paradigmatic experience of forced Jewish dispersion, which through the Greek translation of the Torah has facilitated the very emergence of *diaspora* as the word for uprooting and displacement.

But this is not yet the whole story. Now the transmigration of lived reality into the realm of epistemological imagination is without doubt a key marker of theoretical agency which acknowledges its own contextual embodiment. But to propose such a transmigration in theology entails, I believe, something more than mere description of the relational traffic between inhabited experience and theoretical discourse. To endorse and elaborate upon this transmigration between life’s existential actualities and models of epistemological imagination is to recognize these actualities as a site of revelation. The implicit claim involved here is that musically interpreted diasporic experience from within a postcolonial milieu can serve as a useful source and resource for the elaboration, arguably even for a curative re-envisagement, of certain binaristic Occidental theological trajectories. On this point, I have sketched a markedly different route from the time-honored methodological conviction that Gordon Lathrop, among others, described as pertinent for liturgical theology. Namely, Lathrop observes that “public questions,” i.e., the realm of sensible and historical embodiment with its moral exigencies of suffering and injustice, provide a “context” for liturgical theologizing but does “not provide its sources and its method.”[[91]](#footnote-91) Context, if by that is meant the non-ritual everyday life outside the places of worship, can no longer be imagined as theologically adiaphoric in the postcolonial milieu. Doxological and reflective practices of theological nature are necessarily intercontextual with the sensible realities of our routine living. Hence these realities are surely among the sources of theological inquiry. Moreover, they modulate the axiologies of theological authority as the revelatory sites of relentless apparitions of the triune God without, however, slipping into the dangerous hegemony of context alone as the sole arbiter of theological normativity.

Thus, without claiming an exclusive privilege to render a conclusive contemporary interpretation of the Eucharist as the definitive methodological principle of sound Christian theology, a fruitful hermeneutical consonance can nevertheless be discernible between the diasporic hybridity and the whole discourse of sacramentality. This – and no more – is the constructive claim of this project. Reading and writing from within a life – in my case out of a diasporically jumbled snarl of existential, intellectual, and linguistic experience – is simultaneously a reading and writing for life whose survival and thriving at present depends on inaugurating and nurturing ethical connections rather than proliferating clashing juxtapositions. The interstitial integrity of the diasporic imaginary, whose take on theological inquiry is written out here as the itinerary of a listening tour to some of my theological roots, theoretical love affairs, and cultural melodies while pondering on theological method, does not reside in abdication from its provisional home in Western Christianity, no matter how ambivalent and porous it is. Instead, it is precisely the interstitial integrity of diasporic theoretical agency that enthusiastically salutes Kevin Vanhoozer’s concise observation that “the way forward is not non-Western but *more-*than-Western theology.”[[92]](#footnote-92) The way forward is through the sacramental counterpoint of *lex orandi, lex credendi* and *lex vivendi*, not their competitive juxtaposition in scholarly turf wars and, even worse, in the life of faith. For sacramental counterpoint is porous like the liturgical spaces of the old cathedrals in the Caribbean. They endure in the Caribbean as strikingly postcolonial in the hybridity of their coercive origins, their colonial histories enmeshed in the unholy synergy of the cross and crown. Yet they are equally striking through their truly contrapuntal present as both reminders of the coloniality of power as well as of eschatological hope for the “*rendezvous* of victory” (Césaire). Theologically speaking, the *rendezvous* of victory is an image of a non-hegemonic place for all; and no one race, culture, theological temperament, language, class, gender or tradition possesses the monopoly of orthodoxy to be coerced upon the others. Sacramental counterpoint of liturgy and ethics enacts the synergistic ontology of grace, rendering the *rendezvous* of victory present, slowly, exhaustingly, often dissonantly, frequently almost to the point of confusion with total invisibility and inefficiency. Remaining embroiled in the continuing actualities of hegemonic injustices and devastating afflictions of the present dispensation, the sacramental counterpoint of liturgy and ethics, or the participatory *opus Dei* of divine service properly speaking, nevertheless “wills to arrive at its victory” – yes, where? – “in the grey and bitter everydayness of life.”[[93]](#footnote-93)

The world as we know it is relational for good and for ill. To state it as a fact does not mean to invest relationality with naïve and undisputed goodness. To prioritize relationality does not mean to romanticize it. However, the *quiddity* of all relations, inside and outside of liturgical sanctuaries as well as in all those liminal spaces in which the inside and outside intermingles as the paths, smells, and sounds intermingle in the deep ambivalence of the old Caribbean cathedrals, ultimately is a matter of consonance with the Eucharist – or lack thereof. To recognize the gravity of relational ontology is, perhaps, to praise – or lament? – the pivotal relational mystery of the Trinity. The gravity of the challenge to act, to imagine, to feel, and to think in consonance with this relational mystery is permeated by the apophatically reserved acknowledgment that “the Trinity is a cross for human ways of thought”[[94]](#footnote-94) on this side of the beatific vision. Regardless of how painfully utopian and ethically indicting such an embodied doxology may seem, is it also not right and not our duty and our joy, at all times and in all places, to praise the relational mystery of Trinity as precisely the “guide of Christians in the wisdom of heaven?”[[95]](#footnote-95)

1. When I last visited the church in Marigot on February 11, 2010 the pigeons had presumably annoyed enough pious souls to mandate their extradition. The day before visiting Marigot I also happened to observe how special fearsome-looking spikes were being installed in the Catholic Cathedral in Basseterre, St. Kitts to prevent birds from landing near the altar. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, “One Rule to Rule Them All? Theological Method in an Era of World Christianity,” *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity* (Craig Ott and Harold A. Netland, eds.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006): 90. Vanhoozer points out that the obsession with theological method is particularly Western proclivity in theological inquiry and hints at the need to move beyond such a fixation, or indeed, that “touch of madness in the West’s fascination with method”; however, he does not abstain from offering his own constructive methodological proposal of “diasporadic systematics” in the “era of World Christianity,” *ibid.,* 86-97. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Robert Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 164-165. Sokolowski argues that the confidence in the “right” method as the surest safeguard for following the “right” reasoning procedures in order to master the truth is an intrinsic part of the problematic rationalism of Western modernity. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company: 2006): 85. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *Ibid.,* 77-83. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Kathleen Marie Higgins, *The Music of Our Lives* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991): 8. Italics added. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Kathryn Tanner, *Jesus, Humanity and the Trinity: A Brief Systematic Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001): 2-23. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Anthony O. Balcomb, “Re-enchanting a Disenchanted Universe – Post Modern Projects in Theologies of Space,” *Religion and Theology* 16 (2009): 80. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. *Ibid*., 84. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Kathryn Tanner, *God and Creation in Christian Theology: Tyranny or Empowerment?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005): 4. Tanner emphasizes that there is a culturally specific “Greek problematic” in conceiving transcendence-immanence conundrum in Western theological traditions but that the modern period represents a peculiar exacerbation of dualistic juxtaposition of difference. She also notes that the collapse of non-competitive and relational imaginary of transcendence and immanence into a competitive univocity of being, jealously divided between the divine and the human, had sporadically occurred before in the Christian theological tradition in the West, for example in the 4th century outlook of Pelagianism. However, “what is new to a modern circumstance is… the pervasiveness of that mis-step. It becomes commonplace of modern theology,” 122. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. William C. Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence: How Modern Thinking about God Went Wrong* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996): 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. *Ibid*, 181-182. Placher remarks that “theologians who think of God as one thing in the world alongside others often then try to preserve some sense of divine transcendence by emphasizing that God is the most distant, most powerful thing in the world, at the peak of all the world’s hierarchies of being and value. This often makes God the *enemy of transformative justice,* since God’s place at the peak of hierarchies gives divine sanction to those hierarchies, and a God defined in terms of distance, power, and unaffectability gives such qualities the imprimatur of divinity,” 182. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Barnor Hesse defines the “Western spectacle” as “a discursive organization of an imaginary social representativeness that rests on a cultivated social exclusiveness,” which functions by globalizing “the ‘non-European’ (‘non-white’) other, outside the chosen people, as irredeemably deficient, deviant and disorderly. Invariably narrowly cast as an outsider, an inferior, a threat, a margin, an amusement, an exoticism, an after-thought; the ‘non-European’ as ‘non-white’, and vice-versa, is situated within the imperial vision and governmental landscape of an idealized Western panorama and paranoia,” in “Reviewing the Western Spectacle: Reflexive Globalization through the Black Diaspora,” *Global Futures: Migration, Environment and Globalization* (Avtar Brah, Mary J. Hickman, Martin MacGhaill, eds.; New York: Palgrave, 1999):130-131. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Juan Louis Segundo, *Our Idea of God* (John Drury, trans.; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1974): 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Achile Mbembe, “Provisional Notes on the Postcolony,” *Africa* 62:1 (1992): 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. In the long posteriority of colonialism, as Achille Mbembe suggests, the conundrum of relational difference endures: “…as a general rule, the experience of the Other, or the *problem of the ‘I’ of others and of human beings we perceive as foreign to us,* has always posed virtually insurmountable difficulty to the Western philosophical and political tradition,” *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2001): 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Edward W. Said, “Gods That Always Fail,” *Representations of the Intellectual* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996): 120. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Edward W. Said, “On Defiance and Taking Positions,” *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002): 503. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, “One Rule to Rule Them All? Theological Method in an Era of World Christianity,” *Globalizing Theology*, 90. See footnote 8 where Vanhoozer astutely notes that “Eastern Orthodoxy did not go on to become the *scientia* that it did in the Latin West, nor did it adopt the Cartesian subject/object dichotomy or the various hermeneutical theories that derive from it.” [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Susan A. Ross, “Women, Body, and Sacraments: Toward and Renewed Sacramental Theology,” *Miriam’s Song II Patriarchy: A Feminist Critique* (West Hyattsville: Priests for Equality, n.d.): 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Yngve Brilioth, *Eucharistic Faith and Practice:* *Evangelical and Catholic* (A.G. Herbert, trans.; London: SPCK, 1965): 288. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. John of Damascus, *De Fide Orthodoxa*, Book 4, Ch. 13. Quoted from *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Reprint Edition, vol. 9 (Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997): 84. Notably, Thomas Aquinas quotes Damascene in ST 3.73.4 to elaborate on the multiple significations, causalities and temporalities involved in the Eucharist as the sacrament of unity. A much looser and far more implicit reverberations of this lineage of sacramental thought appear also in Martin Luther’s sacramental texts (for example, in *The Freedom of the Christian*, *The Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ and the Brotherhoods, The Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ Against the Fanatics* and sporadically in John Calvin’s reflections on the eucharistic ethics such as in *Institutes* IV, 17, 38. Clearly, ecclesiological presuppositions and consequences regarding the relation of the Eucharist and the bodies of believers are very different from Damascene and Aquinas, particularly in the case of Calvin. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Don E. Saliers, “Liturgy and Ethics: Some New Beginnings,” (1979) quoted from *Liturgy and the Moral Self: Humanity in Full Stretch Before God; Essays in Honor of Don E. Saliers* (E. Byron Anderson, Bruce T. Morrill, eds.; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998): 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. George Hunsinger, *The Eucharist and Ecumenism: Let Us Keep the Feast* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008): 253. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Alexander Schmemann, “The World as Sacrament,” *Church, World, Mission: Reflections on Orthodoxy in the West*, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1979): 225. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Schmemann, “World as Sacrament,” 226; also Schmemann, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2000): 102. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Schmemann, *For the Life of the World*, 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. *Ibid.*, 77. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Schmemann, “The Missionary Imperative,” *Church, World, Mission*, 213. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. 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, 1997): 247. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Schmemann, *For the Life of the World*, 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Mark D. Jordan, *Rewritten Theology: Aquinas After His Readers* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006): 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Schmemann, *For the Life of the World*, 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Emmanuel Levinas, “For a Jewish Humanism,” *Difficult Freedom*: *Essays on Judaism* (Sean Hand, trans.; Johns Hopkins Paperbacks Edition, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997): 275. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Levinas, “Place and Utopia,” *Difficult Freedom*, 102. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Levinas, “How is Judaism Possible?” *Difficult Freedom, 248.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Emmanuel Levinas, “The I and the Totality,” *Entre-Nous: Thinking-Of-The-Other* (Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshaw, trans.; New York: Columbia University Press, 1998): 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Levinas, “Between the Worlds. The Way of Franz Rosenzweig,” *Difficult Freedom*, 189. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Levinas, “Being a Westerner,” *Difficult Freedom*, 49. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Michael Purcell’s interpretation of Levinas suggests a similar proposition in what he terms the “cruciform structure” of liturgy. For Purcell, Levinas’ liturgy denotes something similar to my emphasis on the dually vectored and noncompetitively contrapuntal *dievkalpojums*/*Gottesdienst* since “at the heart of liturgy is responsible service” which is “at one and the same time, divine service and human service.” The agential ecology of this liturgy is not dialectical in the sense of progressive displacement because “it is not that we first worship and then are called unto service in a movement out of self towards the Otherness of God and thereafter towards the Otherness of the other person. The movement out of self – liturgy – is at one and the same time worship and ethics, and ethical worship, in which justice is rendered both to God and to the other person,” in “Liturgy: Divine and Human Service,” *Heythrop Journal* 38 (1997):164. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Emmanuel Levinas, “The Trace of the Other,” *Deconstruction in Context: Literature and Philosophy* (Alphonso Lingis, trans., Mark C. Taylor, ed.; Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986): 350. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (Alphonso Lingis, trans.; Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2002): 78. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Levinas, “Place and Utopia,” *Difficult Freedom*, 99-100. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Jean-François Lyotard’s idea of the postmodern sublime as “intrinsically a combination of pleasure and pain” comes to mind here, see Lyotard, “What is the Postmodern?” *The Postmodern Explained* (Julian Pefanis and Morgan Thomas, eds., Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1992): 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Catherine Pickstock notes that “it is when the Eucharist is hypostasized as either a thing or a sign in separation from ecclesial and ecstatic action, that it becomes truly decadent,” *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998): 255. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Hannah Arendt, *Human Condition*, Second Edition(Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998): 52, 180. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Hannah Arendt, “Collective Responsibility,” *Responsibility and Judgment* (Jerome Kohn, ed., New York: Schocken Books, 2003): 157. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop’s Opening Address at ECUSA General Convention 2009, July 7, 2009, accessed at <http://ecusa.anglican.org/78703_112035_ENG_HTM.htm>, July 11, 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Николай Бердяев, *О назначении человека* (Мocквa: Республика, 1993): 249.Indeed, for Berdyaev “the most inadmissible form of aristocracy is the aristocracy of salvation,” *ibid*. Berdyaev also argues rather somberly that “the greatest religious and ethical truth up to which human being must grow up is that one ought not to be seek salvation individually. My salvation also presupposes the salvation of others, of my neighbors, of the whole world, [it presupposes] the transfiguration of the world,” in Николай Бердяев, “[Экзистенциальная диалектика божественного и человеческого](http://www.krotov.info/library/02_b/berdyaev/1944_041_1.htm),” *О назначении человека* (Мocквa: Республика, 1993): 357. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Don E. Saliers, “Afterword: Liturgy and Ethics Revisited,” *Liturgy and the Moral Self,* 215. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Augustine remarks that “true sacrifices are works of mercy shown to ourselves or to our neighbors, and done with reference to God (*quae referuntur ad Deum*),” *The City of God against the Pagans* (R.W. Dyson trans. and ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 400. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Brilioth, *Eucharistic Faith and Practice,* 288. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. I refer to the sense of the sacramental “instrumentality” of the human nature of Christ that is found in the Christological imagination of, for example, John of Damascus’s *De Fide Orthodoxa* and Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa* *Theologiae*, 3.62. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Levinas, “The Trace of the Other,” *Deconstruction in Context*, 350. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. *Ibid.*, 349. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. See Lee Palmer Wandel’s observations on the tendencies of Martin Luther, for example, toward the emphasis on the eucharist/mass as an *opus operatum* from *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520). From such a perspective, “human beings were not to add layers of meaning, nor to add dimensions of human agency. Indeed, the Mass was not to serve as a site of human agency at all,” *The Eucharist in the Reformation: Incarnation and Liturgy* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Norman Pittenger, *Life as Eucharist* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973): 48. Pittenger suggests that liturgy is supremely formative toward an “en-Christed” life since a Christian’s “outward life, like his innermost thought, comes to be a reflection of this central principle. Inevitably and inescapably, once he permits himself to be molded by and built up in the liturgical life of the Church, his whole being becomes ‘liturgical’,” 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. *Ibid*., 62, 33-35, 42-43. A similar kind of asymmetrical coincidence of divine and human action has been proposed also by two other Anglicans Catherine Pickstock and Graham Ward. Neither of them refers to the notion of synergy yet the trajectories of their constructive envisagements implicitly suggest a resonance. For Pickstock, liturgy is the mediating interface between politics and art, ethics and aesthetics, wherein “all activities are to a degree brought within the scope of liturgical enactment,” “nothing is merely instrumental” and “every act exceeds itself, since every act becomes an ecstatic celebratory offering,” in “Liturgy, Art and Politics,” *Modern Theology* 16:2 (2000): 163. For Ward, divine agency continuously fulfills human agency from the space of ritual worship to an act of vicarious service such as moving a neighbor’s lawn whereby any ordinary objects that are the instruments of service become means of grace and their sacramental nature is thus revealed. All true Christian action is liturgical insofar as it participates in the economy of divine love. In liturgy an act becomes an offering as it “inhabits the logic of sacrifice” and liturgy situates all things and all acts in the economy and politics of redemption, Ward argues, so that the Christian acting is “a *praxis* that participates in a divine *poiēsis* that has soteriological and eschatological import. It is a *technē*, a crafting, a production – of redemption,” in Graham Ward, “A Christian Act: Politics and Liturgical Practice,” *Liturgy, Time, and the Politics of Redemption* (Randi Rashkover and C.C. Pecknold, eds.; Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2006): 46-49. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Sergius Bulgakov, “The Eucharistic Dogma,” *The Holy Grail and the Eucharist* (Boris Jakim, ed., New York: Lindisfarne Books, 1997):137-138. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. R. Radhakrishnan, “Grievable Life, Accountable Theory,” *Boundary 2*, 35:1 (2008): 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Edward W. Said, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004): 83. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989): 87-90. Note that the chapter discussing the problematic issue of exoticized otherness is titled “Difference: ‘A Special Third World Women Issue’.” [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1994): 239-261. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. R.Radhakrishnan, “Postmodernism and the Rest of the World,” *The Pre-Occupation of Postcolonial Studies* (Fawzia Afzal-Khan and Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks, eds.; Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000): 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. David Parker suggests that the difference between merely cosmopolitan and diasporic subjectivities consists in their different experiences vis-à-vis loneliness arguing that “a cosmopolitan would never be lonely, or would see potentially anywhere, anyone, anything as capable of assuaging such sentiments… diasporic identities in contrast carry the weight of embodied, racialised histories and a more collective orientation,” in “Diaspora, Dissidence and the Dangers of Cosmopolitanism,” *Asian Studies Review* 27:2 (2003): 166-167. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other*, 88. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. *Ibid*, 90. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Ien Ang, “Can One Say No to Chineseness? Pushing the Limits of the Diasporic Paradigm,” *Boundary 2* 25:3 (1998): 225-227. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Ato Quayson helpfully indicates that “the implications of translocality cannot be limited to the two locations that have most framed migrants’ identities. The translocality of migrants means that their senses of themselves draw on inflections and emphases of different ethnic communities in other parts of the world. As [Khachig] Tölölyan points out in his definition of diasporas (…) ‘diasporas are resolutely multilocal and polycentric, in that what happens to kin communities in other areas of dispersion as well as in the homeland insistenly matters to them’,” in “Introduction: Area Studies, Diaspora Studies, and Critical Pedagogies,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East,* 27:3 (2007): 588. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. 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):190. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. *Ibid*., 190-191. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. The contemporary complexities involved in diasporic situations, going far beyond the stereotypical home/not home dichotomy, are accurately summarized by Kwok Pui-lan: diaspora “shares a broader semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, migrant worker, exile community, and ethnic and racial minorities. Diasporic discourse is currently appropriated by peoples who may not have experienced forced dispersion, who do not share the longing for a return to the homeland, or who may shuttle between the homeland and the host land in continuous commute. It connotes at once the experience of decentered and yet multiple-centered, displaced and yet constantly relocated, peoples who criss-cross many borders,” *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005): 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (New York and London: Routledge, 2009): 244. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands* (London: Granta Books, 1990): 394. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 256. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Derek Walcott, “The Caribbean: Culture or Mimicry?” in *Postcolonialisms: An Anthology of Cultural Theory and Criticism* (Gaurav Desai and Supriya Nair, eds.; New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University press, 2005): 261. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. R. Radhakrishnan, “Derivative Discourses and the Problem of Signification,” *The European Legacy,* 7:6 (2002):790. Elsewhere Radhakrishnan has exposed Partha Chaterjee’s notion of “derivative discourse” as resonating with Ranajit Guha’s “small voice of history” both of which are caught in the profoundest ambiguity as “incapable of achieving systematicity on their own behalf. The best they can do to authorize their own sense of agency is to chip away, to ‘signify’ their intentions on a pre-existing and often alien text,” in “Globalization, Desire, and the Politics of Representation,” *Comparative Literature,* 53:4 (2001): 320. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. *Ibid*., 792. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 259. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. *Ibid.* Said adds that contrapuntal approach emphasizes precisely the contrapuntal quality of “together” or the aspect of intrinsic relationality since histories of colonializing and being colonized re intertwined and, if studied separately, “then the experiences of domination and being dominated remain artificially, and falsely, separated,” *ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Jahan Ramazani, “Modernist Bricolage, Postcolonial Hybridity,” *Modernism/Modernity,* 13:3 (2006): 459. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. *Ibid.,* 448-449. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. *Ibid*., 460. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Kwok, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*, 46, 50. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation* (Betsy Wing, trans.; Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2006): 189-194. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Thomas J. Davis, *This is My Body: The Presence of Christ in Reformation Thought* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008): 192. Davis explores the paradigm shift in signification from the early modernity onwards to conclude that signification became linear, literal, emphasizing one exact meaning with the loss of metaphoric fluidity. The literal and linear trajectory of signification privileges one-to-one correspondence between the sign and thing for visual as well as verbal signs. Chasing after certainty, the modern textual age endorsed that “the meaning that seemed surest was simplest” and the ensuing “unnecessary rationalism” in sacramental discourses developed as “an attempt to address the culture in ways it valued through a medium it valued” since “a precise, logical, literal-type language represented, if you will, the only way of advocating its positions that would pass muster in a linguistic environment that required an almost mathematical approach in terms of signification,” 192-194. Similar critiques of modern Occidental modes of signification are found in the already mentioned works by Regina Mara Schwartz, Catherine Pickstock, Alexander Schmemann, Graham Ward and others. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Gordon W. Lathrop, *Holy People: A Liturgical Ecclesiology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999): 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Vanhoozer, “One Rule to Rule Them All?” *Globalizing Theology*, 119. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Karl Rahner, *Die Siebenfältige Gabe: Über die Sakramente der* *Kirche* (München: Verlag ARS Sacra, 1974): 18. Rahner writes “… wenn wir die Eucharistie wirklich verstehen wollen, wir sie als die Erscheinung jener geheimnisvollen Gnade sehen dürfen, die unauffällig unser ganzes Leben durchwaltet, als festliches Inerscheinungbringen in der Gemeinschaft der Kirche dessen, was im grauen und bitteren Alltag des Lebens zum Sieg kommen will.” [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1976): 66. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Pseudo-Dionysius, “The Mystical Theology,” *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*. The Classics of Western Spirituality (Colm Luibheid, trans., Foreword, Notes and Translation Collaboration by Paul Rorem, Preface by Rene Roques, Introductions by Jaroslav Pelikan, Jean Leclerq and Karlfried Froelich; New York, Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1987): 997A, 135. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)