**PART I**

**Chapter 1**

**Interrogating Disengagement: Liturgy and Ethics in the Gridlock of *Parerga***

The principal challenge, which the contemporary Western theological discourse on liturgy – broadly defined as performed sacramental relationality among God and creation or narrowly defined as the rite structuring the way of performing corporate Christian worship – must prioritize is the necessity to unlearn the methodological adiaphorization of ethics in theological and liturgical inquiry. As it remembers and evaluates its own past, the present post-Holocaust Christian liturgical theology stands under the indictment of Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s dictum “only he who cries out for the Jews may sing Gregorian chants.”[[1]](#footnote-1) Of course, theologically speaking, the Bonhoefferian Jews sadly stand not only for the historical Jews under the Nazi persecution, but also for countless other history and context-specific victims of injustice and human cruelty. The histories of colonialism, the Holocaust, genocides, apartheids, ethnic cleansings, racial and gender oppression, economic disenfranchisement, and what a Harry E. Fosdick hymn calls so poignantly an ongoing “warring madness,”[[2]](#footnote-2) are histories in which the Western Christianity has taken part, often a blasphemous, repulsive, and unjustifiable part. And these histories are far from having been sporadic and exceptional. As Walter Benjamin has warned, “the tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the ‘state of emergency’ in which we live is not the exception but the rule. We must attain to a conception of history that is in keeping with this insight.”[[3]](#footnote-3) Christian theology, and the liturgical and sacramental discourses in particular, also “must attain” to the conception of itself as intrinsically related to and accountable to, *coram Deo,* for its participation in these histories, permeated by human suffering. Hence the exceptional need of a Bonhoefferian soberness, since liturgical and sacramental discourses are particularly often perceived and portrayed as insulary, ethically self-absolving, and peculiarly prone to ludic oblivion toward social injustice and systemic moral evil. It is clear that it is possible to indulge in pious doxology while simultaneously participating into destruction or even unleashing it all around. It is possible to sing whatever sublimely uplifting liturgical chant one’s spiritual taste fancies while succumbing to suspended spectatorial resignation toward one’s own suffering or that of the others. Arguably, the 20th century was the historical moment when this perversely sublime counterpoint reached its crescendo at least in the reflective awareness of the Western theological culture, if not – it must be apprehensively acknowledged – in the range of future possibilities for oblivion toward the unjust suffering and one’s own participatory role in it. The insight with which liturgical theologies must “keep” is the acknowledgement that it is no longer ethically feasible to speak about liturgy and sacraments as redemptive, liberating, and transformative sites and events innocently and automatically. History has demonstrated that liturgy and sacraments can be and often are continuing to be sites of exclusion, despair, as well as of a racial, gender, and sexual injustice. For women in particular, but not solely for women, liturgy and sacraments have been sites of pain alongside being sites of survival, healing, and empowerment.[[4]](#footnote-4) Hence liturgy is already a desecrated space all the while it is also a consecrated space for liberative transformation toward the grace-filled wellbeing (*salus*) of created life. At the present historical and cultural juncture it is still possible, even urgent, to underscore the idea of liturgy as a whole to be “the sacrament of the Kingdom of God”[[5]](#footnote-5) while acknowledging that liturgy is an always vulnerable site vis-à-vis numerous idolatries and injustices. What it means is that the divine kenosis in Christ’s incarnation historically, and his insignification in the Eucharist and in the convocation of discipleship as the Body of Christ sacramentally, position liturgy as a non-coercive and non-controlling, and thus an extremely vulnerable, interface of interaction among God and human persons. Liturgy can, and often has, become vulnerable to deployment as a stultifying mirror not only of “the dominant social gender relations” as Teresa Berger accurately observes, but even beyond the gender specific context as a “mirror or memory”[[6]](#footnote-6) of the templates of relationality across multiple terrains of race, class, geography, and ethnicity. The prevailing concern for liturgical and sacramental discourses at this point in time in the late modern, post-Holocaust, and postcolonial era is, I submit, that Christian theology must attain to the insight of its own precariousness and to the “fragility of sacramental actions of the Christian assembly” as precisely the sites of redemptory yet potentially abuseable “divine vulnerability” wherein the “risk is both divine and human.”[[7]](#footnote-7) Due to the most radical divine kenosis in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, liturgy is precisely a risky, fluid, and porous interface which can and often has become an arena of truncated sacramentality, failed relations, distorted justice, oppressive good news, and blasphemous peace. The transformative fecundity of liturgy can never be presumptuously and prematurely taken as self-evident, even to the point of dubious self-assurance that liturgy by design always already incorporates its own prophetic and self-reforming critique, especially if liturgy is perceived as overall restricted to being the ritually structured *ordo* of intra-ecclesial corporate worship.[[8]](#footnote-8) Hence to speak about liturgy as always and everywhere necessarily and infallibly sacred, liberating, and transfigurative is at best treacherous and at worst – unethical.[[9]](#footnote-9) Instead, I submit, it is time to inquire more intensively and more broadly into the vistas of interaction between the trajectories of negative theology in relation to liturgical and sacramental discourses. Obviously, it is beyond the scope of this project to become a full-blown constructive exploration of negative liturgical theology[[10]](#footnote-10) even though the scenario for such an endeavor is most fascinatingly located in the amazing apophatic-liturgical counterpoint at the pinnacle of Christian apophatic thought in the corpus of Pseudo-Dionysius where “The Names of God” and “Mystical Theology” stand interlaced to “The Celestial Hierarchy” and “The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy.” It seems, however, that interrogating the allergic tensions between liturgy and ethics can serve as an itinerary of apophatically configured theological inquiry to scrutinize certain, mostly modern, Western theological proclivities in theological methodology from a perspective equally loyal to sacramental-liturgical and ethical discourses. Above all, it addresses the proclivity toward exclusionary and binaristically competitive rationality, in which the obsession with boundaries of certainty and reality has not entirely abated, and of which the chronic disengagement between liturgy and ethics is just a symptom. In addition, as it will become clearer in Chapter 2, if relationality, divine and human, is truly the object of inquiry, the self-absorption of the Western discourse must be interrupted in theology as well, and perhaps – especially in theology, by allowing the presence of postcoloniality to enter the theological imaginary. For now, I must perhaps slightly contrapuntally yet complementarily in relation to the Overture, note that the sacramentality as the God-created and God-revealed interface of relationality between the triune God and humanity, and liturgy as the interface for the enactment of this sacramentality, is not a sacramentality of instantly recognizable necessity, unambiguous ubiquity, and predictable seamlessness. As Ann Loades has remarked:

To speak of the mediation of divine presence, transfiguring or blessing or gracing our world or some part or aspect of it, has everything to do with simply allowing for the possibility of it, of relishing it wherever is just so happens to be around, to surface perhaps, to be not merely unmistakably but perhaps even very ambiguously just ‘there’. Further, divine presence may very properly be associated with the fleeting, the contingent, here today and gone tomorrow, with ‘travelling light’. Indeed, most of the ‘material signs’ of specific sacraments or of sacramental practices are fluid, or consumable, transient, except in their immediate or longer term effects on human persons. [[11]](#footnote-11)

If liturgy is indeed the church as the convocation of discipleship – the Body of Christ – *in actu*, then the action which effectively signifies and causes the Body of Christ, itself is an implementation and actualization of a specific relationship. After all, what is liturgy if not a faith enacted, and what is faith if not a particular *religio* (a relational bond/ing), wherein “faith is not a knowledge known but a relationship performed?”[[12]](#footnote-12) If so, the liturgically enacted *religio* of faith is a “liturgical-sacramental practice” which, according to Edward Kilmartin, “implies a comprehensive interpretation of reality which can be unfolded with constant reference to the practice itself.”[[13]](#footnote-13) The adjective “comprehensive” signals the orthodox range of liturgical concern and care for all things in relation to God and particularly of the human life “at full stretch” before God. Hence the issues of ethics – of the quiddity or *how*-ness of human interrelations and interactions across the coordinates of the social, political, the economical, the racial, and the sexual landscapes of lived reality must be situated non-accidentally and non-occasionalistically within the scope of liturgical, indeed Christian theological, orthodoxy. Orthodoxy, as George Florovsky, Aidan Kavanagh, and Frank Senn have rightly insisted on drawing from the semantic structure of the Greek term itself, is “primarily not ‘right opinion’ (as it is usually interpreted in the West), but rather ‘right glory’, i.e. precisely, right worship”[[14]](#footnote-14) or “the true worship of the true God.”[[15]](#footnote-15) Therefore the reflection on orthodoxy must really be about “a sustained life of right worship.”[[16]](#footnote-16) In the light of the Bonhoefferian dictum, the argument of this dissertation proceeds from a necessity to challenge those theological imaginaries of orthodoxy (the right worship or the right liturgy, as well as the right teaching or belief) that ignore the full critical and constructive purchase of Bonhoeffer’s stance for Christian theology. Today, as faithfully as ever, it is the theology shaped by its embededdness in Christ incarnate, crucified, and risen for the salvation of the palpably unredeemed world. But it is also the theology conscious of its age, even more precisely, the theology conscious of its having come of age, having reached its *Mündigkeit* in the age of postcolony, of the relatively recent Holocaust, and during what Arjun Appadurai has aptly called “the decade of superviolence, a decade characterized by a steady growth in civil and civic warfare in many societies as a feature of everyday life.”[[17]](#footnote-17) Appadurai refers to the 1990s decade of high globalization with the large-scale culturally motivated violence in the South Eastern Europe, Rwanda, and India, only to be superseded by the new sort of permanent global war on terror taking place across the multiple plains of our “worldwide civilization of clashes.”[[18]](#footnote-18) The pivotal question in such circumstances, Appadurai suggests, is to consider the peculiar violence of our times in relational terms, which I suggest, makes his concern a theological concern as well:

The large-scale violence of the 1990s appears to be typically accompanied by a surplus of rage, an excess of hatred that produces untold forms of degradation and violation, both to the body and the being of the victim: maimed and tortured bodies, burned and raped persons, disemboweled women, hacked and amputated children, sexualized humiliation of every type. What are we to do with this surplus, which has frequently been enacted in public actions, often among friends and neighbors, and is no longer conducted in the covert ways in which degradation of group warfare used to occur in the past?[[19]](#footnote-19)

The issue of the quiddity of relation in a thoroughly intersubjective and interrelated reality presents the most nagging conundrum in the contemporary cultural milieu, including theological discourse. For theology in particular, it stretches reciprocally across the whole interface of divine-human relationality as well as interpersonal relationality. In this context, the definition of orthodoxy as the sustained life of right worship, I submit, has everything to do with the non-detraction of ethics, or the discourse on the quiddity of relation, from theological discourse proper – liturgical, systematic, fundamental, and all others in their own way. My concern regarding specifically liturgical theology is focused methodologically: what kind of relation between liturgy and ethics could and should be construed to fittingly reflect the divine-human relationality conceived as sacramental? Sacramentality, as I argued in the Overture, is always already an analogous reflection and enablement of a particular constellation of relationality, or a certain quiddity of relation. It configures the hypostatic union christologically, and the economy of salvific Incarnation sacramentally. The relation between liturgy and ethics is thus a question about the right kind of “speculation” or “mirroring” for the “right worship.” It is about the orientation toward the imaginary of sacramental relationality under the dually “dark” proviso of apophasis and eschatology (1.Cor.13:12) vis-à-vis an orientation mirroring in a liturgically “stale mirror,” as Berger argues, more comfortably the patterns of dominant social relations of the surrounding culture than a transformative evangelical newness as a “space where multifaceted, vibrantly new, life-giving, God-sustained gender-roles are being practiced that allow all human beings and all creation to flourish.”[[20]](#footnote-20) As already mentioned, Berger’s focus on the gender hierarchy should be extended to similarly challenge the coordinates of culture, race, class, ethnicity, and sexuality as well. Perhaps especially so, keeping in mind the imaginary of the “civilization of clashes” as a most disconcerting cultural configuration of power, identity, and difference in the present globalized era. Interrogating this kind of relationality – focusing on the liturgy and ethics in particular, but aware of the rhizome quality of relational patterns across the vast panorama of relations immanently and transcendently – is the objective of the present project. This, however, might appear to be a problematic and provocative objective in the specific context of liturgical theology. To some problems involved here I will now turn.

1. **Liturgy: Whose Work?**

Liturgy is a hybrid notion with multiple layers of meaning and usage. The semantic origins of the term λειτουργία are in Greece. In the classical Greek, λειτουργία did not connote a specifically and exclusively religious or ritual activity, but denoted a work (έργον) vicariously performed as public service on behalf of the people (λαος). Projects intended for the common good in various areas such as education, defense, and entertainment were called λειτουργία.[[21]](#footnote-21) The “religious turn” of λειτουργία occurred when it was used in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures (LXX, Septuagint) to denote the ritual worship and sacerdotal services in the temple. In the New Testament, λειτουργία has been used to refer to sacerdotal ministry of priests and Christ (Lk.1:23, Heb.8:2, 8:6, 9:21), to the ministry of proclaiming the Gospel (Rom.15:16), to charitable activity on behalf of the needy (2.Cor.9:12), to the worship of God (Acts 13:2), and even to the service of angels (Heb.1:7, 14). Gradually λειτουργία was used in a more narrowly specified way to describe in the Eastern Christian milieu the eucharistic rite – “the Divine Liturgy.” In the West, λειτουργία returned after a long period as *liturgia*, to be actively used in the aftermath of the Reformation and its reforms of public worship and to be substituted for the Mass among the Protestants, while also being used more widely as the term to denote the rites or orders of Christian practices of worship. Often the meaning of λειτουργία has been rendered as the “work of the people,” comprising the doxological action of the church in its public worship.

Two things are rather clear about liturgy: First, the polysemy of liturgy suggests a remarkably multifarious field of complementary actions of Jesus Christ and people, ranging from Christ’s priestly work as a λειτουργος (Heb. 8:6) performing the redemptive *opus Dei*, to the service of Christ’s followers enmeshed in relations between individuals, community, and state. Liturgy is an *opus*, divine and human, with fluidly overlapping causalities, agencies, orientations, scopes, and goals within the economy of salvation. Second, the historical specification and semantic compression of the notion of λειτουργία into the increasingly well demarcated sphere of sacramental worship in general, and into the varieties of the *ordo* of ritual public worship in particular, has progressively problematized the understanding of liturgy in the present. What is the appropriate scope of liturgy and whose agency is the liturgical agency, given the initial multivalence and subsequent “disciplining” of liturgy? Most importantly, what could be the desirable configuration of a non-hegemonic co-presence and co-working of liturgy and ethics depending on the understanding of what liturgy is?

First of all, there appears to be a broad consensus, at least among the so-called liturgical traditions within Christianity, that liturgy is the identifying or “characteristic”[[22]](#footnote-22) action of the Christian church and the defining marker of identity of a convocation of Christian discipleship. As the identifying action of the church, liturgy is in the most general functional sense “an ordered way of performing its public worship before God and the world.”[[23]](#footnote-23) More specifically, liturgy is, as Norman Pittenger summarizes,

the public action of worship by a community, with the use of prescribed and established forms, thus guaranteeing the possibility of common participation – liturgy is ‘common prayer’, and that requires agreed words and agreed actions, so that the fullest sharing may be possible for those who take part. And in the historical Christianity, there can be no doubt, the liturgical action par excellence has always been the Eucharist, the Lord’s Supper, the Holy Communion – call it what you will.[[24]](#footnote-24)

Regarding prayer, according to Don Saliers, liturgy is even more specifically the Christocentric “ongoing prayer, proclamation, and life of Jesus Christ – sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise – offered to God in and through his body in the world. That is, Christian liturgy is our response to the self-giving of God in, with, and through the One who leads us in prayer.”[[25]](#footnote-25)

But the meaning of liturgy stretches further. Liturgy, as Alexander Schmemann puts it, is “the Church *in actu*.”[[26]](#footnote-26) It is the “church caught in the act of being most overtly itself”[[27]](#footnote-27) in the words of Aidan Kavanagh. Liturgy is in a certain sense coterminous with the church. Simon Chan emphasizes that there is “no separation between the liturgy and the church.”[[28]](#footnote-28) Frank Senn reminds that the church is “visible only where the people assemble to do those things that constitute them as the people of God – proclaim the word of God and celebrate the sacraments of Christ.”[[29]](#footnote-29) Finally, David Fagerberg states that in the “thick sense” it is liturgy that “creates the Church”[[30]](#footnote-30) as the body of Christ, and therefore liturgy itself is “the participation by the body of Christ in the activity of the Trinity,”[[31]](#footnote-31) while Edward Kilmartin stresses that the nature of liturgy is “the common action” as the dynamic medium of church’s gradual “growing” into the body of Christ.[[32]](#footnote-32)

The ascending complexity curve in the conceptualizations of liturgy shows that there is an impressive range of theological positions of initial understanding of liturgy from a liturgical minimalism (order of worship) to a “high” sacramental ecclesiology presupposing a participatory *theo*-ontology. What is common to most descriptions of liturgy, understandably, is the focus on action, i.e. the “work of the people.” But herein resides a difficulty. Namely, the “work” has evolved into one of the most loaded theological notions, especially since the Reformation and all the concerns about the heretical Pelagian features of meritorious “works” in relation to the justification by grace and salvation. The contemporary ecumenical critique of liturgy as “the work of the people” focuses on the concerns about the ascendancy of the images of liturgical assemblies as the “owners” of the “work” of liturgy. A current of critique has been directed toward the tendencies to install the human, indeed sinful, “we” – the liturgical assembly – as the dominating subject of the liturgy rather than the triune God. Thus Michael Aune contests the disposition to give “more pride of place to what the worshipping community is *doing* in the liturgical event” with the result of tripping “the balance of divine initiative and human response”[[33]](#footnote-33) which Aune attributes to what he calls formidable and even verging on the hegemonic “Schmemann-Kavanagh-Fagerberg-Lathrop Line” in the English speaking liturgical theology. In a feisty Protestant manner, Aune reminds that λειτουργία does not univocally signify community activity, i.e. “the work of the people,” and that

…there is a short step from liturgy as ‘the work of the people’ to an emphasis on human action as the primary dynamic of the event. While liturgy is, in some sense, something that believers *do*, this does not justify a wholesale theological shift from God’s action to the worshipping community’s action.[[34]](#footnote-34)

While it is beyond the scope of this project to challenge the surprising presumed homogeneity and pertinence of Aune’s “Line” as I believe should be done, his arguments against the misleading and unproductive spin-offs of Prosper of Acquitaine’s *legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi* and the ahistorically and dualistically coerced clashes of *theologia prima* versus *theologia secunda[[35]](#footnote-35)* are timely and useful. Moreover, his call for the refocusing of attention on liturgy as *opus Dei* before being anything else and for an inquisitive revisitation of the theological potential within notion of liturgy as *dievkalpojums*/*Gottesdienst* can, I submit, be useful precisely in reimaging the relation of liturgy and ethics, albeit I suspect in a different way than Aune would do it. In fact, Part III of my dissertation envisions to do precisely that.

Another current of the critique, resonating but not coinciding with both Berger’s and Aune’s concerns, represents a perspective for which the issue of liturgy being an obedient “mirror” of the *Zeitgeist* again comes to the fore. In the Western cultural context, Kavanagh – to name but one of the critical voices – forcefully decried the “modern middle-class *Volksfrömmigkeit*” whose dominant agency is shaped by civil religion and inscribes the gospel into the middle-class values such as “comfort in affluence, participation in approved groups, consumerism, and a general optimism which seems to have lost its grip on reality.”[[36]](#footnote-36) The consequence of such prioritizing of human agency is liturgy becoming, in his famous words, “a tiresome dialectical effort at raising the consciousness of middle-class groups concerning ideologically approved ends and means.”[[37]](#footnote-37) Expanding Kavanagh’s concerns to ethnocentric and nationalistic horizons, it becomes clearer that liturgy can indeed easily become a self-centered “autocelebration”[[38]](#footnote-38) of a liturgical assembly and its pseudo-eschatological ideologies. What is unforgivably lost is the redemptive exteriority of God and the corresponding attitude of eschatological and apophatical reserve as it should be incorporated into the *sacrum commercium* of the triune God with the liturgical convocations of discipleship. Under the circumstances of autocelebration the salvific exteriority is interdicted by a “liturgical ‘coup’ in which the sacred is eliminated, the language trivialized and the cult turned into a social event.”[[39]](#footnote-39) In short, liturgy becoming an autocelebration constitutes an abdication of the liturgical vocation to participate in the order of salvation. In this context, Berger and other women-centered theologians of liturgy and sacramentality are rightly concerned with the unholy “mirroring” work of liturgy in the ongoing facilitation and proliferation of oppressive gender relations. In the postcolonial context, the attention also understandably goes well beyond the mostly simplistic, unilateral, and cunningly “universal” models of “liturgical inculturation” administered by and mirroring the “Western spectacle”[[40]](#footnote-40) of theological rationality.[[41]](#footnote-41) At the same time, from a Protestant perspective, Aune is concerned with the manipulation of proper liturgical agency in significant segments of recent constructive liturgical theology at the expense of divine *opus* of grace and responsible appreciation of the human condition of sinfulness. Aidan Nichols similarly condemns the “derailing of the essentially theocentric act of worship into sidelines of social edification and group-psychological therapy” with its “entertainment ethos.”[[42]](#footnote-42) From the perspective of (Occidental) theological aesthetics the undesirable outcome of such displacements, according to Nichols, is a “liturgical horizontalism” that rejects the *Hochformen* of (Western) “high culture” as indispensable means of liturgical practice and issues in a “distinctively Christian version of *philistinism*.”[[43]](#footnote-43)

But alongside these, there is another kind of concern about uncritical “mirroring” of culture at large and the potentially manipulative exaggeration of human agency in liturgy, with a more ambiguous objective and with a rather direct bearing on the relation of liturgy and ethics. It appears in the critiques of those versions of “autocelebration” which are perceived as transgressive of the “untouchable quality”[[44]](#footnote-44) of the liturgy. According to this type of concerns, within the “ownership” model of liturgical agency, liturgy becomes a “property” of the celebrating assembly and a “terrain given over to their ‘creativity’.”[[45]](#footnote-45) Liturgy is seen as a component of an ahistorical and universal order of preservation: the liturgy pre-exists the celebrating community and is a “pre-established, divine and spiritual architecture.”[[46]](#footnote-46) According to Danneels,

…liturgy can never be a self-fashioned concoction of the celebrating community; we are not creators, we are servants and guardians of the mysteries. We do not own them nor did we author them (…) the fundamental attitude of the ‘*homo liturgicus’*… is one of receptivity, readiness to listen, self-giving and self-relativizing. It is the attitude of faith and of faithful obedience (…) It is an attitude of listening and seeing… an attitude so alien to the ‘*homo faber’* in many of us … an attitude of prayer, of handing ourselves over to God and letting his will be done in us.[[47]](#footnote-47)

What Danneels calls the “untouchable quality” of liturgy seems to be the (now contested) *ordo* or the grounding structure or “shape” of liturgy, but not only that. The flipside of the otherwise appropriate concerns regarding liturgical agency for the critiques like Danneels’, Nichols’, and Kavanagh’s – among others – is the identification of the *ordo* or the “untouchable quality” of liturgy not with the immensely versatile, even though not arbitrarily chaotic, liturgical tradition, but with a distinct imaginary of the liturgical past. Certain historical imaginaries of the divine initiative, theologically and liturgically, border on being mistaken for the divine initiative when a particular liturgical form is enthroned as untouchable for correction, augmentation, modulation, and re-imaging. Divine initiative thus comes dangerously close to being, in fact, identified and confused with the domineering Western European cultural, and especially aesthetic preferences, and with the hegemonic social, especially gender, relations expressed in what the feminist critiques have rightly called a linguistic injustice of the liturgical language to name just the most obvious liturgical component of the “masculine monopoly in religion.”[[48]](#footnote-48) Divine initiative can be identified with certain “creativity” of the past historical and cultural moments since liturgy as an *ordo* is indeed a creative production of human liturgical convocations of discipleship in response to the vulnerably kenotic divine self-revelation in Christ, and thus in no way infallible as all human responses necessarily are. Kavanagh, half-ironically calling himself a reactionary, can deride the “em*bourgeoisement*” of the consumerist liturgical dialectics while only a couple of paragraphs later lamenting the aggressive, ill-considered, and unilateral alterations of liturgical language and its biblically and conciliary grounded ways of naming God[[49]](#footnote-49) in response to the attempts to rectify precisely the linguistic injustice in relation to gender, culture, class, and race. Even more ironically, when otherwise thoughtful and necessary critiques –such as Danneels’ – proceed without sufficient investigation of their frequent confusion of the salvific divine exteriority with the exteriority of the past and with the exteriority of a particular cultural chronotope, it is indeed important to notice the ambivalence of such pronouncements as: “The liturgy is not a feast we have laid out for ourselves, according to our own personal preferences. It is God’s feast. We attend at God’s invitation.”[[50]](#footnote-50) The emphasis on God’s prevenient *opus* can become precisely a feast that a certain kind of “we” lay for themselves according to their very personal preferences. It is helpful not to forget that by such “work” and such “initiative” a profitable re-entrenchment of injustice and indifference toward the existential religious exigencies of internally and externally subaltern fellow human beings can be camouflaged.

Of course, in the context of liturgy as *opus* and especially in the light of the multipronged liturgical critiques of the “work” imaginary of liturgy, it is advantageous, I submit, to turn once more to the liturgical language in search for a constructive imaginary that remains true to the biblical pluriformity of λειτουργία, its dynamic nature as a work, as well as the indispensable primordiality of divine action. Of course, the reliance on the linguistic aspects of theological notions in such constructive endeavors has been sometimes criticized.[[51]](#footnote-51) But as a non-native speaker of English, I cannot but notice a formative role of linguistic consciousness in theological inquiry. Indeed, “to speak a language is to take on a world, a culture.”[[52]](#footnote-52) For example, I have never been quite able to understand the diffuse term “worship”[[53]](#footnote-53) in all its myriad usages in liturgical theology, especially when it is used as a synonym for liturgy or divine service. It is probably so because my native Latvian language uses the word *dievkalpojums* to describe the public divine service in exactly the same way as *Gottesdienst[[54]](#footnote-54)* is used in the German language, or *gudstjänst* in Swedish. *Dievkalpojums/Gottesdienst* has the capacity in a single word to imply the double agency of God rendering the work of service to us and us rendering the service of praise, thanksgiving, lament, and supplication to God. Two orders of agency and causality are united dialogically (or hybridically, as I will argue in Part III) in one “service of God” wherein

the phrase ‘of God’ must be taken not only as an objective genitive but also as a subjective genitive; that is, not only does the community serve God, but God also serves the community, in the saving service he has performed for it in Christ, who said that he had come ‘not to be served but to serve’ (Mt.20:28, Mk.10:45).[[55]](#footnote-55)

The imaginary of *dievkalpojums*/*Gottesdienst* provides a rewarding interface for a univocal affirmation of liturgy as *opus Dei* indeed before it can be any other kind of *opus*. Their close connection to the work of service (the verbs are *kalpot* and *dienen*) preserve the terms’ theological linkage to the aspect of vicarious performance initially inscribed in λειτουργία and subsequently appropriated in the notional range of λειτουργία in the New Testament. As Senn accurately points out,

Christian liturgy as acts of rite and prayer instituted by Jesus the Christ and inspired by the Holy Spirit in the history of the church is also the work of God (*opus Dei*) …it is the work of God’s people only because it is the work of God.[[56]](#footnote-56)

Moreover, from the hybrid perspective of *dievkalpojums*, it is only pertinent to be more precise about the naming of the liturgical communities. So far, when not quoting or referring to other authors, I have used the expression of “liturgical convocation of discipleship.” “Convocation” is a term I borrow from Henri de Lubac and Robert F. Taft. If liturgy is indeed first and foremost *opus Dei*, then the church as a liturgical community “is a *convocatio* before being a *congregatio*.”[[57]](#footnote-57) Taft elaborates that the church as εκκλησία denotes precisely the “calling together” and not merely “coming together” on our own initiative, thus the church is not, properly speaking, an “assembly” but “convocation.”[[58]](#footnote-58)

To sum up, at this point I believe it is helpful to rehearse the stance of the Overture to specify that liturgy is the enacted interface of the entire economy of *sacrum commercium* or sacramentally configured relationality between God and creation. Even more, liturgy in its broadest Pauline and patristic sense, according to Taft, is the “salvific relationship between God and us.”[[59]](#footnote-59) As *dievkalpojums* or *Gottesdienst*, liturgy is an *opus* in which divine and human agencies and causalities interact and co-act. Liturgy is *opus Dei* in and through human *opera* as far as these *opera* participate in Christ’s work through the power and the inspiration of the Spirit. Or, according to Taft’s analogy, “if the Bible is the Word of God in the words of men” then liturgy perceived as work is “the saving deeds of God in the actions of those men and women who would live in him.”[[60]](#footnote-60)

1. **Ethics: Which Ethics?**

Now what about ethics? What about the relation – or lack thereof – between liturgy and ethics? Being in the habit of defining the most important concepts and images broadly, ethics is no exception to this proclivity. My understanding and usage of the term “ethics” does not presume an endorsement of a particular theory or school of moral philosophy, or some tightly disciplined body of knowledge. If indeed ethics would be understood as a neatly limited set of philosophical expert-discourses on moral dilemmas and the prescriptive models of solutions to reject or to subscribe to, then envisioning the desirability of liturgical and theological discourses entering into a relation with such ethics would raise the question of an ontotheological slippage in the Heideggerian sense of “metaphysics.” Namely, the site of the relationship would be similar to the site of hegemonic philosophical conditions determining the way of “*der Gott*” entering philosophy,[[61]](#footnote-61) with the specification that here it would be, in Heidegger’s language, something like a non-“metaphysical” cultic practice of falling in awe onto one’s knees and making music and dancing before God[[62]](#footnote-62) that now forces itself upon a moral theory in accordance with such theory’s judgment of “that and how” such an entrance must take place. This perception of liturgy-ethics relation is, I submit, partially to explain – without justifying – the reluctance of liturgical theologies to become ethically engaged and to exaggerate rather disjunctively the ludic nature of liturgy. I will return to this issue later in the next section of this chapter.

Yet pondering over the locus of ethics in theological reasoning is not primarily and merely about the methodologically justifiable navigation among various, sometimes mutually allergic, disciplinary universes but rather about the relation of theological discourse and what Edward Kilmartin aptly calls “routine living.”[[63]](#footnote-63) To paraphrase Dietrich Bonhoeffer, it could be said that the responsible question about ethics and theology, or rather, ethics in theology, is akin to asking “not how to extricate [oneself] heroically from the affair” – here the affair of disciplinary alienation driven by the modern romantic yearning for purity among other things – “but how the coming generation is to live.”[[64]](#footnote-64) Ethics is “essentially social” as “an inquiry into living well and getting along with others.”[[65]](#footnote-65) On the other hand, the vector of ethically colored reflection certainly traverses the multiple terrains of life as lived relational complexity, penetrating into, but not arresting itself around, specifically focused social, intellectual, political, religious, or economic discourses with their immense hinterlands of theories, methods, debates, and prejudices. The field of ethics is the whole of life in both its mutually related 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.[[66]](#footnote-66)

To sum up, ethics, as I have already hinted several times before, is about the quiddity and quality of relations: the divine-human relationality and equally and simultaneously the inter-human relationality. Deliberately I have tried so far to say both aspects of relationality, divine-human and inter-human, in one breath – impossible as it is in all media of human signification except in music. I attempt to do so here following Martin Buber – and later Emmanuel Levinas in a certain sense as well – by applying his pivotal analytical metaphor of “relation” (*die Beziehung*) analogically to the whole interface of relationality. In *Ich und Du*, Buber envisions inter-human relationality as the truly real similitude of the relationality between God and humanity.[[67]](#footnote-67) The quiddity of inter-human relations is simultaneously the site of disclosure, discernment, and judgment of the relation with God, and vice versa. Relation functions like a double-sided mirror in which the theological conceptions, religious dispositions, and liturgical performances are opened up for interrogative transparency, always interlaced with and always answerable to the actualities of human cohabitation, and vice versa. Buber’s dually vectored relation encompasses the whole of created life; in human life the division and separation between the supposed “real relation to God” and “unreal relation of the I-It attitude toward the world”[[68]](#footnote-68) can only be an idolatrous fabrication. Another crucial aspect of the dually vectored analogical relation is that it is not mutually competitive since it is precisely the uniqueness (*Einzigkeit*) of the real relation to God to accommodate the absolute exclusivity and absolute inclusivity of relations.[[69]](#footnote-69) Hence my insistence on speaking of both kinds of relation – divine and human – in the same breath as far as the quiddity, i.e. ethics, of both is concerned. Evermore, the same template of dually vectored, reciprocally answerable, and non-competitive[[70]](#footnote-70) relationality ought to, I submit, be considered as the most fruitful appropriate methodological imaginary for the re-engagement of liturgy with ethics without reductive instrumentalization of either. In fact, such a methodological imaginary would be fruitful beyond this particular modern disengagement of theological disciplines and sensibilities – perhaps first and foremost, to phase out the dualistic civilization of the *lex orandi* versus *lex credendi*, *theologia prima* versus *theologia secunda* clashes.

Surely the kind of relationship among specific areas of religious knowledge and knowing, such as liturgical theology, doctrinal theology, and theological ethics – or lack thereof – is part of the broader, indeed infinitely broader, network of theo-ontological relationality. This relationality definitely includes the habits of thought as one of the crucial sites of ethics among other sites ethically invested in “a refinement of want, an education of vision, a revelation within one’s innate desires of the beauty present in all otherness (even when deeply hidden).”[[71]](#footnote-71) Imaging ethics in narrower terms of theoretical labor in theology, it seems to be about the habits of thought pertinent to a reading/reflection practice that – and here I feel particularly in line with Rey Chow’s observation – “is always tactical” and carries “with it a willingness to take risks, a willingness to destroy the submission to widely accepted, predictable, and safe conclusions.”[[72]](#footnote-72) Especially, given that the “anxiety about being accused of conservatism and political incorrectness can cause to hold back observations of what is equally exploitative, coercive, and manipulative in so-called ‘oppositional’ discourses,” ethics as discursive habits of mind engenders a capacity for risk-taking by supplementing “idealism doggedly with non-benevolent readings.”[[73]](#footnote-73) Accordingly, I propose, ethics is a pivotal and indispensable ingredient of theological discourse, embedded in and accountable to relationally conceived theo-ontology. It is so especially since Christian theology is based on the sacramentally configured revelation of a triune God – the God whose nature is “triune relationality without remainder.”[[74]](#footnote-74)

Finally, it seems to be too minimalistic to invoke ethics without mentioning justice. Here I find particularly interesting that Beverly Wildung Harrison’s idea of justice gravitates around the notion of right relationship. For Harrison with her sustained special attention to the problematic of liberation over decades, justice “is our central theological image, a metaphor of right relationship, which shapes the *telos* of a good community and serves as the animating passion of the moral life.”[[75]](#footnote-75) Justice as right relationship, I suggest, has much to do with the notion of orthodoxy, already encountered in the previous section in the context of the sustained life of right worship/service. Of course, it is fairly obvious that for theological reflection focusing primarily on the issues of method in particular it is true that “while theological notions of justice specify neither the range of concrete goods and values for which we ought to strive in the immediate future, nor principles of sufficient specificity to adjudicate conflicts of interests … they give us some clues for prioritizing our principles and identifying our concrete goals.”[[76]](#footnote-76) It is important to notice that the “prioritization of principles” turns out to be not only a question of Christian ethical orthodoxy as an intra-disciplinary orthodoxy but of theological orthodoxy *tout court*. Harrison is completely right, as I see it, to evaluate the “prioritization” of ethical principles as making an appropriately overriding difference since the point of the prioritization she advocates is nothing less than construing “a vision of justice” – right relationship! – “to be substantive and central to our *theological* vision.”[[77]](#footnote-77) Even though I do not believe that “prioritization” (with its connotations of competitiveness) of justice as ortho-relationality is the most beneficial way of re-imaging and re-orchestrating ethics as a native and indispensable part of theology as a discourse, the critical and constructive purchase here is, first of all, to situate relationality in the center of theological enterprise as a whole. In fact, such is the thrust of certain liberation theologies. Justice or ortho-relationality is radically inscribed “at the center of not only a theological *ethic*, but of *our vision of God*.”[[78]](#footnote-78) It remains for me to add at this juncture that I do have reservations about the language of “prioritization,” Harrison’s and liberationists’ alike. Prioritizing gestures often privilege competitively and dualistically. These reservations will receive a fuller treatment in Part III as part of the constructive argument for a contrapuntal conception of relationality. However, the conviction that justice as ortho-relationality belongs irreplaceably – not adiaphorically and not as an illegitimate impostor of some theo-ideology – within theology as the “ever-renewed risk of trying to talk about God”[[79]](#footnote-79) and thus within the “prolongation of the message of revelation,”[[80]](#footnote-80) also points toward the possibilities of a fruitful re-engagement of liturgy and ethics. But before getting there, it is now time to take a closer look at the lingering disengagement.

1. **Ambiguous Adiaphorization: Liturgy and Ethics as *parerga***

In these times of post-postmodernism, to invoke modernity is to suggest, almost predictably and routinely, an attitude of critique without restraint toward this “already and not yet” dissolving epoch. But of course, no epochs – especially as envisioned theologically even “in face of despair” by contemplating them “from the standpoint of redemption”[[81]](#footnote-81) – are beyond the possibility of discerning the redemptive and redeemable aspects.[[82]](#footnote-82) Modernity is a far too complex and ambivalent constellation of lifeworlds and lifeforms to be either fetishized or demonized without care and attention to its many colonial, universalistic, and imperialistic “undersides.” Regarding the conflictual, even occasionally oppositional, relation of liturgy and ethics it must be said, however, that modernity has provided a context of particularly problematic imaginaries of unproductive binarism and competitive dualism within the Western habits of thought. These convoluted aspects of modernity have facilitated a maliciously fecund ground for the mutation of faith and spiritual life into fetishization of liberal individualism and privatized pietism, and the mutation of theological discourse into alienated disciplinary archipelagos which bear virtually no resemblance or relation to the intertwined actualities of lived religion as an integral part of all human existential engagements personally and communally.

The facet of modernity most relevant to the disengagement between liturgy and ethics – practically and academically – can be summarized as addiction to the discursive and imaginative tendency toward “overpitched polarity.”[[83]](#footnote-83) According to Gavin Hyman, modernity as a worldview or sensibility is characterized by “the desire for an all-encompassing mastery of reality by rational and/or scientific means.”[[84]](#footnote-84) It has permeated various cultures and disciplines, but

was always marked by the trace of an exclusion. This is because in order for this mastery to be accomplished, the system itself had to exclude, expel, or negate that which was deemed to fall outside it, namely … the nonrational or nonscientific. This was the great paradox of the modern desire for mastery: that in its quest for universal and totalizing comprehension, its system was obliged to *exclude* or *repress* that which lay outside it, thereby calling its universal and total comprehensiveness into question. [[85]](#footnote-85)

Certainly, a less Occident-centered view would necessarily add that alongside the excluded/expelled nonrational and indeed “feminine,” all things non-Occidental were and still are equally excluded or at least suspected within the modern desire for mastery. Also, an enduring fixture of the imaginary of mastery is the desire for purity. It operates according to the law of the excluded middle, i.e., the logic of competitive “either/or.” The application of the law of the excluded middle, i.e., “both,” constitutes “a core project of modernity.”[[86]](#footnote-86) Consequently, as a *habitus* of imagination, rationality, and praxis,

…modernity itself is just this contradictory, even duplicitous, attempt to separate and purify realms – the natural, social, and empyrean realms, with their things and people and gods – that have never been separate and pure, and still are not.[[87]](#footnote-87)

But the double desire for mastery and purity – or the imperial passion for perspective of panopticon, surveillance, and observation with an implied viewer with an elevated vantage point[[88]](#footnote-88) – is not simply “modern.” It pertains to a specifically *Western* modern idea of possessive enclosure and boundary. As Bill Ashcroft argues, the trope of boundary is fundamental in Western epistemology; but it does not merely mean epistemological limit and contradiction, but also control.[[89]](#footnote-89) Left undeconstructed, boundaries “are a sign of the need to resolve ambivalence, to regulate and categorize difference.”[[90]](#footnote-90) Boundaries are fundamental for Western European modernity: not only as regulatory practices of Western epistemology – such as boundary between the subject and object – but also in a much more sinister way between the civilized (white, Western European, male) self and the primitiv(ized) others. Far from being a cultural or solely epistemological caprice, in conjunction with the idea of enclosure and tendency toward Manichean reification,

boundaries of various kinds and forms of boundary-making are central to the colonial relationship, from the most material forms of spatial enclosure to the most abstract modes of Western thinking. None of these boundaries is easy to ignore, and the ultimate force of imperial hegemony lies in their invisibility, for boundaries, erected as forms of conceptual enclosure and social regulation, become ways of understanding ‘how things are’.[[91]](#footnote-91)

Yet, as postmodern and postcolonial discourses have demonstrated, the repressed/excluded is by no means the non-existent and is therefore always liable to return to call modernity into question, thus proving the inherent instability, let alone ethical malfunction, of the modern (and colonial) project.

Theologically, the indulgence in epistemological dualisms has lead to an overall truncation of sacramentality (see the Overture) into fragmentary and mutually allergic discursive fixations which serve the thrust of mastery and purity. It endorses dualistic thinking habits that constrict the reflection on lived reality in all its complexity and ambiguity and artificially divide reality into axiological hierarchies. The outcome, as Susan Ross has observed, is that the subtle sacramental complexity, ambiguity, fluidity, and multivalence are constricted into a detached realm of an “official” sacramental system, which, being dualistic has a predilection toward legalistic discourse of validity and no toleration of metaphysical ambiguity, and

…poses … dual realities over and against each other… resists complex and fluid relations between dual realities, and defends instead clear and distinct boundaries. Qualities belonging to one by definition do not belong to the other, and the two are often hierarchically related: one is superior to the other, or one has jurisdictional power over the other.[[92]](#footnote-92)

In the context of sacramentality and liturgy, the modern Western trope of boundary and the desire for mastery and purity have produced a double disjunction: first, between doctrinal (or dogmatic, or systematic) theology and sacramental-liturgical theology, and second, between theology, including most disturbingly sacramental-liturgical theology, and ethics. It is beyond the scope of this project to investigate a pivotal moment of the modern Western theological “turn to purity,” namely, the Reformation of the 16th century.[[93]](#footnote-93) Yet it is in the epistemological, rhetorical, and imaginative posteriority of the Reformation that the dualistic logic of exclusion facilitated the acceleration of the already present tendency of liturgical “externalism and ritualistic sacramentalism” with the dissolution of the liturgical community and the triumph of the private mass in (the Roman Catholic context)[[94]](#footnote-94) into the perilous invisibility of “how things are.” But the way how things “were” – and still “are” in many respects – within the modern liturgical space is indeed ironic.

On the one hand, the modern Western imaginary of dualistic compartmentalization, especially between the “sacred/otherworldly” and the “secular/worldly,” accommodated the slippage of the deeply ingrained Christian primacy of personal relation with God in Christ into the relegation of other kinds of simultaneous human relations to a subordinate position. This, as Marie L. Baird points out, created the setting where the spiritual focus is squarely on the relation (*religio!*) with God “usually encountered in devotional and liturgical practices.”[[95]](#footnote-95) The assumed and assigned pure and uncontaminated space of religion is supremely characterized by sacraments, liturgy, privatized devotional practices, and preoccupation with personal salvation. Certainly, such centrality of personal relation with God liturgically and devotionally does not comprise a problem, except when it is privileged disproportionately, exclusively, and competitively – most paradigmatically at the expense of ethical engagement. Yet this is precisely what confronts the Christian spiritual life and theology in the aftermath of the Holocaust according to Baird and, I must add, after the colonial modernity in general: there is indeed

…something amiss with a Christian spirituality that would continue to exclude a primarily *ethical* dimension from its self understanding and basic definitions. Perhaps such an exclusion is the last bastion of dualism that still considers ‘action’ to be the outcome of a ‘contemplation’ whose ultimate focus is in fact ‘otherworldly’.[[96]](#footnote-96)

Envisioned competitively and in isolation, the liturgical space – set apart narrowly and neatly from the rest of life – seems to be the exclusive center of spiritual self-transcendence in the life of faith and bears the full weight of being the privileged site of personal salvation. As far as the life of exercised faith or lived religion is concerned, the disengagement of liturgy and ethics ruefully reflects the epistemological and cultural *habitus* of enclosure. Even though Baird singles out Roman Catholicism in her relevant analysis of Christian modernity, her conclusions reach further across the spectrum of traditions less liturgical and sacramental but no less devotional than the Roman tradition:

In our desire to approach God through liturgy, devotional practice, as well as sacramental participation for Roman Catholics, we often seem to have forgotten that this God exhorts us repeatedly to care for the other beyond the get well card, the gift at Christmas or birthday, the check written out to our favorite charity. Traditional models of Christian spirituality as currently practiced have unintentionally encouraged this forgetfulness all too often. So too have other models of spirituality to the extent that they neglect ethical responsibility as an integral part of their self-understanding and practice. A primary intent of the post-Holocaust spirituality … is to incorporate ‘good works’ into the heart of self-transcendence itself, rather than relegating them to the status of ‘altruistic outcome’.[[97]](#footnote-97)

Yet on the other hand, as far as theology is concerned, the invisible regime of “how things are” appears to be rather the opposite. In the context of theological reflection the same dualistic and exclusionary logic of mastery, boundaries, and purity plays out in a different setting. The trajectories of privilege – or the teleologies of purity – regarding liturgy and sacramentality vis-à-vis dogmatic/doctrinal theology follow the paths of variably configured adiaphorization – rationalistic, moralistic, and aesthetic. Or, using a more theological term to describe the teleologies of desire for purity, the particularly modern inclination in liturgical adiaphorization is an inclination toward a certain Monophysitism[[98]](#footnote-98) – the inability to hold together palimpsestically the multiple causalities, significations, and performative efficacies of liturgy as enacted sacramentality.

First, the modern Western *Entzauberung* and its correlative (theo)ideologies of secularism[[99]](#footnote-99) left in their wake the attitude toward liturgy and worship as being irrelevant, addictively nostalgic habits of reasoning, relating, and living in the best case, and as dangerously distractive, useless, and manipulative practices in the worst. The more or less clandestine continuation of this attitude of anti-liturgical secularism in theological inquiry, most notably in the modern systematic/dogmatic discourses, has contributed to the disengagement with and marginalization of the liturgical reflection and practices to the fanciful outback of theological *parerga*. The disenchanted style of theology has curiously ignored not only the “usual suspects” of the instrumental and mechanistic rationality – human embodiment, relationality, affectivity, and generally the dimension of αἴσθησις in human ways of knowing, suffering, and acting – but also a fact which was not lost on Friedrich Nietzsche in the very prime of modernity. Namely, the fact that “man is a venerating animal” while recognizing clearly that the time of “being at home with our venerations”[[100]](#footnote-100) has yielded to the era of systematic suspicion, mistrust, or even nihilism. If nothing else, Nietzsche’s open ended gesture toward a strange coupling of the abolition of worship and nihilism[[101]](#footnote-101) should definitely kindle some passion about de-marginalization of liturgy. As far as the routine methodological landscape of a typical disciplinary divide goes, the de-marginalization of liturgy and sacramentality offers epistemological alternatives which, as I will argue in Part III, can facilitate a modulation of the lingering methodological addictions to disciplinary hermeticism but most importantly, the dualistic Western Christian theological penchant for imaging liturgical practice and compassionate service as mutually competitive.

But more specifically, the rationalistic theological adiaphorization of sacramental liturgy consists in the attitude of sacramental and liturgical “*ex opere operato* minimalism.”[[102]](#footnote-102) The minimal requirements for and conditions of isolated sacramental validity here become the virtually exclusive focus in the epistemological framework of dichotomously juxtaposed realities of the “sacred” and the “secular.”[[103]](#footnote-103) The theological implication for liturgy in such circumstances is what Alexander Schmemann calls “tragic nominalism”[[104]](#footnote-104) which mutates the liturgical forms into an end in themselves by divorcing them from all other aspects of the life of faith. Liturgical nominalism is a formalism polished into the perfection of flawless inertia of self-referential empty repetition in splendid isolation from the interaction with other theological modalities. The compartmentalization resulted in liturgy becoming an oppositional activity in respect to the “profane” spheres of life and theology

shifted to a purely ‘cultic’ inquiry, which is centered always on the question of the validity and modality of a rite. Considering the sacrament exclusively from the point of view of the elements (transubstantiation, consubstantiation, etc.), theology practically ignored the liturgy itself, considering it as non-essential, symbolical ‘framework’ for the minimum of action and words necessary for validity. The whole liturgical action ceased to be understood as *sacramental*…[[105]](#footnote-105)

The genealogy of Western liturgy becoming a theological *adiaphora* is a complex one and its commencement is definitely not confined either to modernity alone or to any particular liturgical tradition alone. Modernity, however, accommodated and even facilitated the metamorphosis of philosophical and theological rationality wherein liturgy was frequently conceived as “an external shell” and as “just the ceremonial frosting, something nice but not essential, useful not in itself, but because it could edify and arouse devotion”[[106]](#footnote-106) in the cultural environment of devotional privatization of piety. On the top of it all, “the ceremonial” becomes “a disturbing factor” [[107]](#footnote-107) appealing to the peculiarities of aesthetes lacking Christian sincerity as a mere external decoration and generally expendable in terms of the authenticity of spiritual inwardness. The “frosting” perspective curiously resonates with another modality of liturgical adiaphorization which is also closely related to the same dualistic alienation, exacerbated by the modern Western *Entzauberung* – only in this case the adiaphorization is moralistic.

The adiaphorization of liturgy by reducing it to an instrument of Christianity as the moral religion *par excellence* in some quarters of the Enlightenment assigns liturgy to the status of *parerga.* The modern sensibility of rationalistic, non-embodied, and privatized religious inwardness unproblematically accommodates the instrumentalization of liturgy by reducing it to moral utility. Interestingly, here it is the moral utility and the concern about liturgy as precisely the distraction from ethical life that foregrounds the competitive juxtaposition favoring religion conceived in terms of morality over religion conceived in terms of sacramentality and liturgy. The logic of exclusion and enclosure operates in such a way that an always worthy and vigilant concern about what Immanuel Kant describes as “the danger of producing nothing but hypocritical veneration of God instead of a practical service of Him – a service which never consists of mere feelings”[[108]](#footnote-108) can only be prioritized in a hierarchical either/or relationship of zero-sum competitiveness. For the “religion within the limits of reason alone” outlook, sacramental liturgy is suspect of being an illusory and idolatrous formality capable of inducing “that sinking mood, called *adoration*, annihilating men, as it were, in their own eyes.”[[109]](#footnote-109) Now this is seen as clearly pointing to the dualistic and competitive conception of divine transcendence and creaturely immanence,[[110]](#footnote-110) so characteristic of the Western modernity. In an unsurprising Protestant gesture – for his era at least – Kant relegated all things sacramental and liturgical to the marginality of *parerga*. The wordplay around έργον is particularly suggestive of the remarkable perspectival shift regarding the status of liturgy as the “work” which constitutes and identifies the Christian convocation of discipleship – the church. For Kant, the “means of grace” – a technical term also for sacraments – are *parerga* which “do not belong within [religion] but border upon it.”[[111]](#footnote-111) In his earlier *Critique of Judgment*, Kant denotes *parergon* as an ornamentation and augmentation, and as “only an adjunct, and not an intrinsic constituent in the complete representation of the object.”[[112]](#footnote-112) Thus religion as ethical life is juxtaposed to the *Nebenwerke* such as the sacramental liturgy of the Eucharist which can be useful for promulgation of Christian communal equality and even cosmopolitan moral community, yet reminding about the dangers of clericalism, Kant warns that

…to assert that God has attached special favors to the celebration of this solemnity, and to incorporate among the articles of faith the proposition that this ceremony, which is after all but a churchly act, is, in addition, a *means of grace* – this is a religious illusion which can do naught but work counter to the spirit of religion.[[113]](#footnote-113)

The shift that Kant represents in such an exemplary manner reifies the dichotomy between sacramentality, liturgy, and ethics – among many other dualistic epistemological construals of reality. It is this juxtapositional epistemological trajectory that underlies most of the subsequent struggles and passions around the mutually exclusive center versus periphery configuration of liturgy’s relation to ethical life. From a methodological point of view, it does not make a tremendous difference what gets installed in the center – liturgy or ethics – since the *ergon-parergon* allocation remains unchanged. Consequently, as long as the sensibility and rationality of dualistic disengagement continues to lurk in the background of all attempts to produce a more fruitful and life-like template of relationality, the struggle to re-engage what has previously been enclosed away will continue.

As far as the aesthetic adiaphorization is concerned, it is not surprising that even those theological dispositions which represent the direct and sometimes reactionary backlash to the theologies prioritizing ethical primacy in religious discourse in general and in the liturgical-sacramental life in particular, repeat the same paradigmatic gestures in their administration of priorities. Only here the liturgy is associated with the aesthetic order of playfulness and ethics takes place of its *parergon.* To counter the reduction of liturgy to a didactic instrument of hegemonic moral, philosophical, and ideological agendas, gestures of aesthetic re-envisioning of liturgy are suggested. To wrest the liturgy out of the clasp of modern Western *Zweckrationalität*, Romano Guardini famously suggested that liturgy pertains to the ludic order of self-referentiality and artistic self-sufficiency.[[114]](#footnote-114) Developing this trajectory, Godfried Danneels (among others) carefully and pertinently highlights the perils of reductive liturgical subordination by emphasizing that liturgy is an end in itself and not a “warm-up” for anything else; life and liturgy remain in permanent and irreducible dialectical relationship where the two do not coincide.[[115]](#footnote-115) Of course, the question remains whether guarding the unquestionable irreducibility precludes the possibility of a non-reductive and palimpsestic coincidence. Moreover, within the aesthetic slant of center-periphery logic of adiaphorization it is the theologies of liberation[[116]](#footnote-116) that routinely (but only occasionally deservedly) bear the brunt of critique by liturgical conservatism which itself operates within the same modern dualistic and reductive paradigm that it assigns to other theological orientations. Yet admonition against “the overvaluation of ethics” by the “militant version” of “tilt toward ethics” at the cost of “devaluation of liturgy” through overall forgetfulness of the uncomfortable biblical tension between the two is present also within sacramental theologies that emphatically seek to re-image and re-enact the vital relation, such as Louis-Marie Chauvet’s.[[117]](#footnote-117) I will return to Chauvet’s proposal of holding the vital yet uncomfortable tension between liturgy and ethics later, but at this juncture it needs to be mentioned that the dangers of mutual absorption are dual while Chauvet prefers to single out the absorption of liturgy in ethics alone without addressing the dangers of the other option.

Among the merits of the ludic emphasis is the valuable re-engagement of liturgy and theology in general with the realm of human aesthetic experience to move toward recovery of the incarnational “fundamental consanguinity of intelligible and sensible.”[[118]](#footnote-118) Also, it is the gesture toward full restoration of aesthetic discourse as an intrinsically – incarnationally and sacramentally – theological concern. However, I believe that in the aftermath of the Holocaust and in the present condition of postcoloniality and superviolence, this particular slant of liturgical discourse ought to be extremely vigilant about its own entanglement not so much with aesthetics but aestheticism. Aestheticism in this context consists in the separation (boundaries!) of aesthetics from ethics and other discourses of struggle for truth and justice as a “pretension to paradise within sin.”[[119]](#footnote-119) This kind of aestheticism comes across as acutely decadent when the necessary arguments for non-reductive imaginaries of liturgy guarding against the catapulting of worship into political frames of discourse are accompanied by judging “oppression, war, injustice, hunger, racism, classism, sexism, western culturalism, and hierarchical power” to be nothing else but “strategic abstractions” invoked in emotional rage.[[120]](#footnote-120)

To sum up: all trajectories of dualistic adiaphorization – of religion from life, of liturgy from theology, of ethics from liturgy, and liturgy from ethics – testify to a methodological *habitus* of disengagement under the logic of dualistic exclusion and enclosure. Specifically, ethics, or something fuzzily thematized as “liturgy and life,” has been typically comprising the last chapter of liturgical theologies in the same way as the topics of sacraments and liturgy continue to be relegated to the last chapters of systematic or dogmatic theologies. Occasionally, this typical last chapter on liturgy and ethics even manages to unseat the chapter on eschatology from the position of the absolutely “last things,” coming right before the back cover of a book.[[121]](#footnote-121) None of the adiaphorizing trajectories presents an orientational openness for discursive and performative fecundity in liturgical theology and worship practices if the goal is to re-engage what has been divided, alienated, and made mutually jealous. All prefigure and continue to haunt what I see as the defining challenge of the present era in Western liturgically and sacramentally inscribed theology – the bringing together of what simply cannot be (be)held together under the auspices of unproductive binarism and infatuation with reifying enclosures and boundaries. Of course, the pivotal issue here is the quiddity of holding together or the quiddity of relation between liturgy and ethical life of faith. The relation of repetitive adiaphorization is certainly a sort of relation – competitive, segregating, and solid – as it is. This mutuality is a mutuality of disavowal. But is the relation of fissures and enclosures the most appropriate and desirable one for the sacramental economy of divinely inaugurated *salus* for clashing communities, races, classes, genders, and cultures, and most importantly, for the suffering and afflicted human bodies stretched and scattered in between all these terrains of life? What are the itineraries of an ethical re-engagement of liturgy and ethics beyond the solid compression of the dominant Monophysitic imaginary of the “either/or?”

1. **Re-orchestrating the Overpitched Polarity: From Shock and Awe to Oscillation and Rehearsal of eucharistic Living**

The epistemological and cultural imaginary of dualistic gridlock, into which the figurations of liturgy in relation to ethics have frequently been constricted, seems to require a fluid enlargement in order to modulate the unproductive overpitched polarities of Western modernity in particular. The modern Western desire for mastering the segregated purity of various segments of reality and life, of disciplines and discourses, of minds and bodies, and all that can be administered by the logic of the excluded middle, can be called into question by the Christian theological insistence on the pivotal event of Incarnation and the envisagement of the whole created reality from the perspective of potentially redemptive sacramentality. Or, to be more precise, it ought to be called into question by a trinitarian and incarnational liturgical discourse conscious both of its pivotal theological identity and of its age. The discursive and imaginative habits of enclosure and their uncritically codified certainties are paradigmatically contested in the Christian incarnational discourse. Precisely as incarnational – and hence as sacramental, I must add – this discourse and this worldview harbors the preferential openness for overlaps and for leakages that spread out, opacify, and make more liquid concepts, beliefs, identities, differences, and imaginations. This is the pivotal premise for sacramental-liturgical theology and its methodologies for which the borderlands of sensible mediation of the transcendent is the primary *locus operandi*. And this premise, interestingly, has even been noticed and acknowledged outside the guild of Christian theology.

Reflecting on Erich Auerbach’s intricate analysis of the influence of Christianity, especially the incarnation, on Western European literature, Edward Said – with all his skepticism regarding religion – has drawn attention to the “mingling of styles” characteristic of Christianity. Said remarked that “Christianity shatters the classical balance between high and low styles, just as Jesus’ life destroys the separation between the sublime and the everyday.”[[122]](#footnote-122) Similarly Terry Eagleton points to the “revolutionary continuity between the special and the common” in which “an act of extremity becomes the foundation of the ordinary.”[[123]](#footnote-123) Against the background of concerns about the dangers of coincidence with, or absorption of liturgy as an “extreme occasion” of sorts in the routine living, Eagleton’s references to incarnational Christianity suggest that it opens the possibility for “the sublunary sublime.”[[124]](#footnote-124) Theologically speaking, the sublunary sublime that Eagleton speaks about is the paradoxical and preeminently sacramental “holding together” of the transcendence and immanence, of which, again, the Incarnation is the source and summit. As Eagleton sees it, in the sublunary sublime constellation of reality “the whole cosmos is at stake in the giving or withholding of a cup of water…”[[125]](#footnote-125) The dualism that encloses God and the creation, body and mind, male and female, the liturgical and the mundane, the ethical and the aesthetical, the intelligible and the sensible, and the sacred and the secular in a reifying gridlock of competing purities is indeed detrimental for Christian liturgical theology. Perhaps, with great caution, the word “heretical” would be in order here. In any case, the re-orchestrating of the gridlock of overpitched polarity is a complex and intricate endeavor in order not to gravitate back into the pattern of mere re-volution wherein the same pendulum would be swinging back and forth in between the same dualistic trajectories. Considering that some of the most interesting proposals for recalling the liturgy from the periphery of theological and spiritual *parerga* lean toward re-volutions, indeed reversals, which do not alleviate the binary construals of relationality, Eagleton’s observations on the temptations involved in reconfiguring unhelpful oppositionalities are very timely. They respond – as if by anticipation – to the theological gestures of reconceptualization of liturgy and ethics that I will expose and engage with to a greater or lesser extent in Part II and Part III. Hence, I believe it is worth quoting Eagleton at some length here:

This dismantling of the opposition between the privileged and the commonplace is particularly relevant today, strung out as we are between a complacent postmodern consecration of the everyday… and a philosophical spurning of the quotidian in the name of some all-privileged moment of rupture with it. This latter, to be sure, is a characteristically Gallic gesture… The French, not least the supposedly radical among them, are old hands at discovering exciting new ways of devaluing the dreary prose of everyday life for the poetic intensity of that which transcends it, whether you call the latter the symbol, authenticity or the *être-pour-soi*, the Event or the Other, Theory, the sublime or the perpetual non-advent of the Messiah. Such thought returns incessantly to the break, crisis, disruption, paralogism or epiphany of otherness which will tear you free from everyday inauthenticity – from *doxa*, *das Mann,* the consensual, beauty (as opposed to sublimity), the practico-inert or *être-en-soi*… [[126]](#footnote-126)

If the dismantling of an unhelpful opposition actually reinscribes “this whole overpitched polarity” even more dramatically, albeit with a reversed vector of preference, then this strategy is problematic for a theology aware of the need to dismantle the hierarchical binarism, especially as it (dis)figures the sacramental relations of divine-human agency and the “division of labor” of *opus Dei* into a pattern of hegemonic unilateralism. Occasionally, an otherwise promising enlargement of liturgy turns precisely into a “shock and awe” kind of totalizing saturation wherein the human agency gets so overwhelmingly disrupted/interrupted that it borders on being meaningless and expendable. The enlarged imaginary of liturgy – liturgy being released from the confines of constrictive and adiaphoric enclosure in deep periphery of life and faith – suggested by Jean-Yves Lacoste provides an example a path to be appreciated but not followed.

Lacoste, drawing on the philosophy of Martin Heidegger and phenomenology, suggests similarly to some views already noted in this dissertation, that liturgy is a transgression of the radical immanence of the being-in-the-world. As such, liturgy is “everything that embodies the relation of man to God” in a wholistic and non-dualist sense.[[127]](#footnote-127) Moreover, liturgy is “the logic that presides over the encounter between man and God writ large” while liturgy coincides but also “exceeds the limits of worship.”[[128]](#footnote-128) Liturgy as relation to God exposes human person to the Absolute and posits a distance from the world. Liturgical interstice is a site of double superimposition over against the limits of human “facticity,” since both, relation to God (*religio*) and relation to goodwill (ethics) are not intrinsic to the “facticity” of human condition.[[129]](#footnote-129) Liturgy is a divertissement from the actual – fallen and sinful – world in the very movement of disclosing the world as precisely such. This, Lacoste argues, must not arouse suspicions of ethical rationality since the liturgical divertissement does not bracket the world in which “goodwill reigns.”[[130]](#footnote-130) For Lacoste, liturgy and ethics function analogically: both bring subversion in the world. Liturgy and ethics are both non-native “nonplaces” in the world. They are both provisional homelands of the eschatological kingdom of God. The kingdom is “implicated inchoately and thus in a non-symbolic way” in enacted ethical fraternity as it is in the “entr’acte of liturgy.”[[131]](#footnote-131) Liturgy, or the relation with God, however, tilts the analogical relation of “circularity” by antedating ethical relation of fraternity. Liturgy prefigures ethics by enabling “us to dwell in the world and on the earth by superimposing on our facticity the order of ethical vocation that alone authorizes us to let the Kingdom invest itself in world and earth in advance.”[[132]](#footnote-132) Liturgy – very broadly conceived – grounds ethics, yet Lacoste insists on not inscribing tension or contradiction between the two: “the work of liturgy and the labor of the ethical” are the “two poles of a unique structure” which is “that of the definitive’s hold over the provisional, and the Kingdom’s hold over the world and history.”[[133]](#footnote-133) The stakes for liturgy and ethics are the same – to challenge the provisional in the name of the eschatological. Hence the analytical metaphor of “circularity” in which the “liturgical reason and ethical reason is the fundamental rhythm of existence… transgressing its native conditions,” ultimately desiring “the accomplishment of the human beyond what can be derived from our facticity.”[[134]](#footnote-134)

Lacoste’s “circular” re-envisagement of liturgy and ethics as attending to *opus Dei* sounds the depths of a most fruitful orientation for the conundrum of ethic-liturgical disengagement. His emphasis on liturgy engaging and subverting the whole of human experience in the world carries the necessary tenacity to deliver liturgy from the gridlock of *parerga*. Where I must part the ways of otherwise substantial agreement with Lacoste, however, is his preference for a so profoundly disoriented/diverted human agency that the “nocturnal” liturgical non-experience and non-place indeed seems to be also a site of annihilation of human agency. Thus I must inquire further into the nature or the quiddity of liturgy as the relation of human to God. For Lacoste, liturgy transgresses and disorients the egocentricity and self-glorification of (I have to clarify at once by adding qualifiers modern, sovereign, male) subjectivity. The liturgical relationality is a relation of “man’s pure *exposition* to God.”[[135]](#footnote-135) Human being as a “soul” – pure passivity vis-à-vis the God that liturgy brings to impose into human life and consciousness – is installed as an object of the divine gaze.[[136]](#footnote-136) Liturgy as a “relation” and as a “logic” can be humanly rejected,[[137]](#footnote-137) but if it is not, then liturgy, as Lacoste presents it, can be best described as hegemonic in a Gramscian sense: it is the surrender to God who then compels a human person to exist before God as an object, while the very entering into the liturgy, i.e., the divine-human relation, “dismantles the constitution of subjectivity.”[[138]](#footnote-138) Consequently,

man fundamentally exists only within the dimension of exteriority; … he is “in God’s hands.” It would be by no means aberrant to say that his objectivity is, then, yet more radical than that of the flesh, and is similar to the objectivity of the thing – to say, therefore, that he is in God’s hands as clay (which is not conscious of this) is in the hands of the potter.[[139]](#footnote-139)

The liturgical disruption for eternity is a disruption into uselessness (*inutilité*) and boredom – of the liturgical work and of the human liturgical subjectivity and agency. If the work of ethics – is still to be done, then the ethical agency must at some point return to the limits of human cohabitation alone and thus become disjoined from the “circularity” of relation and vocation. The work of God requires the cessation of the human work in the same way as some phenomenologically oriented conceptions of faith have posited the relation of faith as a pure painful suffering of God’s transcendence.[[140]](#footnote-140) The competitive template of the clash of agencies is merely reversed, not transgressed, in Lacoste’s otherwise fecund project. The “fundamental rhythm of existence” is here disrupted back into tension and contradiction – seemingly against Lacoste’s own warning, but this time it circles back to the uninterrupted competitive dialectic of transcendence and immanence. As I hinted already in the Overture in relation to Lieven Boeve’s postmodern envisagements of sacramentality around the popular trope of interruption or disruption,[[141]](#footnote-141) there is a good reason to remain critically vigilant about the seemingly universal panacea-like aura of the image of disruption as necessarily and properly characterizing all *religio* as human relation to God – or liturgy in Lacoste’s terms. Particularly so, when it comes to human subjectivities other than the sovereign, predominantly white, upwardly-mobile male subject of Western modernity with his desires and practices of mastery, compartmentalization, and dualistic purity. Influential and attractive as it was and still is in many respects, this is just one kind of subjectivity. For this subjectivity and the cultures and discourses produced around this subjectivity, the trope of interruption is indeed timely and fitting as its virtually iconic place in the postmodern rhetoric has amply demonstrated. But for the lives and subjectivities always already disrupted – constantly disrupted by mastering gazes and profitably romanticized delusions of sexual and racial purity and impurity in the various undersides of modernity and beyond even those undersides – what can be truly new, transgressive, or liberatingly diversive about being a thing-like clay also in the liturgical space of *opus Dei*? On the other hand, the totalizing and essentializing proclivities in all cultural, religious, and theoretical traditions, including Christianity, mandate the expediency of epistemological, ethical, historical, and cultural interruptions as “protocols against idolatry” to counteract the always luring tendency of in-curvature into and onto itself, into which all genders and all races are increasingly enmeshed precisely as the gender, class, and race discriminations are assuaged. The decisive issue is not to reify and not to exaggerate interruption as always necessary and fitting, i.e., not to mold it into a culturally circumscribed yet universalistically projected metaphysical fetish.

The theological and historical debates regarding the precise birthdate of modernity notwithstanding, the most persistent modern challenge for liturgical-sacramental discourse consists in the imaginary of dualistic epistemology pre(dis)figuring ontology. When there is an infinite, absolutized, and jealously guarded chasm between God (primarily marked by a supreme and irremediable epistemological transcendence) and God’s created, yet unmoored in its “pure nature” humanity, the imitative fragmentation of theology as religious knowing and knowledge into similarly monadic and mutually allergic components does not strike as surprising. If it is true that epistemology prefigures ontology in the (post)modern Western worldview, then such a methodological inertia between thinking God in terms of coercive and competitive relationality and thinking one’s own ways of thinking about God in a similar vein is to be expected. But what it at stake is not just an academic nomenclature and its turf wars, but the role of theological discourse as the enabler and sustainer of an ethically detrimental view of worldly reality and human life. Yet again, the most sinister heir to such competitive fragmentation is the preferential option for the often painfully and occasionally profitably compartmentalized Christian *religio*.

Responding to the theological and spiritual carnage that dualistic figurations of liturgy and ethics, or more comprehensively of the “sacred” and “secular,” have brought upon the late modern sensibilities, several trajectories of modulation have emerged. In the last chapter of his magisterial *Doxology*, Geoffrey Wainwright acknowledges the dangers of detraction, inherent in the underlying dualistic juxtaposition between “the sacred”/”the secular,” and consequently in its proliferation into the separation of liturgy from ethics. He suggests the model of “oscillation between worship and ethics.”[[142]](#footnote-142) The “oscillation” builds on the reciprocal relationship between God and humanity, which is the enabling condition and content of worship.[[143]](#footnote-143) Louis-Marie Chauvet insists on the mutuality of liturgical re-reading of ethics and ethical re-reading of liturgy against the absorption models, advocating for their relation to be conceived as uncomfortable tension not to be abolished, but to be managed in the salvific “passover” from the letter (Scriptures) to the body (ethics).[[144]](#footnote-144) Don Saliers underscores the continuity of the Eucharist as a ritual action with ethics by envisioning the eucharistic liturgy as the rehearsal of living eucharistically in the world in relation to one’s fellow human persons.[[145]](#footnote-145) For him, liturgy in its root meaning as the “whole ‘work of the people’” already implies the interrelatedness of the cultic, social, and ethical features.[[146]](#footnote-146) Alongside Saliers, also Cesare Giraudi, Kevin Irwin, and Ion Bria advocate searching for the continuity of liturgy and “liturgy after liturgy,”[[147]](#footnote-147) or the theologically inviolable interpenetration of *lex orandi, lex credendi*, and *lex agendi/lex vivendi*.[[148]](#footnote-148) The multifaceted commonality of these theologies – to which I am gratefully indebted – consists in their inclination toward what Clare Watkins in her proposal for a post-liturgical sacramental theology calls the “biggering” of the liturgy and the whole eucharistic rationality and practice beyond the fatal dualisms of either/or between communion and mission, and contemplation and action.[[149]](#footnote-149) My argument so far has been in favor of the dilation of theological imaginary of sacramentality, sharing similar concerns with other theological objectives noted above with appreciation, regarding methodological re-engagement beyond the reductive and stifling dialectics of *parerga*. It is then a matter of conceptual decompression in order to modulate the dualistic entrapments of theological rationality into more fluid and non-competitive modes. And these modes require a certain theoretical imaginary capable of responding both to the tradition of the theological multivalence of λειτουργία and to the ethico-sacramental exigencies of liturgical life beyond the enclosures of pure cultic reason alone.

To conclude the chapter, I suggest that it is the emphasis on non-coercive mutuality and reciprocity – among the most prominent tropes of feminist liturgical critique[[150]](#footnote-150) – that provide the *Leitmotifs* toward the truly desirable liturgical *divertissement* within the arenas of life with which liturgical discourse intersects. With Lacoste and others similarly concerned about the erroneous dualism in which liturgy – here duly and generously magnified to aspire to reflecting itself and reflecting about itself according to the largesse of actual world as God has created it – and ethics are unnecessarily entangled, it is vital, I suggest, not to reproduce other dualistic imaginaries onto the terrain of divine-human relationality *tout court*. The dualistic zero-sum conception of the relation between liturgy and ethics is a symptom of a much larger dualistic imaginary – that of divine transcendence and human immanence. It is when liturgy is seen as it should be – broadly, as the enacted sacramental relationality of humanity to God spilling over into the overlapping dimensions of creaturely existence – that the underlying problematic of the most fundamental importance can really be recognized. Namely, the dualistic and competitive understanding of divine and human relationality. This is what Lacoste’s work brings to the fore probably better than any other proposals: the solution of the harmful liturgy-ethics dilemma appears useless or at least decadent if the either/or kind of relation between God and creation itself remains outside the spectacle of methodological divertissement. Hence, to interrogate the possibilities of re-imaging the tense relation of liturgy and ethics most fruitfully would, I suggest, do well to consider an itinerary for theology proposed elsewhere by Jean-Yves Lacoste. Lacoste muses that

theology, then, must have its ‘method’, for itself and for anyone to whom it speaks, which is to make a detour by way of another language and another world simply to acquire a language of its own…The speech that counts, the speech that pretends to speak the truth about essential things, comes out to meet us from its housing in particular languages and times.[[151]](#footnote-151)

The particular detours which are called for regarding the resilient gridlock of dualistic imaginaries of the Western modernity would, I submit, lead to an engagement with other languages on liturgy. Specifically, with the Eastern Orthodox larger-than-life lifeworld of liturgy as exemplified most impressively in the work of Alexander Schmemann, and with the disagreeable lifeworld of post-Holocaust ethics as it rattles the optimistic liturgical self-sufficiency in the work of Emmanuel Levinas. As Lacoste indicates, the other languages make accessible other relations to the world. Here these other relations are Eastern Christian tradition and Judaism. Yet these liturgical detours – both contrastively ambiguous in their diasporic locations of enunciation in the West – no longer quite suffice to address the problem suitably without giving equal consideration to both the “Western” and the “modern” components of the gridlock of dualistic imaginaries of enclosure and the interlocked desires of mastery and purity. Another detour into the conditions of “speaking the truth about essential things” is virtually unavoidable for the present liturgical theology conscious of its age – a detour into the “housing” of the present world in postcolony and the diaspora space. Before conversing more exclusively with Schmemann and Levinas, a conversation with postcolonial criticism is in order to implement the Bonhoefferian dictum for liturgy conscious of its age and the exigencies of ethical habitation in this age.

1. Eberhard Bethge dates the famous statement of Dietrich Bonhoeffer to his students as of 1935, in Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Biography*, Revised edition (Victoria J. Barnett, ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000): 607. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. I refer to Harry E. Fosdick’s “God of Grace and God of Glory,” where the third stanza starts with “Cure your children’s warring madness…” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” in *The Frankfurt School on Religion: Key Writings by the Major Thinkers* (Harry Zohn, trans.; Eduardo Mendieta, ed.; New York and London: Routledge, 2005): 266. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The problematic complexity of the liturgy’s idolatrous inscription in binaristic gender hierarchies and its enabling role for such detrimental dualisms is attentively disclosed, among other works, in Susan A. Ross’ *Extravagant Affections: A Feminist Sacramental Theology* (New York: Continuum, 1998) and *For the Beauty of the Earth: Women, Sacramentality, and Justice*, 2006 Madeleva Lecture in Spirituality (New York and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2006), in Janet R. Walton’s *Feminist Liturgy: A Matter of Justice* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000), in Teresa Berger’s *Women’s Ways of Worship: Gender Analysis and Liturgical History* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), *Fragments of Real Presence: Liturgical Traditions in the Hands of Women* (New York: Crossroad, 2005) and in her edited volume *Dissident Daughters: Feminist Liturgies in Global Context* (Louisville and London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), in Gail Ramshaw’s *Liturgical Language: Making it Metaphoric, Keeping It Inclusive* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996), and in Siobhan Garrigan’s *Beyond Ritual: Sacramental Theology After Habermas* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Alexander Schmemann, “Liturgy and Eschatology,” *Liturgy and Tradition: Theological Reflections of Alexander Schmemann* (Thomas Fisch, ed.; Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1990): 95. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Teresa Berger, *Women’s Ways of Worship*, 153. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Don E. Saliers, *Worship as Theology: Foretaste of Glory Divine* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994): 61. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. On the ambiguities involved with the emphasis on the otherwise fascinating notion of the liturgical *ordo* as the vehicle of its own reform and critique see Steffen Lösel’s Review Article “What Sacred Symbols Say about Strangers and Strawberries: Gordon W. Lathrop’s Liturgical Theology in Review,” *Journal of Religion* 85 (2005): 634-648. A question of utmost importance for contemporary liturgical theology indeed is: “Is there not too much optimism here about how liturgy reforms both itself and the habits of the heart, and too much pessimism about how the church must witness to God’s kingdom in the world,” 646. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Andrea Bieler and Luise Schottroff highlight the risks involved in essentializing liturgy – “there is no ‘essence’ of ritual…that is always liberating. It is rather the case that rituals can also sustain and foster the order of dominance. As always, everything depends on the context,” *The Eucharist: Bodies, Bread, and Resurrection* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007):102. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Here I draw inspiration from Mark D. Jordan’s suggestions about the usefulness of “the contribution of negative theology to liturgy, among many other things,” most importantly moral theology and pastoral care. I use the notion of negative/apophatic theology during the course of this dissertation in a methodological sense, which I believe is what negative theology is all about, and which seems to be implied in Jordan’s use of the term as well: “The argument of negative theology is that we fail radically in naming God or capturing God’s operation in human speech. The proposal of negative theology is to apply a process of negation, to stage an event of denial at every point in Christian theology, in order to hasten the union of believers with God,” in *Telling Truths in Church: Scandal, Flesh, and Christian Speech* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003):75-76. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Ann Loades, “Finding New Sense in the ‘Sacramental’,” *The Gestures of God: Explorations in Sacramentality* (Geoffrey Rowell and Christine Hall, eds.; London and New York: Continuum, 2004):162-163. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Oliver Davies, *A Theology of Compassion: Metaphysics of Difference and the Renewal of Tradition* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2001): 252. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Edward J. Kilmartin, S.J. *Christian Liturgy: Theology and Practice*, I. Systematic Theology of Liturgy (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1988): 95. See also Gordon W. Lathrop, *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998):1. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Georges Florovsky, “The Elements of Liturgy,” in *The Orthodox Church in the Ecumenical Movement: Documents and Statements 1902-1975* (Constantin G. Patelos, ed.; Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1978):172. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Frank C. Senn, *The People’s Work: A Social History of the Liturgy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006): 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Aidan Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology* (New York: Pueblo Book, 1984): 81. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Arjun Appadurai, *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006):1. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. *Ibid*., 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. *Ibid*., 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Berger, *Women’s Ways of Worship*, 153. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Among other sources, see Lawrence J. Madden, S.J., “Liturgy” in *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship* (Peter E. Fink, S.J.ed.; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1990):740-742; Adolf Adam, *Foundations of Liturgy: An Introduction to Its History and Practice* (Matthew J. O’Connell, trans.; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992): 3; Frank C. Senn, *New Creation: A Liturgical Worldview* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000): 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Norman Pittenger, *Life as Eucharist* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973): 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Senn, *New Creation*, 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. W. Norman Pittenger, *The Christian Understanding of Human Nature* (Digswell Place: James Nisbet and Co, 1964):180. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Saliers, *Worship as Theology*, 86. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Alexander Schmemann, “Renewal,” in *Church, World, Mission: Reflections on Orthodoxy in the West* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1979):155. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Aidan Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology* (New York: Pueblo Book, 1984):75. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Simon Chan, *Liturgical Theology: The Church as Worshipping Community* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006): 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Senn, *New Creation*, 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. David W. Fagerberg, *Theologia Prima: What is Liturgical Theology*, Second edition (Chicago and Mundelein: Hillenbrand Books, 2004):10. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. *Ibid.*, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Kilmartin, *Christian Liturgy*, 77. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Michael B. Aune, “Liturgy and Theology: Rethinking the Relationship,” Part I. *Worship* 81:1 (2007): 60-61. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. *Ibid*., 63-64. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. See Part II of Aune’s article in *Worship* 81:2 (2007): 141-169. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Aidan Kavanagh, “Liturgical Inculturation: Looking to the Future,” *Studia Liturgica* 20 (1990): 102. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. This is a reference to Josef Ratzinger’s (Benedict XVI) liturgical critique, see John F. Baldovin’s “Cardinal Ratzinger as Liturgical Critic,” in *Studia Liturgica Diversa: Essays in Honor of Paul F. Bradshaw* (Maxwell E. Johnson and L. Edward Phillips, eds.; Portland, OR: Pastoral Press, 2004): 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Godfried Cardinal Danneels, “Liturgy Forty Years After the Second Vatican Council: High Point of Recession,” *Liturgy in a Postmodern World* (Keith F. Pecklers, S.J. ed.; London and New York: Continuum, 2003): 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. 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 and Martin MacGhaill, eds.; New York: Palgrave, 1999):130-131. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. I will return to this issue in more detail in Part I, Ch. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Aidan Nichols, O.P. *Christendom Awake: On the Reenergizing the Church in Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999): 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. *Ibid*., 37, 30. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Danneels, “Liturgy Forty Years After the Second Vatican Council,” 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. *Ibid*., 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Elizabeth A. Johnson, “Imaging God, Embodying Christ: Women as a Sign of the Times,” *The Church Women Want: Catholic Women in Dialogue* (Elizabeth A. Johnson, ed.; New York: Crossroad, Herder and Herder, 2002): 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Kavanagh, “Liturgical Inculturation,” 102. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Godfried Danneels, “Liturgy 40 Years After the Council,” *America* 2007 (August 27-September 3):14. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Robert F. Taft, “‘Thanksgiving for the Light’: Toward a Theology of Vespers,” *Beyond East and West: Problems in Liturgical Understanding*. Second revised and enlarged edition. (Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute, Edizioni Orientalia Christiana, 1997):161. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (Charles Lam Markham, trans.; New York: Grove, 1967): 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. “Worship” as Dwight W. Vogel has noted, is “the human response to that which is worshipped, including such elements as prayer and praise, lament and thanksgiving, confession and commitment,” in “Liturgical Theology: A Conceptual Geography,” *Primary Sources of Liturgical Theology: A Reader* (Dwight W. Vogel, ed.; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000):5. Also, as Senn suggests, “worship is more than liturgy because it includes the creature’s response to God in personal devotion as well as the community’s corporate prayer. Worship is less than liturgy because liturgy is a species of rite (*ritus*) which involves actions, ceremonies, and forms of proclamation as well as devotions and prayer,” in Senn, *New Creation*, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Senn (among others) argues that the Lutheran Reformers (especially in the early sacramental theology of Martin Luther) in particular promoted the insight that *Gottesdienst* includes both the aspects of public worship and public ministry, i.e. the service of God is “both God’s service to us in Word and Sacrament and our service to God in worship and in love toward our neighbor,” *The People’s Work*, 185. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Adam, *Foundations of Liturgy*, 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Senn, *The People’s Work,* 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man* (Lancelot C. Sheppard and Sister Elizabeth Englund, OCD, trans.; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988): 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Taft, “What Does Liturgy Do? Toward a Soteriology of Liturgical Celebration: Some Theses,” *Beyond East and West*, 242. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. *Ibid*., 240-241. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. *Ibid*., 247. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. In “Die onto-theo-logische Verfassung der Metaphysik”Heidegger remarks that “dann kann der Gott nur insofern in die Philosophie gelangen, als diese von sich aus, ihrem Wesen nach, verlangt und bestimmt, dass und wie der Gott in sie komme,”in Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002):123. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. I am using here Heidegger’s description of the presumably appropriately worshiped “göttlicher Gott” versus “der Gott” perceived “metaphysically” or ontotheologically as a sterile *causa sui*: “Vor der Causa sui kann der Mensch weder aus Scheu ins Knie fallen, noch kann er vor diesem Gott musizieren und tanzen,” *ibid*., 140. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Kilmartin, *Christian Liturgy*, 79-81. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, “After Ten Years: A Reckoning made at New Year of 1943” in *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Letters and Papers from Prison*. Enlarged edition (Eberhard Bethge, ed.; New York: Touchstone, Simon and Schuster, 1997): 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Kathleen Marie Higgins, *The Music of Our Lives* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991): 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Martin Buber stated that “die Beziehung zum Menschen is das eigentliche Gleichnis der Beziehung zu Gott,” *Ich und Du* (Heidelberg: Verlag Lambert Schneider, 1977):122. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. “Man kan sein Leben nicht zwischen eine wirkliche Beziehung zur Gott und ein unwirkliches Ich-Es-Verhältnis zur Welt aufteilen, – zur Gott wahrhaft beten und die Welt benützen. Wer die Welt als das zu Benützende kennt, kennt auch Gott nicht anders,” *ibid*., 127. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. “Einzig in der Beziehung zu Gott sind unbedingte Ausschliesslichkeit und unbedingte Einschliesslichkeit eins, darin das All begriffen ist, ” *ibid*., 118. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. I have used the term non/competitive quite often and I acknowledge my indebtedness to Kathryn Tanner’s notion of radical divine transcendence and the corresponding non-competitive relation between creatures and God whereby the zero-sum model of relation is replaced by an understanding that “creature does not decrease so that God may increase.” As a result, since God is beyond any such contrasts, “the glorification of God does not come at the expense of creatures,” in Tanner, *Jesus, Humanity, and the Trinity: A Brief Systematic Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003): 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. David Bentley Hart, *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2003): 84. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Rey Chow, “Introduction,” *Ethics After Idealism: Theory-Culture-Ethnicity-Reading* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998): xxii. “Tactical” inscribes a reader practice as ethical – it “seeks to uncover the theoretical part of even the most specific ‘cultural’ study … and the implicit cultural presumptuousness, aggressivity, and violence in even the most pristinely ‘theoretical’ pronouncement,” *ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Elizabeth A. Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: Crossroad, 2000): 227. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Beverly Wildung Harrison, “The Dream of a Common Language: Toward a Normative Theory of Justice in Christian Ethics,” in *Justice in the Making: Feminist Social Ethics: Beverly Wildung Harrison* (Elizabeth M. Bounds et al, eds.; Louisville and London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004):16. Harrison adds that “justice as rightly related community may be claimed legitimately as *the* core theological metaphor of a Christian moral vision of life,” *ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. *Ibid*., 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Johann Baptist Metz, “God: Against the Myth of the Eternity of Time,” in Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Johann Baptist Metz, Jürgen Moltmann, Eveline Goodman-Thau, *The End of Time: The Provocation of Talking about God* (J. Matthew Ashley, trans.; ed.; New York and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2004): 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Explorations in Theology: I The Word Made Flesh* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989):196. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections On a Damaged Life* (E.E.N.Jephcott, trans.; London and New York: Verso, 2005): 247. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. See Anthony J. Godzieba’s careful argument for the access of eschatological transformation of all historical and cultural eras and against the assumptions of irretrievability and unredeemability of modernity in certain postmodern philosophical and theological circles in “Incarnation and Imagination: Catholic Theology of God Between Heidegger and Postmodernity,” *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context*, 279-298. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. I borrow this expression from Terry Eagleton, “A Response,” *Literature and Theology* 19:2 (2005): 136. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Hyman, *The Predicament of Postmodern Theology*, 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. *Ibid*., 11-12. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Sheldon Pollock, Homi K. Bhabha, Carol A. Breckenridge, and Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Cosmopolitanisms,” *Cosmopolitanism* (Sheldon Pollock et al., eds.; Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002):11-12. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. *Ibid*., 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Bill Ashcroft, *Post-colonial Transformation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001):141. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. *Ibid*., 166. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. *Ibid.*, 181. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. *Ibid*., 182. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Ross, *Extravagant Affections*, 54. Andrea Bieler and Luise Schottroff also list hierarchical dualism in rationality and hermeneutics as a colonial “captivity” of imagination, promoting “a monolithic theology of disembodiment” to the detriment of women-centered eucharistic theology in particular, *The Eucharist*, 45-46. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Susan R. Boettcher has argued that “the rhetoric of early modern religion was one of competing purities and the narratives of these purities were integral to the growth of evangelical confessions as aggressive colonizing forces” and that “the contest over purity is a central element of all rhetorical activities by the parties to the 16th-century religious uproar,” see Boettcher, “Post-Colonial Reformation? Hybridity in16th-Century Christianity,” *Social Compass* 52:4 (2005): 443-452. Also, Regina Mara Schwartz points to the sacramental controversies as the locus of origin of the modern secularized worldview, *Sacramental Poetics at the Dawn of Secularism*, especially Ch.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Robert F. Taft, “Liturgy in the Life and Mission of the Society of Jesus,” *Liturgy in a Postmodern World*, 43, 38. The present views of the state of liturgy in the Middle Ages are highly contrasting, ranging from Taft’s thoroughly critical judgment on “a degenerate medieval view of liturgy” (41) to Catherine Pickstock’s preference of the medieval Roman liturgy as the ideational model of a genuinely post-modern and post-dualist liturgical worldview, see, for example, her *After Writing* among other shorter articles. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Marie L. Baird, *On the Side of the Angels: Ethics and Post-Holocaust Spirituality* (Leuven, Paris, Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2002): 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. *Ibid*., 22. In response to this situation, Baird’s thesis is to situate the personal self-transcendence in ethical engagement with the incommensurable other as the way of constitution of ethical and fully human subjectivity, *ibid*, 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. *Ibid*., 128. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Henri de Lubac has pointed to a similar problem in ecclesiological context: “… we reject Monophysitism in ecclesiology just as we do in Christology, but none the less strongly do we believe that dissociation of the divine and the human is in either case fatal. If necessary, the experience of Protestantism should serve us as sufficient warning. Having stripped it of all mystical attributes, it acknowledged in the visible Church a mere secular institution; as a matter of course it abandoned it to the patronage of the state and sought a refuge for the spiritual life in an invisible Church, its concept of which had evaporated into an abstract ideal,” *Catholicism*, 75-76. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. As I have already noted in the Overture, secularism, in Alexander Schmemann’s words, consists in the negation of the liturgical act. Hence secularism is the negation “not of God’s existence, not of some kind of transcendence and therefore some kind of religion. If secularism in theological terms is a heresy, it is primarily a heresy about man. It is the negations of man as a worshipping being, as *homo adorans*: the one for whom worship is the essential act which both ‘posits’ his humanity and fulfills it,” in “Worship in a Secular Age,” Appendices, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2000): 118 [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (Bernard Williams, ed., Josefine Nauckhoff, trans.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 204. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Robert F. Taft, “Liturgy in the Life and Mission of the Society of Jesus,” 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. See Alexander Schmemann, “Worship in a Secular Age,” 119-130; also “The World as Sacrament” and “The Underlying Question” in *Church, World, Mission: Reflections on Orthodoxy in the West* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1979), see 221-222 and 22-24 respectively. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Schmemann, “The Underlying Question,” 14, 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Alexander Schmemann, “Theology and Liturgical Tradition,” *Liturgy and Tradition: Theological Reflections of Alexander Schmemann* (Thomas Fisch, ed.; Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1990):19-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Robert F. Taft, “Liturgy in the Life and Mission of the Society of Jesus,” 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Romano Guardini, “An Open Letter,” *Foundations of Ritual Studies: A Reader for Students of Christian Worship* (Paul Bradshaw and John Melloh, eds.; Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, 2007): 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* (Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudsen, trans.; New York: Harper and Row, Harper Torchbooks, 1960):186. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. *Ibid*., 185. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. On the issue of competitive/contrastive view of divine transcendence and the problems involved with it see, among others, Henri de Lubac, *The Mystery of the Supernatural* (Rosemary Sheed, trans.; New York: Crossroad, Herder and Herder, 1998), Kathryn Tanner, *God and Creation in Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), and William C. Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence: How Modern Thinking about God Went Wrong* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996). [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Kant, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, 47. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment* (J.C. Meredith, trans.; Nicholas Walker, ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 57. In the context of sacraments, to appreciate the full thrust of Kant’s statements it is helpful to remember that he invokes picture frames, draperies, and colonnades as examples of *parerga*. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. Kant, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, 188. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. See particularly Romano Guardini, *The Spirit of Liturgy* (Ada Lane, trans.; New York: Crossroads, Herder and Herder, 1998):61-72. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. Danneels, “Liturgy Forty Years After the Second Vatican Council,” 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Danneels also refers to unnamed “others” who maintain that “liturgy and life coincide and that true service to God takes place outside the church in one’s daily life,” *ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. Louis-Marie Chauvet, *The Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body* (Madeleine Beaumont, trans.; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2001):54. Chauvet, working from a phenomenological perspective in sacramental theology also makes a thinly veiled reference to liberation and otherwise politically responsive theologies after 1960s alluding to a “militancy” against liturgy, and other stances that present “the danger of a tilt toward ethics,” *ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Margaret R. Miles, “Foreword: The Eye of the Beholder,” *The Subjective Eye: Essays in Culture, Religion, and Gender in Honor of Margaret R. Miles* (Richard Valantasis et al, eds.; Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2006): xx. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Н.Бердяев, [*О назначении человека:Опыт парадоксальной этики*](http://www.krotov.info/library/02_b/berdyaev/1931_026_00.html) (М.: Республика, 1993): 247. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Kavanagh, “Liturgical Inculturation,” 98. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. See, for example, David L. Stubbs’ tellingly titled concluding chapter “Ending of Worship: Ethics” which comes after Martha L. Moore-Keish’s “Eucharist: Eschatology,” and of course, after Christology, revelation, sin, grace, etc., in a book published under the auspices of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship *A More Profound Alleluia: Theology and Worship in Harmony* (Leanne Van Dyk, ed.; Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2004):133-153. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. Edward W. Said, “Introduction to Erich Auerbach’s *Mimesis*,” *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004): 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. Eagleton, “A Response,” 135. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. *Ibid*. Immediately after proposing that Christianity is an example of such a sublunary sublime, Eagleton adds that Marxism is the post-Enlightenment equivalent of Christianity, since for Marxism the heroic is the anti-heroic masses (135). It is beyond the scope of this project to investigate this analogy, with which I am, however, in complete disagreement. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. *Ibid*., 136. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. Jean-Yves Lacoste, *Experience and the Absolute: Disputed Questions on the Humanity of Man* (trans. Mark Raftery-Skeban; New York: Fordham University Press, 2004): 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. *Ibid*., 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. *Ibid*., 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. *Ibid*., 72-73. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. *Ibid*., 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. *Ibid*., 74-75. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. *Ibid.*, 75. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. *Ibid.*, 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. *Ibid*., 152. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. *Ibid*., 150-151. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. *Ibid*., 71. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. *Ibid*., 156. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. See for example, Paul Moyaert, “On Faith and Experience of Transcendence: An Existential Reflection on Negative Theology,” *Flight of the Gods: Philosophical Perspectives on Negative Theology* (Ilse N. Bulhof and Laurens ten Kate, eds.; New York: Fordham University Press, 2000): 382-383. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. Boeve, “Thinking Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context,” *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context*, 20-23. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine, and Life: A Systematic Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984): 410. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. *Ibid*., 462. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. Chauvet, *The Sacraments*, 65-66. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. Saliers, *Worship as Theology*, 102-104. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
146. Don E. Saliers, “Afterword: Liturgy and Ethics Revisited,” *Liturgy and the Moral Self: Humanity at Full Stretch Before God: Essays in Honor of Don E. Saliers* (E. Byron Anderson and Bruce T. Morrill, S.J. eds.; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998): 215. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
147. Ion Bria, *The Liturgy After Liturgy: Mission and Witness from an Orthodox Perspective* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996): 23, 85. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
148. Saliers, *Worship as Theology*, 187; Cesare Giraudi, S.J. “The Eucharist as *Diakonia:* From the Service of Cult to the Service of Charity,” *Liturgy in a Postmodern World*, 131-132; Kevin W. Irwin, “Liturgical *Actio*: Sacramentality, Eschatology and Ecology,” *Contemporary Sacramental Contours of a God Incarnate* (Lieven Boeve and Lambert Leijssen, eds.; Leuven: Peeters, 2001):111-123 and *Models of the Eucharist* (New York and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2005): 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
149. Clare Watkins, “Mass, Mission, and Eucharistic Living,” *Heythrop Journal* 64, 2003: 447. Watkins’ argument for the “ ‘post-liturgical’ positioning of sacramental” develops as a critique of the overemphasis on liturgy hijacked by the dualistic conceptions of cult and ritual which has resulted in the overspending of theological energies and resources – mostly in the Roman Catholic context – on ritual refinement, while neglecting the dimension of sacramental discipleship. Watkins emphasizes the need to transcend the dualistic notions of nature and grace which she also sees as grounding the problems of the eucharistic liturgy being reductively conceived in a limited ritual manner. What is needed is an overhaul of “our ecclesiology, Christology, and theology of grace and the world, and then allow these ploughed fields to be the places of nurture for Eucharistic thinking. On the whole, I suggest, this has not happened, and this had brought about a persistence in the opposition of Church and world, sacred and secular, with has allowed Eucharist to be restricted to liturgy, to the detriment of the whole Church and the Gospel mission entrusted to it,” 452. [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
150. See, for example, Bieler and Schottroff, *The Eucharist*, 166, and Walton, *Feminist Liturgy*, 45-46. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
151. Jean-Yves Lacoste, “More Haste, Less Speed in Theology,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, 9:3 (2007): 280. It must be noted that Lacoste’s primarily concern here is the pertinence of theological openness to the past languages and “worlds” of the theological tradition and its hermeneutics. I translate Lacoste’s idea beyond the original context in my argument. [↑](#footnote-ref-151)