

# Liturgical Worship and the Transformation of International Political Community

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper will explore how the content of religious practices, particular the Christian Eucharistic Liturgy can be mobilised bring about changes to political communities, and with that build the conditions for the more peaceful coexistence. Drawing mainly from the Radical Orthodoxy tradition, this paper will explore how the rituals of the Eucharist can engender a communal reimagination of the way we perceive the political communities we inhabit, and going further create new webs of relations to challenge those of the nation state. This paper argues that the liturgy reinforces an ontology of participation contra the state's ontology of violence. It argues that the rituals also redefine terms of citizenship, providing an avenue to engage with difference and provide an economic alternative to current political communities disciplined by capitalism.

## Introduction

Two emerging security debates capture the public imagination. One concerns the seeming inability to stop the re-entry of 'irrational' religious actors into the political realm,<sup>2</sup> and the accompanying concern over a looming increase in intolerance and violence.<sup>3</sup> The other concerns the aggressive reassertion of the state and the threat it poses to political rights, exemplified most starkly by the legal limbo faced by the detainees of Guantanamo Bay.

While one debate concerns the limitations of state capacity in maintaining security, another regards state capacity itself as the very threat to that security. Both

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<sup>2</sup> Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2004), Christopher Hitchens, *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (New York: Hatchette Book Group, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> John R. Hall, Philip D. Schuyler, and Sylvaine Trinh, *Apocalypse Observed: Religious Movements and Violence in North America, Europe and Japan* (London: Routledge, 2000), 121, Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 99-114, Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 137-8.

debates are underpinned by a common concern over a state-centric political status quo that is showing its limits in keeping violence at bay and maintaining humane governance.<sup>4</sup> Growing disappointment with statecraft to provide the basis for more harmonious international relations has also fuelled a long debate over the reimagination of the kind of political communities in which humanity resides and operates.<sup>5</sup> This disappointment with statecraft has also gradually given political currency in these debates to forms of social *praxes* whose previous exclusion from statecraft has also excluded their consideration as proper political categories.<sup>6</sup>

This paper will explore the potential of communal worship as one such form of sociopolitical practice whose efficacy does not depend on manipulating the levers of state, and explore how this practice addresses the two aforementioned debates. This paper sympathises with the concerns regarding the threat posed by the nation-state to human wellbeing. However, it finds that the counter to this Westphalian threat lies in religion, the very resource portrayed as driving much of the political violence.

The author does not deny the track record of violence inflicted in the name of religious causes. However, this paper will argue that the contemporary threat of violence comes less from religion's inescapable violent baggage, and more from religious proponents aligning themselves to the violent logic of the Westphalian State. This paper will disentangle religion from this Westphalian calculus by giving the *praxes* of communal worship its own political currency. However, while the first section of this paper will show that worship can slot into the mechanics of reimagining political community, the plurality of concrete worship forms would make it premature to assume that all worship forms reimagine political community in the same way. Therefore, the second half of this paper can only focus on one example, the practices of the Roman Eucharistic Liturgy, where the reading of scriptures is combined with rituals that purport to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. This paper will explore

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<sup>4</sup> Richard Falk, *Religion and Humane Global Governance* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

<sup>5</sup> Andrew Linklater, *The Transformation of Political Community* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998).

how this particular example of Christian communal worship can slot into the general mechanics of political transformation, act as a contribution to the project of reimagining international political community beyond the contemporary Westphalian straightjacket, and create global conditions for a peaceable co-existence not underpinned by the 'Peace of Westphalia'.

This paper draws from the work of Catherine Pickstock, William Cavanaugh and Daniel Bell, all of whom have provided accounts on the political potential in the rituals of the Eucharistic Liturgy.<sup>7</sup> It will also integrate these efforts with Graham Ward's writings, which provides a blueprint by which the political status quo can be challenged from within via religious practice, without adopting the instruments of the very system that threatens human wellbeing.<sup>8</sup> Ultimately, this paper will show how sites of liturgical worship form sites of resistance that challenge seemingly unassailable notions of Westphalian political community.

Because of the intimacy of this project with countering the violence that underpins international insecurity, this paper would also explore the ways the Eucharist's can contribute to the creation of a more pacific international relations. This could establish one site of traction between the mystical world of worship and concrete political transformation, so that the liturgical prayers that the Eucharist 'advance the peace and salvation of all the world' can be more than an eschatological spiritual nicety, but an imminent political probability. This paper will explore the Eucharistic Liturgy as a locus for the production of webs of communal practices and relations, what Graham Ward calls a liturgical 'social imaginary'. The enactment of the liturgical imaginary is at the same

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<sup>6</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *Resistance Is Surrender* (2007 [cited 1 April 2008 29(22)]); available from [http://www.lrb.co.uk/v29/n22/zize01\\_.html](http://www.lrb.co.uk/v29/n22/zize01_.html).

<sup>7</sup> Daniel M. Bell Jr., 'Only Jesus Saves: Towards a Theopolitical Ontology of Judgement,' in *Theology and the Political: The New Debate*, ed. Creston Davis, John Milbank, and Slavoj Žižek (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), William T. Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination: Discovering the Liturgy as a Political Act in an Age of Global Consumerism* (NY: T & T Clark, 2004), William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist, Challenges in Contemporary Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1998), Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), Catherine Pickstock, 'Liturgy, Art and Politics,' *Modern Theology* 16(2) (2000).

<sup>8</sup> Graham Ward, *Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

time a *Kulturkritik* that challenges the monopoly of the ‘social imaginary’ of the nation-state,<sup>9</sup> an imaginary characterised by a resignation to the necessity of violent webs of relations.<sup>10</sup> Challenging the inevitability of violence to maintain communal integrity dovetails into exploration of the Eucharistic redefinition of citizenship, and the terms of exclusion that feed into violent dynamics. At the same time, combining Eucharistic terms of citizenship with alternative narratives can facilitate the generation of alternative webs of relations that counter the violent relations of consumer capitalism.

## **The Liturgical Transformation of Social Imaginaries**

Transforming the political landscape must start with questioning the natural status of current political arrangements. If one seriously engages Hendrik Spruyt’s argument that current institutional arrangements result more from the granting of political privilege rather than proven merit,<sup>11</sup> it paves the way to consider giving currency to political practices that lacked such privilege. Spruyt’s argument opens the way to consider a political landscape consisting of constantly interacting webs of communal practices and significations, what Graham Ward calls ‘social imaginaries’. Constructivists and feminists are keen to point out that behind the veneer of a privileged Westphalian diplomacy lies webs of practices whose lack of privilege does not deprive them of their political nature. Anderson argues further that, privileged or otherwise, what gives all social practices and relations their political power is their ability to capture and mobilise a shared communal imagination.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the intimacy between the communal imagination and the formation of social arrangements makes Ward label such arrangements as ‘social imaginaries’. Viewed this way, one can undermine the natural status of the current Westphalian international system by positing the powerful argument that the institutions Westphalian politics are not natural but only dominant social imaginaries.<sup>13</sup> This is a dominance gained by privilege rather than demonstrated efficacy. Raising the issue of privilege thus questions the universal validity of Westphalian

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<sup>9</sup> James KA Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy: Mapping a Post-Secular Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 80.

<sup>10</sup> John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

<sup>11</sup> Hendrik Spruyt, *The Sovereign State and Its Competitors* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 158-79.

<sup>12</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 1.

political arrangements. Notions of privileged political arrangements thus opens avenues to consider the contributions of marginalised imaginaries in transforming the political status quo.

### ***The Practical Formation of the Social Imaginary***

#### **Praxis and Establishing Standpoints**

Once the way is open to look at international political arrangements as an assemblage of ‘social imaginaries’ competing for dominance, one must explore how social imaginaries are formed, and how the liturgy forms its own social imaginary and bears the potential in challenging others.

Considering the formation of social imaginaries must begin with powerful critical and postmodern arguments that ideas are caught up in an intimate ‘theory-practice relationship’. Only the existence of a distinct practice can explicate the implications and possibilities of theory.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, theories are what instruct, infuse meaning into and ultimately bear the possibilities for transforming those practices.<sup>15</sup> The credibility of ideas and their dynamic potential could thus only be realised by their being concretised in political action.<sup>16</sup>

Religious categories thus become sociopolitically significant because ideals rooted in transcendence such as those of Christianity are not exempt from the need for social embodiment. The mere fact of transcendence’s surpassing the social does not exempt its having to work within the social.<sup>17</sup> Christianity cannot remain mental categories that deign to judge practices whilst being itself cut off from a distinct mode of practice. The Christian imagination that engenders the web of practices that constitute the social imaginary must itself be a core of practices. It is through this core of practices that

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<sup>14</sup> Louis Althusser, *For Marx* (London: Cox and Wyman, 1969), 172, Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, trans. Neville Plaice, vol. 1 (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), 268, Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 380.

<sup>15</sup> Althusser, *For Marx*, 166, Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy*, 232.

<sup>16</sup> Charles Davis, *Theology and Political Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 17.

<sup>17</sup> Ward, *Cultural Transformation*, 15.

constitutes a specific locus from which what counts for reality is viewed and critiqued, and from which the alternative reality of the social imaginary is generated.<sup>18</sup> The ‘Christian imagination’ is a core of practices that in turn form a distinct imaginary, comprising what feminists call a ‘standpoint’

The practical nature of Christian imaginaries is accentuated further when Ward speaks of Christianity as a task of ‘read[ing] the signs of the times’.<sup>19</sup> Such a reading does not merely comprise textual analysis, since what is to be ‘read’ are experiences of social phenomena. At the same time, social phenomena resemble texts because their meanings are not readily accessible.<sup>20</sup> Social phenomena can only be ‘read’ through a process of discernment of practical engagements. This process of discernment must involve a coupling of concrete engagement with social phenomena with a simultaneous engagement with a lens of an interpretive tradition.<sup>21</sup>

Interpretive communities play an indispensable role here, since their shared practices give such lenses their significance and form. Indeed, the lenses that gauge the meaning of social phenomena are after all no more than extensions of the community that creates them.<sup>22</sup> The Christian mandate to discern must involve juxtaposing the ‘sign’ (the social phenomenon) against what Ward calls ‘grammar of the Christian faith’.<sup>23</sup> Because discernment is grounded in *praxis*, this Christian grammatical lens has to be itself rooted in practices. Christian discernment is therefore imbricated in performances of communal formation, cultural engagement as well as reflection. The site of this Christian grammar is at the same time the site of practices that constitute the Christian standpoint from which the political status quo is critiqued and transformed, and it is the contention of this paper that the practices that establish the standpoint subsist in liturgical praxis.

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<sup>18</sup> Sandra Harding, *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1991).

<sup>19</sup> Matthew 16:3

<sup>20</sup> Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class: The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (NY: Harvard University Press, 1980).

<sup>21</sup> Graham Ward, ‘Radical Orthodoxy and/as Cultural Politics,’ in *Radical Orthodoxy? A Catholic Enquiry*, ed. Laurence Paul Hemming (Burlington: Ashgate, 2000), 103.

<sup>22</sup> Fish, *Is There a Text*, 14-16.

<sup>23</sup> Ward, ‘Radical Orthodoxy and/as Cultural Politics,’ 103.

### Why Worship as Standpoint?

Here, a question may be raised: What sets liturgical worship apart from other practices as the core of practices that brings the ecclesial standpoint into being? It is true that myriad practices are constitutive of the Church's imaginary, and that each practice has potential in enacting a social imaginary. However, not all practices are equal.

The answer begins with consideration of the inherent instability of standpoints. Standpoints are not readily obvious, static or self-sufficient. Standpoints are always caught up in a dynamic process of emerging and re-emerging by constantly being activated and reactivated. In feminist terms, standpoints must always be 'achieved'.<sup>24</sup> There is thus a constant need for practices to maintain standpoints, rather than hermetically sealed cognitive exercises. The reason for such instability is concisely provided by Peter Berger: people forget.<sup>25</sup> Keeping a standpoint alive is dependent on a process of constant reminder, or constant 'achievement'. The establishment of a credible standpoint as a lens by which to interpret and engage the world, inevitably gravitates towards series of rhythmic repetitions whose foundations defy any rational explanation.<sup>26</sup> For explicitly religious interpretative communities, only rituals of 'reiterations of sacred formulas that explicitly 'make present' once more the names and deeds of the gods' have the rhythmic pattern necessary to facilitate the 'achievement' of standpoints.<sup>27</sup>

There is also an issue of credibility. Communities rank webs of practices according to credibility, with credibility being judged against a 'model of the *perfect* working relationship'.<sup>28</sup> Pickstock similarly argued that while myriad practices of cultural production is constitutive of human action, privilege is given to practices that point to an 'ideal aspect' of human life. All cultural forms inevitably privilege those actions in which the human subject is deemed to be most fully itself. A hierarchy of actions must therefore

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<sup>24</sup> Nancy Hartstock, *The Feminist Standpoint Revisited and Other Essays* (Boulder: Westview, 1998), 110.

<sup>25</sup> Peter L. Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion* (Suffolk: Penguin Books, 1973), 48.

<sup>26</sup> Pickstock, 'Liturgy, Art and Politics,' 160.

<sup>27</sup> Berger, *Social Reality of Religion*, 48-49.

<sup>28</sup> Ward, *Cultural Transformation*, 122.

exist in a community that privileges those actions that deign to point to that ‘ideal aspect’, since it is that ‘ideal aspect’ that enables any form of reasoning, articulation and action.<sup>29</sup>

What then constitutes the ecclesial ‘ideal aspect’? Eric Voegelin observed that all social actions are simultaneous acts of participation in temporality and transcendence.<sup>30</sup> If Voegelin is correct, and if Christianity enjoins such participation in transcendence, why can all forms of social action not enact the Christian standpoint? The answer to this question is twofold. According to Pickstock, an ecclesial ontology is not merely one that participates in the transcendent. The human subject is ‘fully central to itself’ when it is engaged ‘in an act of dispossessing [worship and] praise’ of the transcendent.<sup>31</sup> As such only social actions that constitute explicit acts of worship in both word and deed can be said to properly constitute an ecclesial standpoint, and only the rituals of communal liturgical worship meets such a standard. Thus, to the extent that the social actions of the Church fall short of this doxological ideal, they can only imperfectly constitute the Church’s imaginary.

Also, speaking of the capacity of any action in constituting the Christian standpoint must logically proceed from a person occupying only a single imaginary at any one time. However, the transformation of political community can only proceed on the understanding of a subject’s simultaneous straddling of multiple imaginaries. The same social practice can simultaneously constitute a number of standpoints, including those quite distinct from the Christian counterpart. For example, the provision of aid to the needy can constitute the Church’s imaginary, in that the practice may point to an imagination where human subject’s inherent dignity as the image of God renders unacceptable his or her endurance of grinding poverty. However, it is possible that the same act can point to the ‘ideal aspect’ of capitalism, whereby the human subject’s ‘ideal aspect’ is realised in consumption. Just which standpoint gets enacted when considering that act in isolation is unclear, so maintaining an imaginary’s generation of coherent

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<sup>29</sup> Pickstock, ‘Liturgy, Art and Politics,’ 160.

<sup>30</sup> Eric Voegelin, *Order and History Vol. II: The World of the Polis* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 68.

<sup>31</sup> Pickstock, *After Writing*, 177.

meaning is dependent on hooking those practices to others that explicitly point to the imaginary's 'ideal aspect'. Avoiding the loss of an explicitly Christian imaginary's centre of gravity is dependent on hooking that web of practices onto a doxological and thus liturgical anchor.

### ***Liturgical Reading and Transforming***

Asserting the centrality of doxological *praxis* is not to prescribe a return to an inward 'navel gazing'. Indeed, the possibility of such 'navel gazing' is dependent on a simultaneous outward projection into cultural production. This section looks at how the enactment of a liturgical standpoint constitutes a cultural generator that destabilises and transforms the political status quo.

#### Liturgy and the Externalisation of Knowledge

The first fruit of enacting a standpoint's core of practices is a transformation of the way participants think about the world. Ward similarly regards liturgical practices as a Christian core of practices, possessing the same capacity to engender attitudinal transformation.<sup>32</sup> This is because all practices inevitably imprint knowledge claims on the practitioner which are subsequently reflected in attitudes.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, Talal Asad reminds us that the longevity of such attitudes can only be assured via the cocooning of attitudes in practices that act on the body.<sup>34</sup> Such practices must thus overlap with webs of corporeal relations between one person and another. For this reason, there is a need to explicate first the externalization of knowledge reflected in attitudes, and then the necessary involvement of interlinking bodily exchanges in the reinforcement of such knowledge.

Externalising knowledge is necessary because at one level, 'theory' is doomed to disintegration were it to remain a purely cognitive category. Stanley Hauerwas argues that practices are essential in providing the content of knowledge or changes thereof.

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<sup>32</sup> Graham Ward, *Christ and Culture* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 2005), 36.

<sup>33</sup> James K.A. Smith, *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism? Taking Derrida, Lyotard and Foucault to Church*, ed. James K.A. Smith, *The Church and Postmodern Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 86-87.

<sup>34</sup> Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 131-2.

Knowledge, be it constituted in ethics or notions of virtue, ‘cannot be clear until the practices that correspond to each...have been specified’.<sup>35</sup> In other words, the content of attitudinal changes must be established via webs of practices.

What is more, *praxis* plays a part in entrenching a standpoint’s persuasive power. This process is indispensable in a postmodern context where universally accessible, cognitive criteria are deemed to be no longer available or trustworthy. The legitimacy and persuasiveness of a social imaginary can no longer come from recourse to a set of universally valid cognitive criteria. Thus, the most potent alternatives must be enfolded or ‘lived out’ into a web of practices around a standpoint. Philosophers, anthropologists and sociologists of the most ardent secular variety have linked the need for alternative knowledge to be imbricated in webs of practices,<sup>36</sup> and theological insights as alternative knowledge forms are not exempt from this.<sup>37</sup> Thus attitudinal changes brought about by theological insights engendered by liturgical practices, must themselves be externalized into practices in tune with that transcendent ordering experience.<sup>38</sup>

Also, the political significance of the core of practices that constitute a standpoint lies in its capacity to generate webs of other practices that point to future utopias that challenge the status quo.<sup>39</sup> If standpoints are content with merely interpreting of the status quo, they only reinforce the status quo. ‘Counter positions’ must be generated.<sup>40</sup> Hartstock contends that a standpoint’s credibility in providing descriptive accounts is closely interlinked with their being geared towards providing ‘conditions of possibility for creating alternatives’ towards a particular horizon.<sup>41</sup> Ward’s point about ‘standpoints furnish[ing] not only positions-from but positions-to’<sup>42</sup> follows Horkheimer’s argument

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<sup>35</sup> Stanley Hauerwas, ‘Courage Exemplified,’ in *The Hauerwas Reader*, ed. John Berkman and Michael Cartwright (London: Duke University Press, 2001), 297.

<sup>36</sup> Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Karen E. Fields (NY: Free Press, 1995), 419-20, Annemarie de Waal Malefijt, *Religion and Culture: An Introduction to Anthropology of Religion* (Macmillan: London, 1968), 11.

<sup>37</sup> Ward, *Cultural Transformation*, 15.

<sup>38</sup> Michael P. Federici, *Eric Voegelin: The Restoration of Order* (Wilmington: ISI Books, 2002), 99.

<sup>39</sup> Davis, *Theology and Political Society*.

<sup>40</sup> Althusser, *For Marx*, 171, n7, Grace Jantzen, *Becoming Divine: Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Religion* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 217.

<sup>41</sup> Hartstock, *The Feminist Standpoint Revisited and Other Essays*, 236.

<sup>42</sup> Ward, *Cultural Transformation*, 88.

about the significance of practices to interpret and engage the present time, as well as to provide the conditions for projecting future utopian possibilities that transform the present 'into the *right kind of society*'.<sup>43</sup>

However, utopian possibilities will remain unreachable so long as they remain merely cognitive. Their credibility is dependent on their being enfolded in practices that point to that utopian moment. However, utopian futures cannot represent a complete rupture with present practical possibilities. As such, the credibility of future utopias depends on their ability to subsist within the practices that sustain present realities.<sup>44</sup> A simplistic example of future projection of possibilities can be found in the genre of science fiction, most notably the *Star Wars* movies, where nearly all portrayals of futuristic life-forms and technologies represent extrapolations of the era that made the films. For example, Jabba the Hutt and C3PO have humanoid features. What this somewhat silly example indicates is that the production of future possibilities must take place with some reference back to the practices that constitute the present standpoint and imaginary,<sup>45</sup> which as discussed above in the case of the Church, subsists in the practices of the liturgy. The production of possibilities then must simultaneously involve acts of inward referral to an ideal/liturgical anchor, with a corresponding outward social projection.

Such projections have an indispensable communal aspect, and the communal nature of political practices also means that such practices generate corresponding webs of corporeal relations. Transformative projects then must be synonymous with projects in bringing about a 'revolution in social relations'.<sup>46</sup> The concrete link between the creation of one social imaginary and the destabilization of another comes from consideration of what Ward calls 'transcorporeality', the implication of the interrelationship of bodies in the production of attitudes and utopian possibilities. Knowledge, as Lynn Nelson observed, cannot occur in solitary confinement. Individual projections thus cannot be

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<sup>43</sup> Max Horkheimer, *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: Continuum, 1972), 215-8.

<sup>44</sup> Ward, *Cultural Transformation*, 146-8.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

validated as knowledge unless it meets with shared practical responses by others within a community that appreciates the significance of the projection.<sup>47</sup> The production of credible categories of knowledge, and of credible political possibilities, in one person must therefore be said to derive from the body of another.<sup>48</sup> The capacity of the liturgy as a generator of political possibilities lies not only in its rearrangement of ideas. The liturgy as a form of worship that engages its participants *both* in terms of dispensing words of scripture, *and* in terms of enjoining participants in ritualistic corporate motions, rearranges bodies into a corporeal order, creating new webs of relations. These rearrangements then form new nodes of exchanges that generate and reinforce the knowledge categories of a new kind of imaginary within the individual, the ecclesial imaginary.<sup>49</sup>

Bodily exchanges define the *boundaries* and the *content* of knowledge. Members of a liturgical community then, by engaging in liturgical practices *as well as* in the living out of their daily lives, inevitably become ‘walking and talking fragments of a given society...embody[ing]...the essential core of the institutions and significations of their society’.<sup>50</sup> In short, each member by his or her ordering of life around a liturgical logic becomes a fragment of a liturgical imaginary.

### The Liturgical Destabilisation of Imaginaries

Because people are constantly externalising a standpoint or social imaginary in their everyday lives, there will also an inevitable meeting of differing social imaginaries. To begin considering what this meeting entails, one should be warned against any impression that standpoints and social imaginaries are monolithic entities possessing clearly defined borders. Seyla Benhabib is keen to point out that participation in communal practices that give imaginaries their shape are the result of contestation between members of a community, and of (albeit grudgingly consensual) domination by

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<sup>46</sup> Althusser, *For Marx*, 175-6.

<sup>47</sup> Lyn Hankinson Nelson, *Know Knows: From Quine to a Feminist Epistemology* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 290.

<sup>48</sup> Ward, *Christ and Culture*, 95-98.

<sup>49</sup> Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, 131.

<sup>50</sup> Cornelius Castoriadis, ‘Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary,’ in *The Castoriadis Reader*, ed. David Ames Curtis (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 332.

some members of that community and the marginalisation of others.<sup>51</sup> Because such contestation never ceases, the products of this contestation and the borders that circumscribe them are far from stable, and any notion of ‘delineable wholes’ amounts to little more than an artificial imposition.<sup>52</sup> It is important to point out the existence of competition in the production of standpoints and social imaginaries, since competition actually paves the way to consider the instability of all imaginaries, including those that seem defy any possibility of change. From this instability, one could then consider the possibility of the dominant imaginary’s transformation.

For Ward, the sites of exchange between different imaginaries will also be a site of fierce confrontation for the inhabitant of the social imaginary. Such confrontations arise because every exchange that the individual engages in inevitably destabilises the image of oneself, community and the world. This happens because whilst each socialised individual is a living fragment of his or her articulated societal institutions, it is also true that each socialised individual is simultaneously a point of convergence for multiple social imaginaries.<sup>53</sup> Straddling multiple imaginaries then means that there is constant corporeal mobility between imaginaries and thus between standpoints. This inevitable contact of imaginaries, combined with the frequent movement across their borders, means that all imaginaries concerned come under strain the moment they are externalised and socially mediated, since the very process of social mediation forces an abandonment of an imaginary’s ‘pristine...meaning for the shared meanings provided by [wider] society’.<sup>54</sup> For Ward, the contact between imaginaries engenders a reciprocal exchange of practices through the borders of the respective imaginaries. In such exchanges, the integrity of each imaginary is inevitably undermined as each established mode of interrelationality comes under challenge.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Seyla Benhabib, *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 5, Gayle Letherby, *Feminist Research in Theory and Practice* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2003), 23-8.

<sup>52</sup> Benhabib, *Claims of Culture*, 5.

<sup>53</sup> Ward, *Cultural Transformation*, 134.

<sup>54</sup> Castoriadis, ‘Radical Imagination,’ 330.

<sup>55</sup> Ward, *Cultural Transformation*, 170.

This raises the question as to the exact locus and nature of the challenge posed by the meeting of social imaginaries. Concerning the locus of the challenge, it is argued that if Ward's point of the person being the meeting point of multiple social imaginaries is correct, then the point can be made that the body of the member itself represents the site of the challenge to any imaginary. William Cavanaugh has given this element greater weight, in his work on the use of torture in Pinochet's Chile. Cavanaugh convincingly casts doubt on the strategic efficacy of torture as a form of data extraction. However, Cavanaugh asserts that the significance of torture lies not in its ability to extract data but in its ability to reproduce of the imaginary of the state, which is then manifested on the physical body of the torture victim. At the same time, this manifestation on the body also manifests a strike at other imaginaries as well.<sup>56</sup> What can be extrapolated from Cavanaugh's exploration is that the body of the member of the imaginary is the exact site in which a particular imaginary manifests itself and challenges others.

Defining *where* the challenge occurs assists in defining *what* the challenge to the social imaginary actually involves. It must be pointed out that such a challenge goes beyond a purely cognitive or discursive exercise. If the body of the member of the imaginary is both a site of convergence and challenge, then the nature of the challenge must be located in the processes that occur on that member's body. To fully understand the process, one must revisit Ward's point that multiple imaginaries can be manifested in a single person, and couple it with Ward's other point that members are also living fragments of the imaginary to which they belong. If these were true, the need for cohesion and the concomitant process of privilege and marginalisation of imaginaries that takes place communally must be replicated within the individual, so that a hierarchical relation of imaginaries is established within the individual.<sup>57</sup> The stability of the imaginary therefore, is concomitant with the goal of maintaining that hierarchical relation of imaginaries both communally and individually.

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<sup>56</sup> Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 57.

<sup>57</sup> Ward, *Cultural Transformation*, 83.

In the processes of transcorporeal exchange, however, members of all imaginaries will eventually engage a situation whereby a dominant imaginary is unable to provide a sufficient basis to comprehensively engage the phenomenon at hand. The durability of the imaginary that resided within the member that enabled engagement with the phenomenon in the first place and eventually negotiate a means of handling the situation would cease to function. New practical engagements are thus demanded of the member, but this demand for a more satisfactory engagement with the phenomenon is always coupled with a demand for a corporeal rearrangement to take place. When such rearrangements take place, the dominant imaginary loses its privileged position in the member's hierarchy of imaginaries and ultimately standpoints. The substance of the challenge then comes in the form of rearranging that hierarchy of standpoints, so that a previously marginalised standpoint generates more persuasive power on the member than the one that previously enjoyed a position of privilege, and more people come to 'make sense of their existence in the same way'.<sup>58</sup>

Because repositioning standpoints is tied to the reconfiguration of social relations, the meeting of social imaginaries is necessarily paralleled by the recruitment of new members into the imaginary. Such recruitment does not merely take place in the minds of members, manifest in the arguments that defend the merits of the newly privileged imaginary. The recruitment is also corporeal, manifesting on the body of the member as he or she engages in the practices that forge new social relations, and at the same time manifest and legitimise new imaginaries. These practices gradually bring these marginalised standpoints into the member's immediate orbit of meaning and push the once privileged standpoints into the margins of relevance. The multiplication of such processes results in not a mere *discursive* rearrangement but a *corporeal* one as well, as the body of a member becomes rearranged *vis a vis* those of others in his or her interpretive community. The effects of such rearrangements can be a withdrawal of the member from the orbit of one social imaginary, if not a complete removal from that imaginary and subsequent insertion into another. At the same time however, such corporeal rearrangements can also pull in the practices of the marginal imaginaries back

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 129.

into the orbit of those of the primary. Because liturgical rituals engender corporeal rearrangements, that in turn generate the webs of practices that produce the imaginaries that get caught up in the wrestling match of imaginaries, there is little reason to exclude such rituals as politically significant processes.

Liturgical or otherwise, the significance of such corporeal rearrangements for the project of political transformation lies in the fact that the intensification of such rearrangements generate a demand for current social imaginaries to be reconfigured.<sup>59</sup> The meeting of multiple individuals, each bearing multiple imaginaries that collide with one another inevitably means that each and every imaginary at every moment comes under challenge at multiple points from multiple sources. No one community is able to effectively police the borders of the social imaginary, and thus no single imaginary would remain stable.<sup>60</sup> The inevitable result from this lack of comprehensive policing of imaginary borders then is the constant challenge to, if not breakdown of, barriers between imaginaries. At the same time, however, what also occurs is that the imaginary becomes involved in a process of opening up avenues of possibilities to facilitate further expansion of a social imaginary's horizons. This negotiation of communal barriers facilitates the task of finding new ways to handle the onslaught brought about by neighbouring imaginaries, as well as find more meaningful ways of engaging such imaginaries and relating to them.

However, it is the standpoint that enables meaningful interpretation and political engagement in the first place, and standpoints are tied to the interpretive communities that generate those standpoints. Thus, it is unsurprising that Lorraine Code would argue that any political reflection would have to focus on strengthening that community.<sup>61</sup> Central to this task of communal buttressing then is the need for reflection on the identity of the challenged public, for according to Charles Taylor, the primary means to 'make sense' of a community's experience of challenge would be the creation of an 'illusion' of

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>61</sup> Lorraine Code, *What Can She Know? Feminist Theory and the Construction of Knowledge* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 307.

a society within which such members may be situated. Strengthening community then overlaps with the task of generating ‘fictions’ of what a political community is and is meant to do.<sup>62</sup>

Thus a standpoint, when successful in recruiting members into rearranging their respective hierarchy of imaginaries, could also destabilise privileged imaginaries and facilitate a reconsideration of the form, nature, meaning and purpose of that standpoint. In short a reconsideration of the political community itself. This is no different for Christian standpoints enfolded in liturgical practices. When the Christian standpoint is successful in recruiting and forming a disciplined ecclesial community, it could underpin the practices that provide a critique to the privileged imaginary of the dominant social imaginary, namely the Westphalian international system. If the intensification of such recruitment is successful in persuading a critical mass to topple the dominance of the Westphalian imagination in the public imagination, the result could be a breach in the borders of the imaginary serious enough to force reconceptualisation of political community away from the Westphalian ‘ideal’.

But what directions can the reconceptualisation of political community take when faced with the challenge of the liturgical imaginary? After considering the mechanics of liturgical challenge, the question should then turn to the possible areas in which practices around the Roman Eucharistic Liturgy can emerge to challenge the conceptions of political community.

## **Liturgical Challenge: Space, Time, Citizenship and Consumption**

### ***Spatial Interruption***

The primary method by which the Roman Liturgy reimagines political community lies in redefining communal spatial demarcations. It interrupts Westphalian notions of community defined by borders on a map, and this interruption occurs through the assertion of the Christian standpoint’s unique sense of spatial unity. Such interruptions

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<sup>62</sup> Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 16-20.

are enacted in the corporate disciplines of the liturgy, which not only make the teachings of the Church visible, but also make the Church *qua* Church visible.

Eucharistic disciplines as corporate behaviours not only interrupt those of the public space controlled by the state. They also draw participants into a common temporal space, separating the participants of the Eucharistic discipline from citizens subject to state disciplines. But this process of separation is intensified at the climax of the Eucharistic liturgy, the consumption of the Eucharistic host, the true Body of Christ. The claim concerning the trueness of the Body is not tangential to the political implications of the liturgy, for if the recipient of the host receives not a piece of bread but ‘the body of Christ’, its reception must be coupled with the notion of receiving not a mere *part* of that Body of Christ but the *whole* Body. This Eucharistic body, while consumed by the multiple recipients, nonetheless remains intact and one. This oneness in the Body of Christ unites many parts of the world where the liturgy is being enacted, despite the spatial separation of the sites of celebration from each other.<sup>63</sup> Recipients are thus participating in something that simultaneously draws distinctions between them and state citizens, as well as draws participants towards something other than the recipient and the state.<sup>64</sup> This dual process solidifies the spatial distinctions between the collection of recipients and state citizens, creating a political unit distinct from the Westphalian State.

### ***The Eucharistic Interruption of Time***

Challenging the state’s monopoly on political space is a crucial aspect of the liturgical transformation of political community. However, securing such a space in a way that sets the Church as a political community in its own right<sup>65</sup> can only be complete with a liturgical interruption of Modern time. This proceeds from the understanding that perceptions of time are not the result of scientific distillation but ‘structured through social practices’.<sup>66</sup> The political significance of remoulding of time stems from the fact

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<sup>63</sup> John Zizioulas, ‘Eucharist and Catholicity,’ in *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997).

<sup>64</sup> Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 119.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>66</sup> Robert Gibbs, ‘Eternity in History: Rolling the Scroll,’ in *Liturgy, Time and the Politics of Redemption*, ed. Randi Rashkover and C. C. Pecknold (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006), 127-8.

that ‘the ways we experience, name and interpret time contribute to the kinds of communities we imagine and inhabit’.<sup>67</sup>

One must first recognise Modern ‘scientific’ time as a seamless stream of repeated units of measure that are constantly being replicated in the present, then irrevocably lost to the past<sup>68</sup> – the flattened time that sustains the state as a political community. The Eucharist interrupts this flattened time by having eternity ‘enter history’, making the liturgy a simultaneously historical and eschatological event that transforms temporal, and indeed political, experience.<sup>69</sup> The liturgical impact on time is sharpened by Franz Rosenzweig’s model of the liturgy as a ‘reflector which focuses the sunbeams of eternity in the small circles of the year’.<sup>70</sup> Through the liturgy of the word, the assembly is told of historical events which are remembered in the pages of scripture. However, these events do not remain in the past, isolated and cut off from the present. Rather, they are brought into the present and lived as if the assembly was living in that ‘past’ moment.<sup>71</sup>

This ‘confusion’ of past and present is given a sharper focus in the offering of bread and wine. The ‘in the now’ offering of bread and wine casts the participants’ minds back to the events leading up to Jesus’ death and Resurrection. This can be a simple memorial of a past event, but remember that the endpoint of the Eucharistic liturgy is the reception of the Body of Christ. Recall that these elements to the participant are not merely symbolic and pointing to the past, but are real and present ‘in the now’. This reception ‘in the now’ of a real Body of Christ that is the result from that same single sacrifice took place in the past,<sup>72</sup> denotes a bringing forward of that past event into the

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<sup>67</sup> Scott Bader-Saye, ‘Figuring Time: Providence and Politics,’ in *Liturgy, Time and the Politics of Redemption*, ed. Randi Rashkover and C.C. Pecknold (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006), 98.

<sup>68</sup> Steven Kepnes, ‘Rosenzweig’s Liturgical Reasoning,’ in *Liturgy, Time, and the Politics of Redemption*, ed. Randi Rashkover and C.C. Pecknold (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006), 115, Pickstock, ‘Liturgy, Art and Politics,’ 168.

<sup>69</sup> Gibbs, ‘Eternity in History,’ 128.

<sup>70</sup> Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, trans. William Hallo (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985), 308.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 304.

<sup>72</sup> Hebrews 10:11-13

present. The liturgical sacrifice both as a memorial of Jesus' bounded historical death and resurrection as well as part of a heavenly liturgy collapses the duality between historical (*Kronos*) and eternal (*Kairos*) time.<sup>73</sup> Participants are reminded that the Eucharist is not a replication of a past sacrifice that occurred *in* a past time, but of one that is continuing *outside* of time<sup>74</sup> in 'the heavenly Jerusalem...[with] innumerable angels...[and] the assembly of the firstborn enrolled in heaven'.<sup>75</sup> This participation in the *Kairos* (where past, present and future meet) is what brings into the now the seemingly unknown events of the future into a single moment. This collapsing of time is enacted through the liturgical prayers where, in the words of the First Eucharistic prayer, the president requests that the sacrifice on the altar be joined to the sacrifice in the 'altar in heaven'.<sup>76</sup>

### ***Eucharistic Citizenship***

The political implications of this collapse are evident in the same prayers that ask that the participants be in union with all 'who share in the Body and Blood of Christ'.<sup>77</sup> The rituals remind the participant that the point of union is in the supper table of the Lamb of God, an event recorded in the Book of Revelations, to take place in an eschatological future 'Kingdom of God' (Revelations 19:9). There is thus a simultaneous looking back and eschatological looking forward that makes the Modern compartmentalisation of past, present and future 'lose their fixed character'.<sup>78</sup> Out of this confusion of past, present and future, a new community emerges with new terms of citizenship.

### **Eucharistic Citizenship and Ontology**

At the heart of this new citizenship is a new ontology that counters the Modern ontology of an autonomous individual who precedes any communal membership. The political significance of this Modern autonomy lies in the fact that in the absence of communal ties, relations between individuals are established and sustained by a hierarchy of contracts. The most fundamental of these contracts is that with the Westphalian state,

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<sup>73</sup> Scott Hahn, *The Lamb's Supper: The Mass as Heaven on Earth* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 117.

<sup>74</sup> Hebrews 9:11-14

<sup>75</sup> Hebrews 12:22-24

<sup>76</sup> *The Roman Missal*, (Sydney: EJ Dwyer, 1963), 491.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 496.

<sup>78</sup> Kepnes, 'Rosensweig's Liturgical Reasoning,' 117.

since the mechanisms of the state are in place for the sole purpose of preventing any transgression to the individual's integrity by those that the individual has established contractual relations with.<sup>79</sup> The very existence of the liberal autonomous individual is dependent on his membership in the social contract with the state, and the protection that contract provides. The protection of the State, therefore, becomes synonymous with the protection of individual liberty, which then makes it unsurprising that the defence of liberty would become the justifications to the resort to all means necessary to protect the state, even to the point of using violence against that state's own citizens.<sup>80</sup> Violence then, does not become the anomaly that the state fixes, but is built into the maintenance of the state

The Eucharistic imaginary responds with an ontology that recasts the person not primarily as an individual but as part a communion that participates in both God and in one another, in a state of original harmony.<sup>81</sup> This is made most explicit in the words of the Second Eucharistic Prayer, where the president asks God that in their participation of the sacrifice of the Eucharist, the congregation be made at peace with God and 'brought together in unity'.<sup>82</sup> This liturgical bringing together however, goes beyond the establishment of contractual bridges between individuals, bridges adorned with clearly defined limits to intrusion and suspended by threats of retaliation should those boundaries be breached. Indeed, the Eucharist breaks those barriers down.

This occurs via the reception by the president of gifts of bread and wine from the community, and offers it as a sacrifice to God who turns it into the Body of Christ. From the beginning of this ritual, the barriers between individuals and the gifts they bring are erased, melding the two to the point of confusion. This confusion is demonstrated when the president, in presenting the sacrifice of bread and wine, asks that God 'receive[s] us [meaning the assembly] and be pleased with the sacrifice that we [the assembly] offer'.

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<sup>79</sup> Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 45, 234.

<sup>80</sup> Slavoj Zizek, 'The 'Thrilling Romance of Orthodoxy', in *Theology and the Political: The New Debate*, ed. Creston Davis, John Milbank, and Slavoj Zizek (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 54.

<sup>81</sup> Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 380-438.

<sup>82</sup> *The Roman Missal*, 496.

The fusion of gift and giver is further reiterated when the president later requests that the recipients be transformed into ‘an everlasting gift to [God]’.<sup>83</sup>

But relations of gift are not confined to the individual recipient and God. To paraphrase Augustine, the Eucharistic host transforms each recipient into that which is being received, and thus pulls each recipient into the life of a Trinitarian Godhead.<sup>84</sup> Participating in the divine life enjoins simultaneous participation with one another. So rather than the Modern regard of each other as potential adversaries to be protected from via contractual relations, the liturgical imaginary trains recipients to become gifts to one another. This then raises questions as to the need for the protection of integrity at all costs,<sup>85</sup> even to the point of resorting to violence.

#### Eucharistic Citizenship and Difference

Another aspect of Eucharistic citizenship is the encouragement of community building on a foundation of more authentic dialogical relations between different political standpoints. The Eucharistic engagement of difference acts as a corrective to Westphalian solutions that have gravitated around the diametrically opposed poles of nihilistic relativism (and thus political fragmentation) on the one hand and mono-civilisationalism (and thus violent political domination) on the other. Because the solutions proposed to dealing with difference are often set against the backdrop of coexistence of conflicting individuals within exclusively temporal Westphalian spaces, both proceed from a logic of a ‘flattened monism’,<sup>86</sup> where difference can only be seen in oppositional terms. In such a context, thinking of and engaging difference can only come about through a process of ‘cutting, slicing, arresting, repressing, contracting, splitting [and] subtracting’. Violence underscores difference,<sup>87</sup> and the propensity to violence thus gives no right to engage the other, only tolerate it.<sup>88</sup> According to Ghassan Hage, the terms of toleration and the social

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods (New York: Modern Library, 1950), 124.

<sup>85</sup> Bader-Saye, ‘Figuring Time,’ 96, Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 118.

<sup>86</sup> Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy*, 195.

<sup>87</sup> Conor Cunningham, ‘Nothing Is, Something Must Be: Lacan and Creation from No One,’ in *Theology and the Political: The New Debate*, ed. Creston Davis, John Milbank, and Slavoj Žižek (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 94.

<sup>88</sup> Stephen Minister, ‘Derrida’s Inhospitable Desert of the Messianic: Religion within the Limits of Justice Alone,’ *Heythrop Journal* XLVIII (2007): 228.

placements of those to be tolerated are almost always determined by tolerator on its own terms, and imposed on the toleratee involuntarily, further reinforcing inherently dominatory and violent webs of relations.<sup>89</sup> To engage difference at all in such a scheme, difference must first be obliterated.<sup>90</sup>

The liturgical rejection of Westphalian community, and recovery of the ontology of participation in divinity and history, provides possibilities that transcend a mere 'middle ground' compromise between the two poles. The liturgical ethic would exceed the prescription of mere 'tolerance' of different 'others'.<sup>91</sup> At the same time the liturgical imaginary exceeds the celebration of diversity at all costs. Current postmodern standpoints that give primacy to the particular over the universal not only descend into relativism. Like their Modern liberal counterpart, such standpoints also descend into atomism, ironically replicating the barriers between autonomous individuals,<sup>92</sup> which perpetuates relations of competition, dominance, and eventually violence.<sup>93</sup>

The Liturgy corrects this anarchy with the narrative of incarnation, which announces that the transcendent universal only unfolds itself through the temporal particular.<sup>94</sup> This is demonstrated by the assertion in most traditions of the Eucharistic host being more than a mere particular symbol that points to the completely 'other' universal, but being truly the Body of Christ. The presence of the universal Godhead in the form of that particular bread being broken at that particular Eucharistic table affirms the particular as being the key site of the unfolding of the universal.<sup>95</sup> Difference manifest in finitude does not become merely 'tolerated' or obliterated, but becomes embraced as a 'figural repetition of the other differences' that in turn constitute the universal.<sup>96</sup> But at the same time, the liturgical celebration of finitude is not left to reduce to the atomistic

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<sup>89</sup> Ghassan Hage, *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society* (NY: Routledge, 1998), 78-104.

<sup>90</sup> Bell Jr., 'Only Jesus Saves,' 216.

<sup>91</sup> Pickstock, 'Liturgy, Art and Politics,' 172-3.

<sup>92</sup> Kristen Deede Johnson, *Theology, Political Theory and Pluralism: Beyond Tolerance and Difference* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 127-8.

<sup>93</sup> Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 120.

<sup>94</sup> Bell Jr., 'Only Jesus Saves,' 215.

<sup>95</sup> Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 119.

<sup>96</sup> Bell Jr., 'Only Jesus Saves,' 215, Pickstock, 'Liturgy, Art and Politics,' 172.

relativism precisely because each participant in each liturgical site consumes not separate parts but the whole of a single body of Christ. All participants are united in that single body of Christ, while at the same time still ‘inhabiting a particular earthly space’.<sup>97</sup>

According to Graham Ward, this introduces new nuances to the process of judgement as a necessary ingredient in *Kulturkritik*.<sup>98</sup> The recognition of transcendence unfolding in immanence should aid acknowledgement that each finite encounter be infused with ‘eschatological waiting’, as participants of the liturgy that anticipate the fulfilment of the truth in the liturgy similarly wait for the true meaning of each finite encounter. This simultaneously rejects nihilistic relativism, whilst also forestalling any imperial triumphalism that has become the mainstay of political relations internationally.<sup>99</sup>

### **Community and Capitalism**

A growing body of literature attests to the collapse of state and society,<sup>100</sup> coupled with the further absorption of this complex into the machinations of the consumer-driven market.<sup>101</sup> This literature has also looked at how this compound collapse has envisaged a new kind of community where bonds of kinship are produced by mass consumption.<sup>102</sup> Whilst a Weberian tradition credits Christianity with providing Capitalism theological sustenance,<sup>103</sup> this section will explain how Christianity seen through the lens of Roman liturgical *praxis* can actually expose the violence of capitalism’s kinship bonds, and redefine Westphalian citizenship in such a way as to resist these bonds.

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<sup>97</sup> Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 119-20.

<sup>98</sup> Graham Ward, ‘A Christian Act: Politics and Liturgical Practise,’ in *Liturgy, Time and the Politics of Redemption*, ed. Randi Rashkover and C.C. Pecknold (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006), 43.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>100</sup> Michael Hardt, ‘The Withering of Civil Society,’ *Social Text* 45 (1995): 27-44.

<sup>101</sup> Daniel M. Bell Jr, ‘The Politics of Fear and the Gospel of Life,’ *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory* 8(2) (2007): 63, Kenneth Surin, ‘Marxism(S) and the ‘the Withering Away of the State’,’ *Social Text* 27 (1990): 45.

<sup>102</sup> Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 109-10.

<sup>103</sup> Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (NY: Unwin Press, 1985), Michael Budde, *The (Magic) Kingdom of God: Christianity and Global Culture Industries* (Boulder: Westview 1997), 37.

If Capitalism's triumph lies in its capture and discipline of desire to the logic of the market, then the fulfilment of such desire must inevitably become a matter of 'capture and possession – combat and sheer assertion'.<sup>104</sup> The post-Cold War proliferation and intensification of capitalist modes of production<sup>105</sup> is accompanied with an increased volatility that produces a culture of pessimism and fear.<sup>106</sup> Escape from fear becomes dependent on the accumulation of material goods and with them the assurance of physical, psychological and emotional integrity. Such accumulation generates illusions of stability, but paradoxically unveils the fleeting nature of this security, thereby either intensifying this nihilistic behaviour or resulting in lashing out in acts of violence in a desperate attempt to regain control.<sup>107</sup> Left alone, the proliferation and intensification of such relations can only degenerate into cycles of inequality, conflict and conquests,<sup>108</sup> whilst still leaving capitalism's calculus of scarcity and self preservation intact.<sup>109</sup>

The Eucharist responds to the violence of capitalism, but not in a manner that mimics capitalism's logic. Capitalism operates on the basis of the exchange of alienable objects from individuals in contractual relationships, maintaining the barriers between giver, gift, and recipient. On the other hand, because the Eucharist makes gifts out of its recipients, such borders are collapsed to the point of confusion. The Eucharist undercuts the basis of Capitalist economics by instituting a new divine economy where the gift is not alienated from the giver, but rather joined with the gift.<sup>110</sup> By collapsing the borders between gift, giver and recipient that maintain the integrity of subjects that in turn act as the insurance against insecurity, the liturgy exposes the uncertainties of life as inescapable. But rather than resign to chaos, the liturgy couples this collapsing with the Christian narrative of fall, transformation and redemption. This narrative challenges the zero-sum competition inherent Capitalism's logic of scarcity, which prescribes resistance

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<sup>104</sup> Bell Jr., 'Only Jesus Saves,' 202.

<sup>105</sup> Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (NY: Free Press, 2006).

<sup>106</sup> Bell Jr., 'The Politics of Fear,' 65.

<sup>107</sup> Pickstock, 'Liturgy, Art and Politics,' 169.

<sup>108</sup> Marie Besancon, 'Relative Resources: Inequality in Ethnic Wars, Revolutions and Genocides,' *Journal of Peace Research* 42, no. 4 (2005): 395, Laurie Nathan, 'The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: The Structural Causes of Crisis and Violence in Africa,' *Peace and Change* 25, no. 2 (2000).

<sup>109</sup> Bell Jr., 'Only Jesus Saves,' 208, Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 120.

<sup>110</sup> Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 48-9.

to the forces that threaten to undermine integrity. This resistance is underpinned by relations of debt, a process that as discussed above, results in violent webs of relations.

The Eucharist resists capitalism's logic of scarcity and relations of debt, with a counter-logic of plenitude<sup>111</sup> that underpins relations of gift and sacrifice, which in turn underpin webs of exchanges where people 'receive without charge [and] give without charge'<sup>112</sup>. The logic of plenitude describes the boundless generosity of God that according to the Christian narrative flows into and transforms all temporal experience, particularly the experience of human suffering, which the calculus of scarcity seeks to resist. The Christian calculus of plenitude welcomes the absorption of harm to security, because historical suffering becomes also the site of historical transformation. It is a narrative that counters the pessimism of the logic of scarcity, which in turn counters the need for stockpiling and thus interrupts the cycle of capitalism and its concomitant logic of competition, domination and eventually violence. According to Pickstock, this logic of plenitude is played in the practice of surrendering bread and wine, the products of labour and source of sustenance, for public sacrifice in its liturgical transformation into the Body and Blood of Christ.<sup>113</sup>

This logic of sacrifice and surrender does not leave untouched the issue of the temporal sufferings of others. Because all participants are made into the Body of Christ via their consumption of the Eucharistic host, the continuation of the Jesus' sacrifice on the altar continues on in the bodies of the Christians.<sup>114</sup> The final liturgical exhortation in the Traditional Roman Rite, '*Ite Missa Est* [trans. 'Go, You are Sent']',<sup>115</sup> thereby demands an 'unleashing of a multitude of sacrifices' via the participants' lives. Acting as gifts and sacrifices through their exchanges with those around them,<sup>116</sup> the recipients of the Eucharist are called to risk their material and even physical wellbeing to alleviate the suffering of others. But these are not confined to isolated acts of philanthropy, which are

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<sup>111</sup> Bell Jr., 'Only Jesus Saves,' 211-2.

<sup>112</sup> Matthew 10:8

<sup>113</sup> Pickstock, 'Liturgy, Art and Politics,' 166.

<sup>114</sup> Augustine, *The City of God*, X.6.

<sup>115</sup> Donald P Goodman III, *The Tridentine and Novus Ordo Missals: A Comparison in Latin and English* (Goretti Publications, [cited 3 November 2007]); available from <http://gorpub.freeshell.org/massland.pdf>.

acts that more comply with ‘relations of debt’ than that of ‘gift and sacrifice’.<sup>117</sup> Because the liturgical process of making gifts out of individuals is corporate it is therefore social. And thus, the alleviation of suffering cannot be extricated from the formation of webs of social relations within the liturgical *polis*. Should there be a proliferation and intensification of these liturgical relations of gift and sacrifice, it could then underpin the creation of an alternative economy that can displace, if not replace, the ‘relations of debt’ that underpin the violence of the capitalist economy.<sup>118</sup>

## Conclusion

The foregoing shows the Eucharistic liturgy representing one hopeful site of resistance to the bellicose confines of Westphalia. By first looking at Westphalian international community as a privileged assemblage, one could find the opening necessary in opening political possibilities. This paper has mapped out how practices of worship can locate spatially fluid communities outside the Westphalian straightjacket, as well as generate the means to infiltrate and eventually undermine it.

Further, this paper has outlined avenues in which the enactment of the liturgical *polis* resists the violence of the state. The liturgy exposes the current imaginary’s resignation to violent relations, and provides new ontological bases and new forms of citizenship that questions the inevitability of the barriers that Modern relations have erected between human beings. At the same time, it has shown how worship can underpin new communities founded on new economic relations, and in so doing countering relations of debt and with that, the relations of domination inherent in Capitalism.

This paper does not pretend to assume that the practices at the present moment are already transforming political community. The present attitude of individualised and interialised worship even within liturgical contexts mean that such political potential is yet to be fully realised. However, this paper has hopefully demonstrated how, when both

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<sup>116</sup> Pickstock, *After Writing*, 250.

<sup>117</sup> Bell Jr., ‘Only Jesus Saves,’ 222.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 220-1.

the communal and doxological aspects of the Eucharistic liturgy are synthesised, they can provides an engine that makes peaceable alternatives of political community feasible.