Cosmopolitanism and Secularism

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> Note the problem of religion taken
> not in the confessional sense but in
> the secular sense of a unity of faith
> between a conception of the world and
> a corresponding norm of conduct. But
> why call this unity of faith "religion"
> and not "ideology," or even frankly
> "politics"? (Antonio Gramsci.[1])

Religion appears in liberal theory first and foremost as an occasion for tolerance and neutrality. This orientation is reinforced by (a) the classification of religion as

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1 Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks,* ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, New York, International and London, Lawrence & Wishart, Ltd., 1971, p. 326.

essentially a private matter, (b) an "epistemic" approach to religion shaped by the attempt to assess true and false knowledge; (c) the notion that a clear and unbiased distinction is available between the religious and the secular; and (d) the view that religion is in some sense a "survival" from an earlier era—not a field of vital growth within modernity. Each of these reinforcements is problematic. So while the virtues of tolerance are real, the notion that matters of religion can otherwise be excluded from the liberal public sphere is not sustainable.

In response to the failure of religion to disappear from the politics of even "advanced" democratic capitalist societies, liberal theorists have sometimes been moved to address religious identities and practices as matters deserving recognition. After initially espousing a more straightforwardly secularist exclusion of religion from politics as an essentially private matter of taste, for example, John Rawls in his later work suggested that religiously motivated arguments should be accepted as publicly valid, but only insofar as they were translatable into secular claims not requiring any specifically religious understanding. In his recent writings, Jürgen Habermas helpfully goes further, advancing discussion of religion as source and resource of democratic politics, from within a revised conception of liberalism. In the present paper I examine Habermas's account of religion in the public sphere, arguing that it breaks important new ground but also raises new problems. I relate this

to the cosmopolitan project which Habermas still espouses (along with many others). And I suggest (1) how abandoning a sharp distinction between religious and the secular reason may be helpful for democratic theory, and (2) why approaching cosmopolitan solidarity as connections across differences may offer advantages that seeking universal common denominators does not.

RELIGION IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Habermas has recently advanced important arguments for a greater attention to religion in the public sphere (including several versions of a core paper with that title) and also explored a variety of meeting points between theological arguments and his theory of communicative action. He is motivated largely by the prominence of religion in contemporary politics and public discussion, but also by arguments that the neglect of religion in his previous accounts of the public sphere was problematic and by the positive engagement of several theologians and religious thinkers with his theories of communicative action and the public sphere. Habermas proceeds, as always, carefully and methodically, but it seems on this occasion with some additional caution and uncertainty about just how far he wants to go. Religion, after all, appears prominently in contemporary politics in the form of strikingly illiberal views and positions, and in a package with practices Habermas can hardly condone. It also appears in more positive and even he-

roic forms, of course, not least as part of movements for peace, civil and human rights, humanitarian relief, and equitable development. But Habermas recognizes that the theoretical challenge requires not just than accepting "nice" versions of religion, but precisely determining in what way religious positions with which secular liberals may disagree vehemently should carry weight.

Habermas labels the present era, in which religion must be taken seriously, as "postsecular". A good start is to ask what this might mean—beyond simply the presence of religious arguments and activism in the actual public sphere despite their absence from most theoretical idealizations. We shall see that a seemingly narrow discussion necessarily broadens into general questions about the meaning of the secular and the relationship of faith and culture to public reason. These in turn raise questions about what establishes sufficient solidarity for support of practices of public reason. If answers include reference to religion, culture and perhaps social organization they reveal potentially important differentiations among the bases for public discourse. These are problematic for a cosmopolitanism that imagines unity to be achieved on the basis of essential similarities among individuals—and among public spheres because these are understood to be peopled by individuals participating in rational ways that abstract from their stronger cultural and social commitments. And to do justice to this kind of differentiation we need at least to raise the question of

what brings order and unity to the world—what makes it the cosmos of a potential cosmopolitanism.

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At the conference on the occasion of Jürgen Habermas's Holberg Prize, as in a number of other contexts, the question of what it means to refer to a "postsecular" era was the subject of debate. Helge Høibraaten reflected the concerns of many when he asked whether the prefix "post" wasn't misleading. Just as the ostensibly "postmodern" reflected cross-currents intrinsic to modernity, wasn't this true also of the "postsecular"?[2]

We could come at this historically as well as philosophically, noting the dramatic role played by religion—and periodic movements of religious revitalization—throughout the modern era. It is significant not just that Americans remain more religious than Europeans in recent decades, thus, but also that the United States has seen successive waves of Great Awakenings, each transforming not only religious but also apparently secular life. And while the contrast with Europe is not new, having informed both Tocqueville and Weber after their travels in the US, it is also not complete. For the Protestant Reformation was not the last time religion mattered in Europe. We should remember the anti-slavery movement and the influence of especially low-church Protestant religions

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2   See Høibraaten, "Post-metaphysical thought, religion, and secular society," in this volume.

on a range of other late XVIIIth century and early XIXth century social movements, including those also shaped by democratic and class politics.[3] We should note that many large-scale popular devotions, like pilgrimages to Lourdes, have relatively modern origins. We should not neglect the mid-XIXth century renewal of spiritualism, even if much of it was outside religious orthodoxy, and we should not lose sight of its fluid relationships with Romanticism, utopian socialism, and humanitarianism.[4] We should see religious internationalism both under the problematic structure of colonial and postcolonial missionary work and in the engagements shaped by Vatican II, the peace movement, and liberation theology. We should recognize, as Habermas does, the importance of religious motivations and understandings (and indeed or-

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3 See for example E.P. Thompson's classic account of Methodist influence on early workers' mobilizations *in The Making of the English Working Class,* Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1968; rev. ed. And see Michael Young's more recent account of the centrality of religion in the era of the Second Great Awakening to the development not just of specific movements—notably against slavery—but to the very form of a national social movement (*Bearing Witness against Sin: The Evangelical Birth of the American Social Movement,* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2006).

4 The shaping of humanitarianism by Christian religious engagements is emblematic of the extent to which a new concern for certain aspects of the "secular"—life in this world—grew within religious contexts at least as much as outside of them in some "secular humanism." Both Florence Nightingale and Henri Dunant, the principal advocates for the founding of the Red Cross, were moved by Christian commitments.

ganizational networks and practices) in a range of social movements during the XXth century, in Europe as well as America, and around the world.[5] In Europe, certainly, these included the Francoist phalange and other conservative as well as progressive movements. And of course we should recognize the growing importance of religion in Europe—largely occasioned by but not limited to Muslim immigration.

When, we might ask, was the secular age that we are now "post"? In his book, *A Secular Age*, Charles Taylor traces a set of transformations that gather speed from about 1500 and which by the mid-XIXth century issue

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5 And in this regard, we should recognize the extent to which the story of secularization is not simply what Charles Taylor calls a "subtraction" story—the story of a decline in religion, or of its evacuation from a variety of "public" spaces. It is the story of shifting ways of understanding the world as well as religion. These reframe the whole question of what it is to believe not just the count of believers vs unbelievers). "Secularity in this sense is a matter of the whole context of understanding in which our moral, spiritual or religious experience and search takes place" (Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age,* Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2007, p. 3). These changes happen not just outside religion, as in the growth of science, but inside religion as religious engagements turn more often to projects of transforming "this-worldly" life. In this sense, believers and unbelievers both live in "a secular age" (though this may be more true of the West on which Taylor focuses). And the growing prominence of religion in public life is not "post-secular" in Taylor's sense of "secular" even if it challenges some political ideas of secularism as a separation of church and state or neutrality of the state towards different religions.

in (a) an era when may people find conscious unbelief (not merely low levels of participation in institutional religion) to be normal, (b) an era when believers are challenged in compelling ways by both a plurality of beliefs and powerful achievements based on science and institutions not based on traditional religion, and (c) an era when states and other institutions recurrently demand a distinction between religion and "the secular" (even though each may be hard to define). Taylor does not believe we have entered a post-secular age. On the contrary, he thinks that believers and non-believers alike must live within a secular age. He does not seek a return to some imaginary pre-secular orientation, but rather a recognition that everyone works with some evaluative commitments that are especially strong or deep and which put their other values into perspective.[6] None of us actually escapes cultural and other motivations and resources for our intellectual perspectives; none of us is perfectly articulate about all our moral sources (though we may struggle to gain clarity). This import of this is that the line between secular and religious is not as sharp as many philosophical and other accounts suggest. On

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6 This argument runs through *Sources of the Self,* Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1989, as well as *A Secular Age,* Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2007. Taylor sees frameworks of "strong evaluation" or orientations towards a "fullness" as basic not only for religious people but for everyone, including materialists and others who insist they act only on interests not values.

the one hand, religious people cannot escape the prominence and power of the secular in the modern world and on the other hand while the norms of secular argumentation may obscure deep evaluative commitments they do not eliminate them.

When Habermas speaks of postsecularism, I think we should not imagine that he means simply a return of the dominance of religious ideas nor an end to the importance of secular reason. Rather, I think he is better read as suggesting the emergencies of deep difficulties in holding to (a) the assumption that progress (and freedom, emancipation, and liberation) could be conceptualized adequately in purely secular terms and (b) the notion that a clear differentiation could be maintained between discourses of faith and those of public reason. Note that the assumption and the notion have never seemed plausible to everyone; they shaped secular perspectives more than those of religious people though they did shape the discourse and views of both. In any case, loss of confidence on these dimensions is challenging, most especially for liberalism. And it leads Habermas to wonder whether exclusion of religious argumentation from the public sphere may be impoverishing.[7]

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7 We might add that there are other sorts of arguments against exclusion of religious argumentation including the fact that this will result not only in bias against religion but in bias against some ethnic and national groups among which religious argumentation and evaluative commitments are more prominent.

As Habermas rightly notes, the very ideas of free-dom, emancipation, and liberation developed in largely religious discourses in Europe and this continues to inform their meaning. This genealogy is not simply a matter of dead ancestry; the living meaning of words and concepts draws both semantic content and inspiration from religious sources.[8] The word "inspiration" is a good example, and reminds us that what is at stake is broader than the narrowest meanings of politics and ethics and necessarily includes conceptions of the person that make meaningful different discourses of freedom, action, and possibility—and that shape motivation as well as meaning.[9] What is at stake is also broader than measures of participation in formally organized religion, since a variety of "spiritual" engagements inform self-understanding and both ethical and moral reasoning.

Religion, moreover, is part of the genealogy of public reason itself. To attempt to disengage the idea of public reason (or the reality of the public sphere) from religion is to disconnect it from a tradition that continues to give it life and content. Habermas stresses the importance of

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8 As Mendieta has suggested in his introduction to *Reason and Rationality*, Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse and others in the Frankfurt School tradition were deeply engaged in recovering both content and inspiration from religion, including both Jewish traditions and the intertwining of Christian theology and German idealism.

9 This is an important theme of Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self,* Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1989.

not depriving public reason of the resources of a tradition that has not exhausted the semantic contributions it can make. Equally, though, the attempt to make an overly sharp division between religion and public reason provides important impetus to the development of alternative or counterpublic spheres as well as less public and less reasoned forms of resistance to a political order that seeks to hold religion at arm's length.

This issue is significant for Habermas's reconsideration of the extent to which prevailing secularist assumptions are adequate for the current era. Not only is there value for public reason to gain if it integrates religious contributions, it is a requirement of political justice that public discourse recognize and tolerate but also fully integrate religious citizens. It is with this in mind that he rejects Rawls' formulations in which public reason requires arguments conducted entirely in secular terms. Rawls' reasoning is that this is necessary in order to ensure that all arguments are accessible to everyone. Religious people, in this view, must give reasons for their arguments that are not specifically religious and fully available for acceptance by those who are not religious. But this, Harbermas rightly suggests, places an unfair and asymmetrical burden on religious citizens.

Official tolerance for diverse forms of religious practice and a constitutional separation of church and state are good, Habermas suggests, but not by themselves sufficient guarantees for religious freedom.

> It is not enough to rely on the condescending benevolence of a secularized authority that comes to tolerate minorities hitherto discriminated against. The parties themselves must reach agreement on the always contested delimitations between a positive liberty to practice a religion of one's own. And the negative liberty to remain spared of the religious practices of others (5).[10]

This agreement cannot be achieved in private. Religion, thus, must enter the public sphere. There deliberative, ideally democratic processes of collective will formation can help parties both to understand each other and to reach mutual accommodation if not always agreement.

Rawls' account of the public use of reason allows for religiously motivated arguments, but not for the appeal to "comprehensive" religious doctrines for justification. Justification must rely solely on "proper political reasons" (which means mainly reasons that are available to everyone regardless of the specific commitments they may have to religion or substantive conceptions of the good or their embeddedness in cultural traditions). This is, as Habermas indicates, an importantly restrictive account of the legitimate public use of reason—one which will strike many as not truly admitting religion into public discourse (6). Crucially, Habermas follows Wolterstorff in arguing that it is in the nature of religion that serious belief is understood as informing—and rightly informing—all of a believer's life. This makes sorting out the

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10 Page numbers refer to the circulated draft of "Religion in the public sphere."

"properly political" from other reasons both practically impossible in many cases and an illegitimate demand for secularists to impose. Attempting to enforce it would amount to discriminating against those for whom religion is not "something other than their social and political existence" (9). On more ambiguous grounds, Habermas does hold it acceptable to demand "properly political" justifications, independent of religion, from politicians even if not from those who vote for or endorse them.[11]

Habermas seeks to defend a less narrow liberalism, one that admits religion more fully into public discourse (including both democratic will formation and the rule

11 Habermas seeks here to defend a distinction between the greater impartiality required of the liberal state, and the lesser requirements (more "reflexivity" than impartiality) required of citizens in the public sphere of civil society. The ambiguity has partly to do with whether "politicians" are part of the state or of civil society. Here national traditions vary, and so do occasions—as one may hold politicians sitting as legislators to different standards from those appropriate to elections. But Habermas seems clear that state institutions from courts through administrative bodies to the legislature must filter out directly religious contributions from the political public sphere, admitting only those that can be translated into "properly political" secular language open to everyone regardless of religious belief or disbelief. Standing rules of parliamentary procedure, for example, "must empower the house leader to have religious statements or justifications expunged from the minutes" (12). Whether this is a necessary requirement or an attempted universalization of a more contingent European laïcité could be debated. In any case, Habermas disagrees with Weithman, Wolterstorff and others who would admit "untranslated" religious reasons into state discourse and decision-making (13).

of law) but seeks to maintain a secular conception of
the state. He understands this as requiring impartiality
in state relations to those of any religious orientation or
none and to all religious communities, but not as requir-
ing the stronger *laïc* prohibition on state action affect-
ing religion even if impartially. Indeed, he goes so far
as to suggest that the liberal state and its advocates are
not merely enjoined to religious tolerance but—at least
potentially—cognizant of a functional interest in public
expressions of religion. These may be key resources for
the creation of meaning and identity; secular citizens can
learn from religious contributions to public discourse
(not least when these help clarify intuitions the secular
have not made explicit).

In this "polyphonic complexity of public voices" the
giving of reasons is still crucial. Public reason cannot
proceed simply by expressive communication or de-
mands for recognition, though the public sphere cannot
be adequately inclusive if it tries to exclude these. The
public sphere will necessarily include processes of cul-
ture-making that are not reducible to advances in reason,
and which nonetheless may be crucial to capacities for
mutual understanding.[12] But if collective will forma-

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12 As Habermas recognizes, there is a question about whether
   these should be called processes of "learning." On the one
   hand, they involve historically produced new capacities. On the
   other hand, it is not clear that there exists an abstract standard
   by which these can be assessed as the acquisition of "truths."
   This issue is intertwined with the question of whether mod-

tion is to be based on reason, not merely participation in common culture, then public processes of clarifying arguments and giving reasons for positions must be central. Religious people like all others are reasonably to be called on to give a full account of their reasons for public claims. But articulating reasons clearly is not the same as offering only reasons that can be stated in terms fully "accessible" to the nonreligious.[13] Conversely, though the secular (or differently religious) may be called on to participate in the effort to understand the reasons given by adherents to any one religion, such understanding may include recognition and clarification of points where orientations to knowledge are such that understanding cannot be fully mutual. And the same goes in reverse. Since secular reasons are also embedded in culture and belief and not simply matters of fact or reason alone, those who speak from non-religious orientations are reasonably called on to clarify to what extent their argu-

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ern science is "a practice that is completely understandable in its own terms, establishing the measure of all truths and falsehoods? Or should modern science rather be construed as resulting form a history of reason that includes the world religions?" (22). See also Thomas Schmidt, "The Discourse of Religion in Post-Secular Society," in this volume.

13 See Schmidt's discussion of the role of philosophy of religion (in "Reasonable Pluralism—Justified Beliefs: Religious Faith in a Pluralist Society," unpublished ms)—though note that expectations for philosophy of religion must be different from expectations for the everyday discourse of civil society, even the public sphere of civil society at its most articulate.

ments demand such non-religious orientations or may be reasonably accessible to those who do not share them.

   Indeed, one could argue that a sharp division between secular and religious beliefs is available only to the secular.[14] While the religious person may accept many beliefs that others regard as adequately grounded in secular reasons alone—about the physical or biological world, for example—she may see these as inherently bound up with a belief in divine creation. This need not involve an alternative scientific view—like creationists' claims that the world is much newer than most scientists think. It

14 Of course, questions about "the secular" are not all about belief in ultimate sources or explanations. They are about how to act in the world. Most meaningful struggles over the secular are arguably inside religions. Think for example of Opus Dei, the "secular institution" formed in the Catholic Church not within but alongside its normal hierarchy, sometimes with strong papal patronage. Opus Dei has a strong engagement with business elites and thus a larger affirmative relation to contemporary capitalism. This is a secular position, and one that puts Opus Dei at odds in many settings with more "progressive" priests. In Peru, for example, where Opus Dei has achieved an unusually strong position at the top of the ecclesiastical hierarchy—a majority of bishops—this occasions a struggle with parish priests, more of whom are informed by liberation theology and many of whom are engaged in practical social projects in tension with aspects of capitalism or ministering to (and perhaps bolstering the movements of) the poor who suffer in contemporary—secular—circumstances. Likewise, Evangelical Christians in the United States may debate whether to exploit or conserve what they regard as God's Creation—a question about religious engagement with both secular social activity (business, environmental movements) and material conditions in secular time (nature).

may rather involve embedding widely accepted scientific claims in a different interpretative frame, as revealing the way God works rather than absence of the Divine. She may also regard certain beliefs as inherently outside religion, but even if she uses the word "secular" to describe these, the meaning is at least in part "irreligious" (a reference to a different, non-religious way of seeing things and not simply to things ostensibly "self-sufficient" outside religion or divine influence).

For purposes of public discourse in a plural society, it is necessary to demand that the religious person consider her own faith reflexively, see it from the point of view of others, and relate it to secular views. Though this amounts to demanding a cognitive capacity that not all religious people have, it is not one intrinsically contrary to religion and equivalent demands are placed on all citizens by the ethics of public discourse. What the liberal state must not do is "transform the requisite *institutional* separation of religion and politics into an undue *mental* and *psychological* burden for those of its citizens who follow a faith" (10). And with this in mind, Habermas also suggests that the non-religious bear a symmetrical burden to participate in the translation of religious contributions to the political public sphere into "properly political" secular terms—that is, they must seek to understand what is being said on in religious terms and determine to what extent they can understand it (and potentially agree with it) on their own non-religious terms. In this way, they

will help to make ideas, norms, and insights deriving from religious sources accessible to all, and to the more rigorously secular internal discursive processes of the state itself.

This line of argument pushes against a distinction Habermas has long wanted to maintain between morality and ethics, between procedural commitments to justice and engagements with more particular conceptions of the good life.

> We make a *moral* use of practical reason when we ask what is equally good for everyone; we make an *ethical* use when we ask what is respectively good for me or for us. Questions of justice permit under the moral viewpoint what all could will: answers that in principle are universally valid. Ethical questions, on the other hand, can be rationally clarified only in the context of a specific life-history or a particular form of life. For these questions are perspectively focused on the individual or on a specific collective who want to know who they are and, at the same time, who they want to be.[15]

Habermas does not abandon the pursuit of a context-independent approach to the norms of justice. But he does now recognize that demanding decontextualization away from substantive conceptions of the good life as a condition for participation in the processes of public reason may itself be unjust.

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15 "Transcendence from Within, Transcendence in this World," *in Rationality and Religion: Essays on Reason, God, and Modernity,* Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 2002. The distinction is developed in many works and examined in detail *in Between Facts and Norms,* Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1996.

In fact, the notion of religion as somehow private has informed the modern era in a host of ways, mostly misleading but also constitutive of social practices and understandings. It is not that religion simply was in every sense private. On the contrary, from the Social Gospel to Vatican II and Liberation Theology, as well as in more conservative forms it was recurrently part of both national and international public life. The distinction is not that of personal piety from more outward forms of religious practice, though this has been a significant distinction. Indeed, established churches have suffered some of the greatest declines in religious adherence. Religion has flourished most where it has felt like a personal commitment, but this has not meant that it had no public implications. Rather, the "privacy" of religion has been bound up with (a) the notion that religious convictions were to be treated as matters of implicitly personal faith rather than publicly authoritative reason, and (b) the idea of a separation from the state (which was as much a demand for states not to interfere as for particular religious views not to dominate states). In the former sense religious freedom could be recognized as a right, but it was implicitly always a right to be wrong or to have a peculiar taste, and thus not to have matters of faith arbitrated by the court of public opinion. In the latter sense, religion was private in something of the same sense that property was private: it could be socially organized on

a large scale, but was still seen as a matter of individual right and in principle separate from affairs of state.

The Peace of Westphalia, for example, established a framework for seeing sovereignty as secular and religion as private (or essentially domestic) with regard to the relations among sovereigns. Bringing a series of partially religious wars to an end, it helped in 1648 to usher in an era of nationalism and building of modern states, as well as the very idea of international relations. The academic discipline of international relations, not least as it recast itself after World War II, incorporated this secularist assumption about states and their interests into its dominant intellectual paradigms. It requires a considerable effort today for international relations specialists to think of secularism as a substantive position on states rather than virtually a defining feature of states, as a "something" rather than an "absence." This issue is more widespread, for in general religion is seen as a presence, and secularism is casually understood as its absence. But of course secularisms are themselves intellectual and ideological constructs and traditions. They differ with different political histories—and also with different juxtapositions to religious claims on and in the public sphere. China is secular in a different sense from India and each from France. Attempts to suppress or at least manage religion, to treat different religions equitably, and to ignore religion are different secularist projects—they are not merely secular. And of course there are more variations

on this theme—states that fund multiple religions, states that grant all religions special privileges, states with established official religions that nonetheless demarcate substantial secular spheres within which religious claims or institutions are expected not to intrude.

Throughout the so-called Westphalian era, religious actors and religious fields of discourse have played important public roles.[16] For example, many scholars of political science and international relations imagine that what issued from the 1648 resolution to religious conflicts was a set of secular states. Certainly the developing European states were worldly and operated in secular time. But most of them were in fact confessional states, mandating an official religion with varying degrees of tolerance for others. The principle that reigned in the immediate aftermath of the Westphalian Peace was still *cuis regio, eius religio* (whose region it is, his religion it is—or in other words rulers may legitimately decide the religion of the lands they rule), as enunciated at Augsberg in 1555. Religion has never been essentially private. Rather, the Westphalian frame of discourse constructed a particular misrecognition of the way religion figured (or didn't) in public life. And if the Westphalian frame did this for international affairs, others did it domestically. Habermas's own account of the public sphere and its

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16 See, perhaps most notably on this, José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World,* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1994.

transformations, for example, pays almost no attention to religion.[17] The error here is not simply Habermas's own, but rather his participation in reproducing and extending an Enlightenment tradition of imagining religion outside the frame of the public sphere. This was tendentious, since empirically religion figured prominently in public life (though it was widely understood as fading). The Enlightenment theorists and many successors were not reporting on social reality so much as seeking to construct a reality in which religion would be outside the frame of the public sphere. Kant's effort to reconstruct religion "within the limits of reason alone" was of course a challenge to the lived orientations of many religious people. If it respected a certain core of faith—"the *Eigensinn* of

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17 This leads to misleading history as well as theory, as for example the vibrant public sphere of XVIIth century England doesn't figure in Habermas's account of the genesis of the late XVIIIth century golden age of the public sphere. See David Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions, and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England,* Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1999) and "Religion, Science, and Printing" p. 259-288 *in* C. Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere,* Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1992. It is worth noting that these examples reveal the extent to which it is not just religious ideas, matters of content, that figure in the genealogy of public reason but also religious practices and experiences. Reformation-era debates were part of the genesis of a rational-critical form of public reason, and throughout the time since, it has often in religious contexts that people learned to speak in public, and even to participate in reciprocal reason-giving (even if the reasons in question—like Bible quotations—are not ones that secular rationalists find persuasive).

religion"—it did so only by excluding it from the realm of reason (and thus by implication of the public sphere). Faith became available only on the basis of leaps beyond reason—as Kierkegaard recognized.

Kierkegaard figures importantly in Habermas's thinking about religion and postsecularism. Indeed, it is perhaps precisely in this sense that we should understand the idea of the postsecular: it refers (a) to the reclaiming of religion as faith without rejecting the claims of reason (in this sense following Kierkegaard) and (b) to grasping the misrecognition that secularism of the Westphalian sort must have of itself, both (i) in terms of historical accuracy since it presumes a containment of religion in the private that has not been achieved and (ii) in terms of justice since it assumes the restriction of religion to the private realm to be accomplishable on universalistic criteria.

But though Kierkegaard is important, we should not presume that Habermas intends an existentialist resolution to dilemmas about the relationship of faith to reason.[18] In particular, I think we must assume that Habermas could not accept existentialism's presentism. Rather than an anti-historical appropriation of faith and action as such, Habermas wants to find a way to incorporate insights historically bound up with faith (and religious traditions) into the genealogy of religion. He

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18 See also the discussion in Høibraaten's contribution to this volume, "Post-metaphysical thought, religion, and secular society".

clearly sees faith as a source of hope, both in the sense of Kant's practical postulate that God must exist and in the sense that it can help to overcome the narrowness of a scientific rationalism always at risk of bias in favor of instrumental over communicative reason. He is prepared also to recognize that reason is not entirely self-founding, especially in the sense that it does not supply the contents of conceptions of the good on its own, but also in the sense that the historical shaping of its capacity includes religious influences that cannot be accounted for "within the bounds of reason alone". How far this should extend to intuitions and inspirations in a more contemporary sense is unclear, but the question is at least opened.

A further couplet of questions is also opened which may prove challenging for efforts to preserve a strong understanding of (and wide scope for) context-independence and universality in moral reasoning. First, is a genealogical or language-theoretical reconstruction of reason adequate without an existential connection between social and cultural history on the one hand and individual biography on the other? Second, is "translation" an adequate conceptualization of what is involved in making religious insights accessible to nonreligious participants in public discourse (and vice-versa)?

The two questions are closely related, for the issue is how communication is achieved across lines of deep

difference. Helpful as translation may be, it is not the whole story. Transformation is also necessary. Translation implies that differences between languages can be overcome without interference from deeper differences between cultures, or indeed from incommensurabilities of languages themselves. It implies a highly cognitive model of understanding, independent of inarticulate connections among meanings or the production of meaning in action rather than passive contemplation. But the idea of translating religious arguments into terms accessible to secular fellow-citizens is more complicated. To be sure, restricting attention to argumentative speech reduces the extent of problems because arguments are already understood to be a restricted set of speech acts and are more likely to be commensurable than some others. But the meaning of arguments may be more or less embedded in broader cultural understandings, personal experiences and practices of argumentation that themselves have somewhat different standing in different domains. (To "translate" a classic religious argument for the existence of God—e.g., one of Aquinas's attempts to transform faith into knowledge—intro secular terms as a demonstration of God's existence for unbelievers might be informative, but it could not reproduce the meaning of the original argumentative project.)

Bridging the kinds of hermeneutic distance suggested by the notion of having deeply religious and nonreligious arguments commingle in the public sphere

cannot be accomplished by translation alone. Perhaps translation is not meant literally, but only as a metaphor for the activity of becoming able to understand the arguments of another—but that is already an important distinction. We are indeed more able to understand the arguments of others when we understand more of their intellectual and personal commitments and cultural frames ("where they are coming from" in popular parlance). But where really basic issues are at stake, it is often the case that mutual understanding cannot be achieved without change in one or both of the parties. By participating in relationships with each other, including by pursuing rational mutual understanding, we open ourselves to becoming somewhat different people. The same goes at collective levels: mutual engagement across national or cultural or religious frontiers changes the pre-existing nations, cultures, and religions, and future improvements in mutual understanding stem from this change as well as from "translation". Sectarian differences among Protestants or between Protestants and Catholics are thus not merely resolved in rational argumentation. Sometimes they fade without resolution because they simply don't seem as important to either side. A shifting context and changed projects of active engagement in understanding and forming intellectual and normative commitments changes the significance of such arguments (as for example when committed Christians feel themselves more engaged in arguments

with nonChristians and the irreligious—including arguments with those who believe secular understandings are altogether sufficient—than they are in arguments with each other). But a process of transformation in culture, belief, and self is also often involved. We become people able to understand each other.[19]

So Habermas is right, following Weithman and Wolterstorff, to insist that cooperative acts of translation are necessary to the full incorporation of religious citizens and arguments into the public sphere. But we also need to recognize that histories of mutual engagement that produce both common understandings and citizens able to understand each other are not simply matters of translation or advances of reason. They are also particular histories that forge particular cultural commonalities. National traditions are examples. The Peace of Westphalia did not issue in a world of nation-states and of course the hyphen in "nation-state" masked a variety of failures to achieve effective fit between felt peoplehood and political power, legitimacy and sovereignty. Rather the Westphalian settlement informed a process of continu-

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19 See discussion in Calhoun, *Critical Social Theory: Culture, History, and the Challenge of Difference,* Oxford, Blackwell, 1995, ch. 2. Such processes of historical transformation are not necessarily advances in reason; they are not necessarily symmetrical; and they are specific histories among multiple possible histories. While any of them may be judged positively, thus, they do not amount simply to progress or evolution. They may involve elements of unreason or arbitrariness in the genealogy of reason.

ing history in which national projects wove together particular cultural commonalities and collective processes of mutual understanding. This was not entirely a matter of reason and it is by no means entirely a happy history (for the era marked by the Peace of Westphalia led by way of both empire and nationalism to world wars). But at least many of the national projects that flourished after 1648, especially in Western Europe, produced histories and cultures that both integrated citizens across lines of religious difference and provided for "secular" discourse about the common good (where secular means not merely the absence of religion but the capacity for effective discourse across lines of religious difference). It is thus an interesting juxtaposition that Habermas's writings on a postsecular era should come on the heels of his considerations of a "postnational constellation." One issue may be the contemporary inadequacy of older national identities, traditions, and discursive frameworks to incorporating new religious discourses—and the need to forge new cultures of integration.[20]

Such cultures of integration are historically produced bases for the solidarity of citizens. Whether they can be

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20 See Calhoun, *Nations Matter* (London: Routledge, 2007) on the issue of cultures of integration, the reasons why older national solidarities continue to matter even while the production of new, potentially transcending patterns of integration is underway, and the reasons why transcending the older national solidarities is a matter of new but still historically specific solidarities not simply cosmopolitan universalism.

construed in evolutionary terms as "advances" in truth or along some other dimension is uncertain. As Mendieta suggests, questions of religion crystallize the tension "between reason as a universal standard and the inescapable fact that reason is embodied only historically and in contingent social practices."[21] This bears on the nature of collective commitments to processes of public reason and the decisions they produce. The Rawlsian liberal model depends on a "reasonable background consensus" that can establish the terms and conditions of the properly political discourse. Wolterstorff doubts whether this exists.[22] Habermas is more hopeful—and reason for hope seems strongest if what is required is only what Rawls called an "overlapping consensus" not a more universal agreement. This suggests, however, that what is required is a practical orientation rather than an agreement as to the truth. This is precisely Wolterstorff's (and Habermas's) concern: "that majority resolutions in an ideologically divided society can at best yield reluctant adaptations to a kind of *modus vivendi.*"[23] A utilitarian compromise—based on the expectation of doing better in the next majority vote—is an inadequate basis for continuing solidarity where there is not merely

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21 P. 1 of the "Introduction" to Habermas, *Religion and Rationality,* Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 2002.

22 P. 160 in Robert Audi and Nicholas Wolsterstorff, *Religion in the Public Square,* Lanham, MD, Rowman and Littlefield, 1997.

23 "Religion and the Public Sphere," p. 13-14.

a disagreement over shares of commonly recognized goods, but over the very idea of the good. "Conflict on existential values between communities of faith cannot be solved by compromise."[24]

This is of course a crucial reason why Habermas has held that we must separate substantive questions about the good life from procedural questions about just ways of ordering common life. I believe he retains the conviction that this separation is important and possible.[25] It is intrinsic to his support for a "constitutional patriotism."[26] But it is challenged by recognition that for religious citizens to give reasons in terms "accessible" to secular citizens may be unjustly difficult or even impossible. And it is challenged further if one agrees that religious faith but also specificities of cultural traditions may make it difficult for citizens to render all that is publicly important to them in the form of criticizable validity claims.

> Conflicts between world views and religious doctrines that lay claim to explaining man's position in the world as a whole cannot be laid to rest at the cognitive level. As soon as these cognitive dissonances penetrate as far as the foundations for a normative integration of citizens, the political community disintegrates into irreconcilable segments so that it can only sur-

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24 *Ibid.*

25 For a relatively recent, nuanced, statement see "Norms and Values: On Hilary Putnam's Kantian Pragmatism," *in* Habermas, *Truth and Justification*, Cambridge (MA) 2003 [1999], MIT Press, p. 213-235.

26 See various essays *in The Inclusion of the Other*, ed. C. Cronin and P. De Greiff, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1998.

vive on the basis of an unsteady modus vivendi. In the absence
of the uniting bond of a civic solidarity, which cannot be legally
enforced, citizens do not perceive themselves as free and equal
participants in the shared practices of democratic opinion and
will formation wherein they *owe one another reasons* for their
political statements and attitudes. This reciprocity of expecta-
tions among citizens is what distinguishes a community inte-
grated by constitutional values from a community segmented
along the dividing lines of competing world views.[27]

The basic question is whether or how much common-
alities of belief are crucial to the integration of political
communities. How important is it for citizens to believe
in the truth of similar propositions "explaining man's
position in the world"?

As Durkheim suggested by distinguishing mechani-
cal from organic solidarity, communities are integrated
in ways other than by shared values (constitutional or
otherwise) and worldviews. But the Durkheimian binary
is too simple. Habermas takes it over, to some extent, in
the distinction of lifeworld from system.[28] In general (and
rightly), he sees a mismatch between the scale of integra-
tion accomplished on the basis of systems of money and
power without the communicative understanding of par-
ticipants, and the capacities of the lifeworld to generate
such integrative understandings. Insofar as communica-
tive action in lifeworlds yields diverse substantive under-
standings (and projects) of the good life, it cannot yield the

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27 *Ibid.*

28 *Theory of Communication Action,* Boston, Beacon, 2 vols.
1984, 1988.

necessary integration on a large scale. But to the extent that communicative action may underwrite agreement on procedures it may generate a "mechanical" solidarity based on a common view of at least one aspect of the world. This is embodied in the project of constitutionalism, where constitutions are limited to procedural rather than substantive norms. As the phrase "constitutional patriotism" suggests, Habermas also hopes this will help to solve problems of motivation and commitment which are otherwise secured only in commitments to diverse ways of life and solidarities that are incommensurable (such as ethnicities). This invests a great deal of hope in the relatively thin commonality of similarities of propositional belief and acceptance of procedures (however valuable).[29] Communities are also products of a variety of social relationships, recognized in varying degree by their members. Bonds of civic solidarity are produced in networks of practice and functional interdependence that is linguistically recognized as well as on the basis of values and propositions "explaining man's position in the world as a whole". Indeed, participation in the public sphere may contribute to this solidarity. Solidarity is not just a condition for reciprocal exchange of reasons in public discourse; it can be a product.

This is not the place to try to defend a different view of the production of social solidarity in which culture is

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29 See Calhoun, "Imagining Solidarity: Cosmopolitanism, Constitutional Patriotism and the Public Sphere," *Public Culture,* vol. 14 #1, p. 147-72.

not reduced to common propositional beliefs and the binary oppositions of mechanical and organic or lifeworld and system are complemented by attention to webs of social relations and processes of historical creativity and transformation in culture. My point here is the more limited suggestion that religion figures in these processes in ways that transcend "beliefs".

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Modernity has hardly been an era of simple secularization, then, though of course few would interpret the secularization thesis so simplistically. The "postsecular" cannot be a reference to moving beyond a historical past so simplistically conceived. It can be a useful shift in presumptions about how public discourse works or should work. It involves abandoning a notion of a secular public sphere in which religious arguments are deemed illegitimate and recognizing the importance of religious motivations for participation in public life. It involves recognizing that whatever the merits of various "secular" political arrangements—whether separation of church and state or neutrality among religions—they are not grounded in a stable division of public from private. It moves beyond conceiving of progress in entirely secular (and especially universalistic and nonsubstantive) terms. And in this sense, thinking about postsecular public reason can potentially be helpful for improving the way we think about new projects of mutual understanding and

social solidarity based on choice rather than mere imposition or inheritance. In particular, postsecular thinking may help us see some limits in many existing approaches to cosmopolitanism and some ways of enriching the pursuit of cosmopolitan ideals.

The ideal of cosmopolitanism is today rendered overwhelmingly in ethico-political terms. Citizenship of the world is a theme of political philosophers concerned with human rights, peace, and the responsibilities all humans owe each other. Even while these philosophers seek to transcend the nation-state, they somewhat ironically understand citizenship largely in the juridical terms states have given the concept and in the logic of equivalence the rhetoric of nationalism has encouraged in domestic discussions. Most of these cosmopolitans are heirs of Enlightenment and French Revolutionary humanism, as well as more distantly of Diogenes of Sinope, so this is not surprising. But it means that a central question about cosmopolitanism remains too seldom asked: what makes the world a knowable whole and not chaos?

There are three main sorts of answer to this question: God, nature, and human social institutions.[30] God is arguably "cosmicizing" in a way neither scientific reason

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30 Obviously each sort of answer is almost infinitely internally variegated. "God" may be understood in Judeo-Christian terms of radical *ex nihilo* creativity, or as the perfect wholeness towards which all things tend. And of course there are others, as for example the proposition that the world (or the universe) is unified aesthetically, or a Platonic notion that if this world is incom-

nor humanism can be. Faith in God renders the whole intelligible in principle (even if aspects of the whole remain opaque even to believers). Faith in science presumes an ultimate intelligibility of nature, and at least in many versions the idea of a deterministic whole. Faith in science is not faith in the already known so much as in the continual improvement of human knowledge and mastery of this whole. Least cosmicizing, perhaps, are human social institutions. Here the knitting together of the whole is a historical project, rather than a reality to be discerned. Human beings form both hermeneutically meaningful relationships and systems of indirect relationships like markets, each intelligible though in different ways. Yet while these human creations structure reality they do so incompletely, and sometimes in internally contradictory ways.

Of course the different types of answer may be combined. An appeal to nature, for example, may be not only an appeal to the external operation of deterministic laws, but at the same time also an evocation of internal meaning as in the quasi-religious ecological notion of *Gaia*. Humanism combines (unstably) reference to the natural commonalities of all people and to the human capacity for creativity which issues in diverse histories and institutions. I don't propose any exhaustive tracing

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pletely intelligible it is because it is only an imperfect reflection of eternal ideals.

of the various ways in which the wholeness of life, or the world, or the universe—the cosmos—may be constituted or represented. Rather, I want simply to call attention to the reliance of all cosmopolitan notions on some theory, usually implicit, of what constitutes the whole. And I want to suggest that differences in claims about what makes the cosmos a meaningful whole are basic to the challenges of contemporary public discourse.

In cosmopolitan discourse it is common to assume that an open, enlarged view of the world must be a matter of transcending strong ties to other people in favor of commitment to humanity as a whole. Cosmopolitan ethics often stresses abstract equivalence among members of the category "human"—as in the notion of human rights. But cosmopolitanism need not be conceived only on a logic of abstract equivalence among human beings. Rather, cosmopolitanism could be understood in more relational terms as a recognition of the many different kinds of connection that link people to other people around the world. Thinking in terms of connections makes sense of different kinds and scales of solidarity. Thinking in terms of equivalence makes each seem partial and limited by comparison to the whole. The logic of equivalence helps us think about distributive justice, but does not help us think about social solidarity or cultural difference.

There is a kind of care and support that people extend to each other through kinship bonds, local communities,

and welfare institutions focused on fellow-nationals. This is sometimes extended transnationally through both religious and secular institutions. Cosmopolitan ideals inspire such efforts to mitigate human suffering. They inform Buddhist, Christian and Muslim efforts to extend religious salvation to people of diverse cultures, as well as to provide material care. Such religious cosmopolitanism has a long history. And indeed, the development of large-scale religions informs both thinking in terms of cosmopolitan connections and thinking in terms of the equal humanity of all people.

This is a question that has historically arisen in religious contexts, although modern science and humanism also offer potential answers. A key question, as Høibraaten has suggested, is whether God (or belief in God) has the capacity to center and unify the world in a way humanism cannot.[31] And closely related, it is worth asking how much most expressions of humanist values are informed by their Judeo-Christian as well as Hellenic heritage. There is, for example, the imagery of creation in God's image which at least on some readings ascribes to human beings an untouchable dignity, a basic freedom and equality, and the capacity for universal solidarity.

Creativity is a basic issue. Arguably there is no more basic tenet to the Judeo-Christian tradition than the radical creativity of God. This doctrine of radical creation, however, yielded internal arguments and tensions

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31 Høibraaten, *op. cit.*

within both Jewish and Christian traditions. Not least, in these traditions human beings are also creative.[32] Yet, paradoxically, human self-assertion is itself linked to positing a radically powerful God fundamentally prior to the world. As the story of temptation before the Tree of Knowledge suggests, human creativity is based problematically—even contradictorily—on knowledge. In Christianity especially, these tensions helped to give impetus to a questioning of metaphysics, yielding nominalism and in turn modern realism. The same tensions inform Protestant efforts to think an unknowable God, from Luther to Kierkegaard. And if these are distinctively Christian issues, they are also responses to questions that arise also in many other religious traditions.

If God makes the world knowable and the world at least to some extent reveals God, neither sort of knowledge is simple and unproblematic. Though the central role of faith has not always seemed in tension with knowledge—on the contrary, has often seemed its condition—one of the core dimensions of secularization has been the continual re-examination of the boundary. The Kantian idea of religion within the limits of reason keeps the boundary, but circumscribes religion as the other to a newly dominant scientific enterprise. The core of faith

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32 Habermas, and Høibraaten following him draw from the Genesis story of God's creation of man in his image that all humans are free and equal, have an untouchable dignity, and are capable of universal solidarity. But the human capacity to join in creation is an implication of at least equal importance.

remains opaque to Kantian moral philosophy, in which an "ought" implies a "can," but it is not denied by it.

Kant is significant not simply as an intellectual source but as the most powerful symbol of an 18th century moment when potential of enlightenment and modernity was radically open, and political economic and institutional history had not yet begun sharply to condemn some of its emancipatory potentials to unfulfillment. Kant claims the compatibility of free will (central to morality) and determinism, distinguishing spheres in which each with differentially reign. But in a sense God (and the current renewal of public professions of religious faith) invites new struggle echoing the old Manichean dualism. If God is radically powerful, whence evil? If God (and morality) are to be reserved for the good, then this source of good is not all-powerful. A line of thought initially focused on how God's radical power circumscribes human freedom and morality is transposed. Is the deterministic scientific-technological rationality equally contrary to human moral action? And if so, how does this affect the intelligibility of the world—especially if the world disclosed by science and technology is only available to human understanding as something exterior?

The shift from secular to postsecular is arguably as much about critical recognition of the limits of scientific naturalism as it is about the incorporation of religious perspectives. It is a shift from the project of asserting human sovereignty as independence from God in a natural

world to a project of recovering the capacity to articulate the limits of the human and of naturalistic understanding without surrendering strong conceptions of human value and freedom. The notion of complete sovereignty and adequacy of human reason is challenged, thus, not only by substantively specific reference to God, but by recognition of the extent to which human reason is always informed by historical and cultural capacities not understandable simply in naturalistic terms (e.g., of individual brains or individual speakers). Religion opens such recognitions but it is not the only source for them. Let me pursue this theme briefly with reference to Charles Taylor's somewhat different effort to recover possibilities lost in simplistic secularism.

One of the main arguments of Taylor's *A Secular Age* is that people, at least modern secular Westerners, have come routinely to think that the world as it is must be all there is. The contrast between immanence and transcendence is thus one of Taylor's main organizing themes. Immanence locates both our sense of reality and our sense of the good within the world around us; transcendence gives us a sense of something beyond. Taylor develops this in conjunction with a notion of "fullness" to try to evoke what it means to live in more constant engagement with that which is beyond the immediately given, the spiritual which might infuse nature, for example, or the Divine which might lift morality above a notion of ethics as mere fairness.

But in trying to make clear the distinctively religious senses of transcendence, Taylor narrows the notion to certain sorts of spiritual transcendence of the material. I think this actually obscures important aspects of religious experience as well as the possibilities for transcendence outside religion. Moreover, I think Taylor himself offers us tools for thinking about transcendence in this more multidimensional way.

In *A Secular Age*, and in much of his other work of recent decades, Taylor runs in effect three parallel and mutually informing arguments. One is about the narrowing of the self to a being of mere self-interest—or rather a narrowing of thinking about the self, since Taylor is at pains to point out that even while utilitarian theories have grown so have richer ideas of the person and human potential. A second is about the flattening of the notion of good, so that instead of having a strong idea of "the good" that gives order to our moral lives and aspirations—what Taylor calls a moral horizon or a higher good—we often think in terms simply of many goods, all in principle quantitatively comparable. And the third is about the importance of transcendence vs. immanence, of the difference between seeing "this world" as all there is, and of having a sense of something more.

By setting the three arguments alongside each other, and trying to integrate them more, we can enrich the idea of transcendence. Specifically, we can see that each evokes an idea of transcendence: transcending mere self-

interest and more limited notions of the self is among other things an occasion for self-transformation. In other words, this is not simply thinking differently about a self that remains unchanged. We are actually able to change who we are—albeit not often radically—to make more of ourselves than what we find on initial self-examination. Similarly, commitment to a higher good necessarily includes a transcendence of mere goods.

Taylor himself articulates three senses of transcendence, three dimensions in which we go "beyond": a good higher than human flourishing (such as love in the sense of *agape*), a higher power (such as God), and extension of life (or even "our lives") beyond the "natural" scope between birth and death (summarized on p. 314-315). He is clearly concerned to bring out what is distinctive to a religious rather than a secular orientation. But let me suggest the value of seeing the transcendent as including what Taylor lists but not limiting our notion of "going beyond" to these senses.

The easiest to grasp, partly because Taylor has so wonderfully articulated it, is the notion of transcendence built into the idea of self-transformation. We can, as he put it in *Sources of the Self*, want to have better wants. In this phrase he captures both remaking the self and the importance of a notion of higher good. The higher good may or may not be backed by a higher power.[33] It

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33 And of course as participants in 12-step programs and readers of Durkheim both know, a "higher power" need not be under-

may not even transcend our selves in all senses—as the Aristotelian pursuit of excellence calls for transcending an initial state of the self in pursuit of a better one. The higher good may transcend human flourishing without transcending all senses of "nature" (as Taylor's references to Gaia suggest). But—and this is crucial—many kinds of commitment to human flourishing already transcend the narrower sense of self which Taylor thinks has become more common in a secular age. To really order our lives by an ideal of improving the human condition is already to be oriented to transcending that condition as we found it.

This approaches a second sense of transcendence, the transcendence of the self embodied in commitment and connection to others. This may be love (which is already more than simply valuing fairness or most other notions of a merely ethical universalism). The Christian notion of *agape* situates this as participation in God's love for humanity, but we need not understand love this way for it to be transcendent. Moreover, the transcendent aspect of social relations is not grasped simply by altruism. It is not necessarily an orientation to others rather than self, but includes the transformation of self that comes through opening ourselves to noninstrumental social

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stood as divine. See Taylor's discussion of neoDurkheimian positions in *A Secular Age* and Robert Bellah's responses on the blog *The Immanent Frame* (http://www.ssrc.org/blogs/immanent_frame).

relationships. We transcend the sense of ourselves as individually complete and necessarily who we already are not only in personal relationships but in larger groups, including movements which work for larger social transformation. To say that there is transcendence of self in relationships with and commitment to others, thus, may point to a more differentiated notion of society than the Durkheimian whole.

And this points us to the third sense of still-earthly transcendence, active participation in history. "The world as it is" is an ahistorical phrase. The world as we find it is inevitably subject to change, and we may shape that change in various smaller or larger ways. The sense of possibility this can open up invites a certain "fullness," an orientation to a higher good, a sense of participation in something that will live beyond our natural lives. The history in which we participate is potentially, as Hannah Arendt stressed, world-making. It may involve revolutionary transformations and enduring institutions. But this orientation to history need not be either revolutionary or utopian to be transcendent. What is crucial is the capacity to envision history as more than mere change, as transformation in which we may participate.

So, there is transcendence in self-transformation, in relationships with others, and in the effort to make history. None of this negates the religious senses of transcendence Taylor describes—nor the extension of a "spiritual," quasi-religious attitude in understanding

nature itself as sacred. Indeed, these may coincide and reinforce each other. Faith in God may make faith in other people easier, may make the struggle for a better future more sustainable. Conversely, though, the transcendence of self in relationships with others may also help to sustain faith in God.

More generally, it seems important to be attentive to several dimensions in which it is possible to transcend resignation to ourselves and to the world as we find them. Absent such recognitions, however, the merely secular is apt to be an affirmative tradition with weak resources for opening up a critical purchase on actually existing social conditions and trends. Religion offers resources for hope along with the critical resource of a negative relationship to the actual.[34] But of course religions are not only traditions with "unexhausted semantic potentials" established sometime in the past. Many religious traditions are alive and innovative today.[35] If in the context of Europe it is

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34 This is a crucial theme for many of the earlier Frankfurt School thinkers from whom Habermas learned a great deal. See Eduardo Mendieta's helpful introduction to Habermas, *Reason and Rationality* as well as several of the essays collected there. Compare the effort to identify cultural but not specifically religious resources for hope by Raymond Williams. The book entitled *Resources of Hope* is a posthumous collection of essays (London: Verso, 1989). But the idea that community, class, and cultural traditions and creativity offer such resources runs through his work.

35 It is potentially misleading to speak of religion in the singular for it implies more unity to the category of religions than is warranted. An ecumenical pursuit of better relations and greater unity among religions is best founded on recognition of their plurality.

Islamic believers who most influentially put religion on the contemporary public agenda, Christian resurgence is at least as significant for global cosmopolitan projects (and it is not as insignificant for Europe as some survey data from Western Europe would indicate).[36] Christianity is about as rapidly growing as Islam. This growth—not least in Africa, Latin America, and Asia—is largely evangelical, often very conservative on both theological and social issues, and while not always political often at odds with moderate versions of Christianity that understand themselves as mainstream.

Religion is likely to figure in the global future to an extent that most cosmopolitan theories have not considered. It is not just one among the various sources of diversity to be recognized and accommodated. There are also a number of religious projects that are direct competitors to secular cosmopolitanism, not because they are backwardly or defensively parochial but because they aspire to occupy the same space, providing moral and cultural and sometimes even political frameworks for global integration. Several religious traditions have

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Religion as such and in the singular may appear most strongly (ironically) from the point of view of the secularist thinking all religions the same and the religious person who unselfcritically thinks religion must simply mean his own (whether as a zealot or simply from ignorance).

36 When discussing religion, political philosophers and critical theorists have a tendency to speak of contemporary Islam and historical Christianity (for the most part they gently skirt Judaism and ignore most of the rest of the world's religions).

produced transnational discursive fields of great scope and complexity. They mediate migrations as much as any secular accounts of cosmopolitan universalism. They inform relations among nations and among activists across national borders. The great world religions are internally diverse and polyvalent and not automatically forces for good or evil—any more than, say, nations and nationalisms are. But at least as much as nations and nationalisms it would be unwise to build social theories that in effect wish religion away, imagine it a fading inheritance from the past, or a private "taste" that can be kept beyond the frame of the public sphere.

Cosmopolitanism is not realistically imaginable as the transcendence of all forms of belonging. To propose a leap into traditionless secular reason is to propose the tyranny of the pure ought, and indeed, an ought without a can. It is also to privilege a class and a cultural group able to identify its traditions—including secularism—with neutral reason. Global solidarity will be achieved—if it is ever achieved—by transformation of religion and other forms of cultural belonging rather than by escape from them. And it will be achieved on the basis of hope and critical perspectives and solidarity that inform public reason but are not produced simply from within it.