Solidarity in the Post-Secular World: Identifying a common ground for democratic public reason.

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Abstract

In this thesis, '"Solidarity in the Post-Secular World": Identifying a common ground for democratic public reason,' I take a look at how the two Western archetypes, the descendants of Socrates and of Jesus, can interact in modern democracies to deliberate effectively in public reason. In the first section, I establish a baseline understanding of the liberal democratic machine through Jurgen Habermas. This reading will offer a twofold problematization of contemporary democratic governments stemming from a single observation; the legitimation crisis. Because the legitimacy of modern democracies rests on the concept of popular sovereignty, it is necessary all people contained by its borders are included in the ongoing process of public reason. Currently, not all are included. Two problems then arise from contemporary discourses. First, participation is low, especially in the American case. Second, religious lifeworlds have been sidelined in secular states, and must be reincorporated as post-secular states develop. In the second section, I show how Charles Taylor's call for a "radical redefinition of secularism" accuses the Habermasian project of not taking inclusion far enough. Though he answers questions left open by Habermas, Taylor's formulation of the inclusion project presents potentially devastating consequences to the goals of secularism. In the final section, I reconcile issues found in Habermas and Taylor with the help of William Connolly's version of an inclusion project underscored by a broader understanding of faith wary of the pre-political discussion necessary for generating a democratic solidarity in the post-secular world.

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1. Introduction: Democratic Legitimacy Crisis and Solidarity in the Post-Secular.

The separation of Religion from the state is fundamental expression of freedom within the liberal democracy. This movement towards the secular on behalf of the state has generated a lively debate amongst social scientists and philosophers as well as the general public. Was it a good or bad move? Does it sideline or incorporate religious bias? Certainly these and many more questions with respect to the secularization of the state are exciting, however what many of these questions overlook is the linkage between the secular and the religious traditions within the Western cannon. These linkages have encouraged many to view the contemporary democratic state as "post-secular." Jurgen Habermas and Charles Taylor both articulate this connection in their own way. The former points to the historical connectivity between the followers of Socrates and Jesus, while the latter demonstrates how a continual reformation within Latin Christendom itself has provided the environment for secularization to occur. Where I applaud these linkages, it is my task to pursue an new understanding of Michael Reder's call for a broader understanding of religion in modernity.[1] What would such a broader call entail? How would this broadening alleviate tensions between the religious and the "secular?"

Habermas sees the major predicament of contemporary liberal governance as an issue stemming from the secular state's lack of inclusion of religiously motivated voices. For Habermas, this translates into a substantive lack of motivation within the democratic process and ultimately a structurally illegitimate state by way of excluding, or not taking seriously an entire population contained by its borders.[2] This "legitimation crisis" is also addressed in the work of Charles Taylor; however his is a pursuit seeking to immediately include religious thought in the formal democratic deliberative process. Where the proceduralist account offered by Habermas solidifies a prioritization of the secular over the religious, Taylor's hermeneutical account seeks

to redefine secularism as to include religion by breaking down institutional definitions constructing a "wall of separation."[3] Both thinkers aim to prescribe an avenue for obtaining a democratic solidarity to calm the legitimation crisis, and both believe this means integrating, to some degree, theistic and non-theistic thought. The goal of this thesis is to reconcile the differences between these two thinkers through the work of William Connolly and Michael Reder to determine the grounds on which religious and areligious traditions can be equalized in public reason. In so doing, it is my highest hope a roadmap to a contemporary democratic solidarity satisfying each respective party will become palpable.

My own response to this problem is similar to both Connolly and Reder in the sense that what has historically come to be understood as religion can be identified analogously in the functions of certain areligious lifeworlds. When modern "secularists" can understand themselves as members of quasi-religious institutions, they will be able to see themselves as believers, or holders of faith. Although the foundation of their beliefs will differ, the existential perspectives of both the areligious and the religious rest on a set of contingent truths which can be held only in faith. In this thesis I will develop a parallel between these conventional polarities.

To accomplish this task, I will focus on a juxtaposition of William Connolly to Jurgen Habermas and Charles Taylor to identify and articulate a potential point of solidarity in the post-secular world. By building on Connolly's notion of mundane and radical transcendence, a conversational connection between polarities will be made evident. Where Taylor defines transcendence as ontologically religious, thinkers such as Connolly and myself disagree. Taylor's assertion observing the modern world as firmly resident to an immanent framework[4] is important, however the ability to recognize the transcendence of immanence,[5] and the immanence of transcendence belies this framework.

Understanding the crossings of these concepts is important when pressing for solidarity in the post-secular liberal democracy. I argue Taylor's neglect of such crossings lies in combination of his marginalization of capitalism and narrow formulation of the transcendent in *A Secular Age*. When examining the crossings of transcendence and immanence, a few questions are likely to arise. First, how do we define religion? It is here that Taylor departs from the more traditional notion of religion as an institution referencing belief in some transcendent. He further manipulates the definition of the transcendent to answer the question; "does the highest, the best life involve our seeking, or acknowledging, or serving a good which is beyond, in the sense of independent of human flourishing?[6]" In answering this question, I will generate a functional understanding of religion that can adapt to Taylor's definition of transcendence. This definition will be exemplified in select secular lifeworlds to assert belief can reside within them. I will ultimately offer these lifeworlds as quasi-religious with hopes this process will inform the Habermasian project.

Taylor's restrictive aim of transcendence ultimately plays into a narrowing of the definition of religion. For Taylor, transcendence is no longer some 'good of existence or experience beyond the normal or physical level,' but now moreover a 'good of existence or experience beyond the normal or physical level independent of human flourishing.' In *Varieties of Secularism,* Wendy Brown argues that Taylor's removal of belief from the secular camp is unwarranted. Acknowledging belief can take both mundane and spiritual forms, Brown advances her claim that the secular left can host a contentless, spiritual form of belief citing the revival of religiosity in the secular left during the course of the 2008 Obama "Hope" campaign. The current President did not beg his constituents to believe in a specific policy change. Instead, he campaigned for the possibility that the Federal government could restore the principals of

liberalism *itself* to civil society despite numerous preceding failures. The American left then proved a contentless belief in something higher than the mundane without subscribing to a normative religion by electing Obama to the presidential office.

Connolly too argues the very notion of transcendence necessitates a corresponding immanent framework to make sense of it. I will formulate an argument by stipulating a functional analogy. Just as the Evangelical transcendent (God) could not be justified without its corresponding religion and reading of scripture, the neoliberal transcendent (unregulated capitalism) could not be legitimated without its respective quasi-religious lifeworld structure. The providence of the free market, and of Gods will, function similarly as transcendent agencies over which humans have, or should have, no power. Though one is mundane and the other radical, the power of transcendence in both forms, as shown by Connolly, is its ability to translate a spirituality across creedal barriers. The problem becomes, though, many religious and areligious people resist the idea that a common spirituality can be shared be between these polarized camps.

The goal of this thesis in part is to identify a functional definition of religion honoring its role as the dictator of a given ultimate reality, source of an absolute truth, supplier of corresponding valuations of good and bad, and its ability to allow its subscribers to cope with contingency and thematize the discussion of transcendence and immanence. This definition owes much to Connolly's idea of "existential faith.[7]" The significance of offering liberalism as quasi-religious is to assert considering it as such will serve moderns in recognizing a potential solidarity. The knowledge matrices structuring our lifeworlds make certain contingent assumptions, and "without these articles of faith nobody now could endure life," but we must keep in mind "that does not prove them." [8]Finding ground for democratic solidarity in the post-

secular world means dealing with pluralism, and understanding our perspective as contingently principled is a necessary first step towards this dealing. Solidarity in the post-secular must acknowledge the value of theistic and non-theistic reasons if the democratic state is to be made legitimate.

This thesis will be centered on the Habermasian conception of liberal democracy. In the first section, I will provide his formulation of what is problematic within the liberal democratic structure, and moreover raise questions as to the viability of the Habermasian project itself. In the second section, Charles Taylor will answer the questions left open by Habermas, and his answers will again be problematized. In the final section, I will show how the work of William Connolly and Michael Reder represents the potential to satisfy each of the preceding parties, and to segue into an argument showing secular lifeworld structures to be quasi-religious. In the end, a cross-creedal communicative process open to discussing pre-political spiritualities will be offered as indicative of the post-secular state. A people wary that negotiating a coherent "sensibility" amidst diverse faiths must also establish some common values before such an inclusion project can indicate a direction for its polity in a state embracive of its pluralism. The central question of this thesis thus not only pertains to what inclusion process best suits the post-secular, but moreover to what shared values can actually include diverse and often competing existential faiths.

1 Habermas, Jürgen, Michael Reder, and Josef Schmidt. *An Awareness of What Is Missing: Faith and Reason in a Post-secular Age*. Cambridge, U.K.: Polity, 2010. Print. Chapter 4.

2 Habermas, Jürgen, and Cardinal Benedict. *Dialectics of Secularization: On Reason and Religion*. Ed. Florian Schuller. San Francisco: Ignatius, 2006. Print.

3 Mendieta, Eduardo et al. *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere.* 2011. p. 40-42

4 Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap of Harvard UP, 2007. Print.

5 Connolly, William E. *A World of Becoming*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2010. Print. p. 74-76

6 Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap of Harvard UP, 2007. Print. Introduction.

7 Connolly, William E. *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*. Durham: Duke UP, 2008. Print.

8 Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm. *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*. Ed. Walter Arnold Kaufmann. New York: Vintage, 1974. Print.

2. The Fundamental Democratic Assumptions for Public Reason.

i. The Rawlsian Inclusion Project: Political Liberalism

In a liberal society, various individual communities are allowed to possess their own unique conception of the truth of the whole. This means that no individuals' moral valuations, idea of the good, or practices of virtue should be discriminated against by the remainder of that liberal society. Though it is likely obvious, it is important to point out why this version of reasonable pluralism is important for John Rawls. For Rawls, reasonable pluralism holds the potential to justify legitimate and fair democratic governance by the means of manifesting some version of an "overlapping consensus." As such, Rawls is more than a procedurelist in the sense that his formulation of political liberalism is justified by the idea that an overlapping consensus constitutes fairness amongst consenting (yet distinct) groupings of individual "comprehensive moral doctrines." Habermas would call this a "substantive" vision of liberal democracy, and further that his own procedure emphasizes the *process* of public argument (communicative action) at the cost of presuming that this process is preceded by some substantive understanding of precisely *what* morality and political values must be endorsed by that system respectively.[9]

Rawls doesn't seem to take this Habermasian charge as problematic for his version of political liberalism. This has less to do with the validity of the charge, and more to do with the intended scope of his theory political liberalism. There are a few salient features of the Rawlsian conception of political liberalism that are important to note in this direction. First, Rawls wishes

to distinguish between comprehensive and political doctrines of liberalism, claiming his own theory falls nicely into the latter category.[10] Where comprehensive doctrines of liberalism, such as that perpetuated by Immanuel Kant aim to discuss the concept of justice in both moral and political milieus, political doctrines of liberalism relegate justice to the political sphere.[11] There seems to be an intrinsic problem with [1] assuming that a societal conception of justice, even if the goal is merely political justice, should be relegated to the political while at the same time [2] a substantive version of liberalism is favored at the cost of a purely procedural one. Rawls sees no reason why liberalism need be discussed in terms outside of the political, however he also believes the very concept of liberalism owes its origin to a specific set of moral valuations, ideas of the good, and strong emphasis on egalitarianism. As such, it is unproblematic for one to assume that, a free and equal society would be doing its best if it endorsed a version of equality seated deeply in a secular lifeworld. This version thus begins with a secular comprehensive vision, and treats other comprehensive doctrines "fairly" so long as these individual doctrines agree to act secular in political argument, or while conducting public reason. This is fair in the sense that, although the comprehensive doctrines under which these pluralities may fall must obey the authority of the secular, they will not have to compromise any of their fundamental beliefs to do so.[12]

Though I will return to Habermas in the latter half of this section, it is important to note the significance of the salient features listed thus far. Stemming from [1] above, it is clear that Habermas and Rawls should have different starting points in their theories of democratic liberalism. As Rawls is confined to the political, and characterized by his substantive (rather than procedural, point [2] above) understanding of what it means to be liberalist, he must offer a

prescription for actual citizens before explaining his theory of justice as fairness. In other words, if his view of political liberalism is to manifest itself in reality, he must provide a conduit through which comprehensive moral doctrines that may conflict with the secular order may become political in a just and fair sense. To this end, Rawls describes the "original position," or an abstract place in the human mind where all social constructs, values and moralities can be forgotten. From this position, an identity is missing. The idea is, without an identity, individuals would endorse an egalitarian morality and series of political values that ensure a potentially tyrannical institution (or in a lesser case, an unjust one) could not be established. I will return to the Habermasian "starting point" shortly. For now, it is important to understand why Rawls maintains his theory of political liberalism, and next, to unearth the problematic that this formulation upholds.

Before furthering the Rawlsian problematic, the Rawlsian use of the concept "reason" and "consensus" need be examined. First, Rawls claims his understanding of *political* liberalism is consistent with his understanding of the "reasonable citizen." Because his is a theory relegated to the political, the reasonable citizen need only be reasonable in the sense that he has an egalitarian-minded secularism guiding his political decisions. This means that, concepts of "truth" and "the person" are exogenous to his own theory. Second, he intends his "overlapping consensus" to endorse a very specific for of consensus, although this point owes itself less to the political nature (salient feature [1]) than it does to the seemingly paradoxical substantive nature (feature [2]). Rawls does not intend his version of consensus as similar to that used by political parties in mobilizing coalitions by determining points of existing convergence across creedal lines, but rather as a series of reasonable dialogues discoursing from a presupposed notion of

justice.[13] But it appears as though the two salient Rawlsian features and corresponding versions of popular concepts exist only paradoxically in the theory of Political Liberalism. To explore this argument it is important to take a look at what fundamental assumptions are contained in Political Liberalism before offering a critique which ultimately advances charges of contradiction.

The political constraint Rawls places on liberalism combines with the substantive ideals he subsequently upholds leading him to endorse a secular bias. If justice as fairness is merely political, then a theoretical blueprint must contain some substance, however modest, from which this political justice can be derived, right? For Rawls, it seems, some substance must be present to guide a democratic society towards its egalitarian and thus just ends. For others, such as Habermas, the substantive component of liberalism should be so modest as to be merely expressed procedurally. As a majoritarian,[14] Rawls has no problem with the idea that a majority of individuals in a just society should endorse a substantively defined version of liberalism, claiming that liberalism itself owes its origins to a given history, and that this history provides a substance which is a posteriori governed by secularized liberal values.[15] But what are these values?

Though more attention will be given to the specific history from which secularity developed in the following chapter, the background validation for the protection of diverse ideas and communities within the greater context of liberal society can be explained with a general look at liberal relativism, or the relative form of (absolute) truth employed by the Rawlsian liberal system. Because no one doctrine exhaustively and appropriately assigns man his values, aims and practices, it is only fair that all concepts of truth be tolerated; at least until a concept of

the good is indisputably established. Because this sort of exhaustive doctrine is certainly

implausible and likely impossible, the relative residence of truth is favored in a liberal system at

the cost of one complete truth. But within this situation that can be reductively analogous to the

common cliché, 'there is only one rule, there are no rules,' is there not still one rule? Isn't it true

that relative truth is simply the absolute truth that best accommodates pluralism?

From this sequence it seems quite clear why political justice should be the sole focus of a

liberal society. Because there are so many different concepts of the whole, and many of these

diverse concepts conflict one another in such a way that accommodating each fairly would make

self-governance implausible if the debate was concerned with the diverse moral fragments of

each comprehensive vision. Instead, Rawls argues that a liberal democracy will attain consensus

by restricting public discussion to political language. The inclusion of so many different ideas

and ideals may seem impossible even when restricted to the political sphere, however, Rawls has

a solution for this threat. It is mandated that deliberation in the public domain be political, and he

exemplifies this distinction (between moral and political discussion) with same sex marriage. It

would be in the opposition of the Rawlsian idea and use of public reason if an evangelical-

Protestant community campaigned against a same sex marriage proposition by the stated claim

that it is innately wrong or inhumane. It would be acceptable, however, if this same group made

a political argument on behalf of their opposition to the very same topic.[16] Here we see that it is

not the substance nor perspective, but the language used to justify that perspective that

determines whether a topic is political and thus appropriate for discussion in the public domain

or not. Here again it is evident that Rawls expects individuals to be reasonable in the sense that

their political attitudes should not be informed by their private moralities, but instead from an

original position. This disallows individuals to act rationally in the public domain, or disallows

individuals to make political arguments as outlined in the evangelical example above.

The problem with such a distinction is not only that it is perhaps unreasonable to expect

others to behave irrationally when approaching the political. Moreover, even if individuals were

forced by some governmental authority to make solely "reasonable" arguments in a political

language, the substance of their arguments would remain unaffected even if the procedure

adhered to 'non-moral' language. Practically speaking, this is essentially private morality

translated into a political language in a case by case basis; and this issue is intrinsic to the very

concept of Rawlsian liberalism. In fact, seems that Rawls himself was aware of this potential

problem, as evidenced by his creation of the original position and argument for the necessity of

an ideal public reason.

This makes for a society which cycles various particular moral beliefs in and out of its

polity, and also points to a major dilemma in the mechanics of a liberal constitutional democracy.

In a broader sense, however, this entire formulation of liberalism manifests a genuine theoretical

contradiction with respect to truth, morality and virtue. Recall that the very fundamentals of

liberalism necessarily conceive a comprehensive concept of the truth of the whole as a relative

truth. Because of this, reciprocity is considered the utmost virtue of the people. Moreover,

various concrete moral valuations are employed by the liberal system to protect its concept of the

whole, or to protect its existential formulation of truth as relative. To protect this existential truth

liberalism must create for itself a physical polity that prioritizes the protection of diversity. The

liberal doctrine both supplies the truth of the whole and the roadmap for its achievement. Within

this doctrine, a series of moral valuations are set forth (Liberty, equality, individualism). When

individual citizens employ these values in their judgement process, these citizens are acting

virtuously. But the reason that their practice is considered virtuous is not merely because they

abide by the liberal moral values, but more accurately that in practicing these virtues they are

conducting their lives with the aim of achieving the ultimate good; the preservation of their

respective whole as liberals, or of relative truth.

The argument here is that the very idea of liberalism as conceived by Rawls is

theoretically contradictory because the very institution of liberalism calls for the denial of

morality in public reason while subsequently presupposing that this society must abide strictly by

its own secular-liberal moral framework. Thus far circularity has been shown in two ways. First

in the 'case by case' basis (individual groups will simply translate their moral beliefs into a

'political' argument). This may not be problematic on some levels, namely that here religion will

at least submit to the secular structure of the liberal society, but is this language enough to make

their arguments merely political? If a fundamentalist right-wing group launches a polemic

against gays privately and then elects representatives and passes laws publicly via political,

"secular" argument, can their arguments be considered reasonable pluralizable with any

integrity? In the second case of circularity, and on a larger theoretical scale, I pointed to the

nature of Rawlsian liberalism that seeks to force an 'amoral' public deliberation, however this

formulation is incapable of dealing with the fact that liberalism itself contains moral valuations,

an ultimate perceived reality and practices of virtue. In this version of circularity, it is evident

that a theoretical contradiction exists deeply within Rawls upon examining his exclusion of any

morality and subsequent inclusion of only one specific morality. Though Rawls may point to a

combination of the politically restrained and substantively a posteriori features of his theory in a

defense of this charge, these features accommodate rather than dismiss the charge. From this charge, I observe one final, fundamental problematic in Rawls. Lets explore this briefly.

Rawls relegates his theory of liberalism to the political for many reasons, not the least of which would be, in so doing, his prescription seemingly hones the ability to be very pragmatic. I would like to show that his is a theory that is actually quite impractical. The first reason I would offer to this end would be that which I have already shown, of the theoretical contradiction suffered by his general theory and cyclical nature of the political language he requires to uphold this contradiction. Secondly, it seems as though he has relegated his theory to the political to expedite the practicality of, or likelihood that his version of liberalism could actually be popularly manifest. At the same time, it seems clear that he wishes to cleave to some empirically observed yet theoretically explained substantive component of liberalism in his formulation. I think part of the Rawlsian problematic lends itself to a brutish attempt to tip-toe across the line delineating theory from practice. On the one hand, Rawls wishes to leave the complexities presented by a plurality of comprehensive moral doctrines by narrowing his theory to the political, while at the same time he cannot form his theory without offering a specific theoretical concept detailing the substance from which the the society must discourse.

Though Rawls fails to generate a *practical* roadmap to democratic legitimacy, there is a reason his work is so broadly read. It seems to make an intuitive theorization of the liberal democratic process, and perhaps the flaws within his theory are mimicked by reality. Nevertheless, how can the democratic state be legitimated through this version of public reason if the sole focus of the individual lies in cleaving to a specific comprehensive moral doctrine? Instead, it seems more accurate to assume individuals enter the democratic process with some

tamed version of the Schmittian friend-enemy dynamic[17] in mind, in so far as they seek to elect

representatives who would advance a political agenda most similar to their own, and most

detrimental to the other. If individuals enter the public sphere under the false assumption all are

completely free of their individual moral beliefs, they are entering a false reality. Because

individuals do retain fragments of their belief structures, the Rawlsian idea of public reason fails

manifest democratic legitimacy.

ii. Habermas and Rawls: Furthering Legitimacy means Furthering Inclusion.

The late work of Jurgen Habermas provides insight into just what the democratic crises

is. Where Rawls has limited the scope of his philosophical doctrine to the political, Habermas

advances a more comprehensive liberal philosophy.[18] Wary of the fact that the political is merely

one facet of human experience in a liberal society. The freedoms and equality sought to be

protected in a liberal democracy are enjoyed, at the very least, equally in public and private life.

As such, a democratic theory should do its best to honor the "comprehensive moral doctrines"

which Rawls insists should be relegated to the private sphere. The idea here is that popular

sovereignty fails to legitimate democrat governments when these moralities are procedurally

marginalized; this seems quite logical. It was observed that the Rawlsian model of political

liberalism creates a secular-totalitarian regime both theoretically by means of contradiction

(excluding moral doctrines while preserving a secular one) and practically by means of the

undeniable preservation these moralities have when cycling through the political and moral

(private) realms of life in a liberal democracy. Thus we have observed indicators of democratic

disillusion in Rawls, and I will argue many of the problems found in Rawls are fine-tuned in the

Habermasian image of liberal democracy. A more comprehensive approach allows Habermas to

take individual moralities more seriously; however I will argue towards the end of this thesis that

this approach too fails to recgonize that secular moral doctrines house a comprehensive vision

that is more than political. As such, it is my goal to further an argument that non-religious and

religious lifeworlds should be treated as functionally equivalently in various political contexts.

For now, I would like to take a look at how the Habermasian improvement on a similar concept,

political liberalism, advances this argument by the specific way in which it improves, as well as

how the Habermasian conclusion accurately locates a legitimation crisis[19] in contemporary

democracies.

Again, this crises lies along the lines of what was above problematized in Rawlsian

public reason. In other words, because a democratic society is justified by popular sovereignty, it

must allow each individual to be heard in the ongoing deliberative process establishing laws,

social and moral norms, and ultimately a democratic solidarity in the face of a growing

existential pluralism. The Habermasian democratic legitimation crisis then turns into a question

of how the state can justify its sovereignty when citizen participation is low [1], and when certain

groups are left out of the process [2]. For Habermas, the democratic state is in crisis because its

legitimacy rides on the fact that all citizens are, or at least could be included in a process of

"communicative action," however by its very own political ethic (freedom), the democratic state

cannot mandate participation.[20] Thus, the crisis takes two forms for Habermas. The first is a

question of motivation, and the second, a question of state neutrality.[21]

In the second democratic predicament, the diverse plurality of lifeworlds inhabiting the modern democratic state have become increasingly polarized. These competing lifeworlds are increasingly at odds; and in his recent work Habermas has continued to work through a process by which the secular liberal state can remain neutral, or tolerant of world views traditionally blocked by its' institutionalized "wall of separation." To exemplify this predicament generally, Habermas turns to a differentiation between those who are "secular" and those who are "religious." He finds an acute friction in the communicative process between these two camps. Habermas' prescriptions for the two part legitimation crisis are intricately interrelated. I will begin with a discussion of his prescription for latter (of motivation), and then return to a detailed discussion of the actual procedure this prescription enlists (for state neutrality). Along these lines, it is important to differentiate Habermas from the salient features associated with Rawls above before returning to the problem Habermas associates with governing a society whose composition may be at existential odds. Lets first take a step back to identify the features of the Rawlsian and Habermasian visions that are distinct to better understand the disagreements leading to the "family feud" between the two democratic theorists. These distinctions should aide in comprehending the Habermasian responce to the democratic "legitimation crisis."

It was shown through the previous criticisms of Rawlsian political liberalism were rooted in his specific perspective of the role of liberalism in the democratic state. To this end, two roots were given, and to these two I would like to purpose one more, also proposed by Rawls himself. First, Rawls is limited to the political nature of liberalism, claiming that liberalism itself is a political creature, and its application is thus solely political. Habermas, on the other hand, understands that liberalism transcends the political and infects the various private lives of its

native pluralities. As such, the comprehensive moral doctrines sidelined by Rawls become central to the Habermasian inclusion project. To legitimate the state, all must be free. Habermas is also aware, however, of the inevitable problematic experienced when individuals committed to their existential doctrines must negotiate across creedal lines to discover a common political ethic. For this reason, I will argue, Habermas takes the notion of a democratic inclusion project in the proper direction; however his looming skepticism of the value of 'religious' thought does not allow him to take his understanding far enough in this direction. Although Habermas has done well in locating a problem in the current nature of liberal governance (shown through Rawls), he maintains these religious reasons conform to a universalizable language and secular mode of argument. I will show that Habermas has done well to locate the democratic predicament, but has done little to address this problem. His prescription is much to conservative to motivate a more legitimate system of democratic governance. Please note my treatment of 'religious' in this context. Consistent with my quest to understand non-religious structures as functionally equivalent to religious structures, I will argue that the nature of 'religious' reasons must be respected as a tradition equally plausible to (non)-'religious' ones. More on this in the final chapter. Lets explore the final two comparative perspectives ultimately leading to distinct conclusions in both thinkers.

It helps to recall these distinctions comparatively. It was shown that Rawls, although the creator of a political procedure, also advances a secular liberal agenda in his formation. This substantive component of his philosophy is not only justified by the political history of liberalism, but I argue is maintained by Rawls namely to advance a practical rather than purely theoretical notion of liberalism. It is much easier to establish a "wall of separation" between

church and state to extinguish the religious-'non-religious' predicament in the political arena. With less political tolerance, it seems Rawls hopes the process of self-governance will be expedited by providing a procedural guide marginalizing the existential side of things. I hope to have shown by now the problem with all of this is that individuals cannot divorce themselves from their existential certainties (or uncertainties) when acting in the political sphere, as is evidenced perhaps most clearly in the formulation of a cross-creedal coalition stressing the importance of fundamentalist Judeo-Christian values, the New Christian Right.[22] Somewhere in assuming that religion can be relegated to the private sphere, pretending that an original position is attainable, and thinking that people can be split into two compatible, yet clearly distinct moral realms (political and moral), the real problematic is avoided only to the ends of strengthening it.

Habermas, on the other hand, sees his as a theory much more modest than that of political liberalism in that it is strictly procedural. There is, of course, some substance occupying the space of Habermasian liberalism. In fact, I will advance an argument that the substance contained within Habermas ultimately leads to a theoretical problem shared by the Rawlsian conclusion. What is important here however is to note how his more modest substance and more detailed procedure leads him to contest Rawls, and discover a crisis amongst the major archetypes inhabiting contemporary democratic societies that belied the Rawlsian perspective. Because Habermas painstakingly limits the weight of his substantive secular bias, he is able to see the unfair nature of treating existential orientations outside of the secular as other-*wise* rather than otherwise. After understanding the final salient difference in perspective between these two thinkers, I will return to a more detailed discussion of the Habermasian procedure before locating questions left open-ended by it.

Finally, each of the previous two differences in perspective lead Rawls to be a self-proclaimed majoritarian, and to identify Habermas as a constitutionalist. This makes sense. Though Rawls sees his version of political liberalism as rightfully manifesting the sort of majority like-mindedness criticized by Habermas,[23] I have gone so far as to hint that the Rawlsian position advances a democratic totalitarianism in the triangulation of the three salient features definitive of his perspective. With a secular substance, division of the self into a real moral being (private) and unrealistic, highly abstracted political being, and an admitted support for a tyrannical secular-politics the Rawlsian system seems to create a totalitarian regime. Wars "spreading democracy" seem to exemplify this fact. If, as I have argued, the Rawlsian brand of liberalism is currently manifest in the United States, it seems the political wars for democracy waged in recent decades would do well to input some of the deeper moral arguments formally relegated to the private realm. This would be the case even if these moral arguments are deeper-seated in 'non-religious' lifeworld traditions than religious ones. For this reason, a constitutionalist approach may actually be favorable. To put the point briefly; Habermas' attention to the limits of his own secular lifeworld assumptions have lead him to favor a procedure for democratic deliberation that honors the realities experienced by alternative perspectives. It is now time to elaborate on this point, seeing as we have reviewed the distinct perspectives of the role of liberalism in a democratic society in Rawls and Habermas. Hopefully, I have communicated the significance of this understanding in how these differences lead Habermas to the exploration of a legitimation crisis unnoticed by Rawls. Lets take a look at the Habermasian formulation of communicative action and subsequent responce to this crisis.

iii. The Habermasian inclusion project, quest for democratic legitimacy.

So there is a contemporary friction between the religious and the secular camps. In *An Awareness of What is Missing*, Habermas seeks to ease this tension. He begins by diagraming a common heritage between the followers of Jesus, and the followers of Socrates; claiming the evolution of secular reason belongs to a shared historical origin stemming from the Axial Age.[24] Once he has shown both sides are "of the same cloth," Habermas prescribes a dichotomous contingency to the lot. First, the religious side must "accept the authority of 'natural' reason as the fallible results of the institutionalized sciences and the basis of egalitarianism in law and morality."[25] As for the secular camp, Habermas establishes an ethic of equality by maintaining secularists cannot act as judge of the truths of faith.[26] Essentially, religious persons must accept the authority of secular rule, and secularists must not simply dismiss religious reasons intrinsically irrational.

Habermas is aware the political ethic of modern democracies does not allow for the mandating of citizen participation. Because of this, he seeks to reintroduce religious persons into the public sphere under the assumption that beneath their potentially dogmatic beliefs lies a motivational ethic unmatched by any substance within secularism. Prescribing a contingency to each general polarity is critical for the Habermasian project, which ultimately seeks to uncover a procedure by which the democratic state can be legitimated by popular sovereignty. For Habermas, this means individuals need to speak to each other instead of at one another. Through this process he hopes the motivational ethic causing disproportionately higher rates of participation amongst religious folks can be universalized and projected unto the political

activism of secular and religious citizens alike. Habermas is not merely attempting to further

legitimate democracy by broadening the scope of inclusion within its communicative process

here. Moreover, he seeks to inflict a mutual learning process to inform higher levels of

democratic participation amongst secular citizens.

This is where the common thread running through the large-scale legitimation crisis of

motivation and state neutrality (or inclusion of religious groups) is located. We have discussed

the former, but this is merely what Habermas feels must be done to broaden the reach of public

reason to motivate participation for his proceduralist solution. In what follows, I will summarize

how this actual procedure of "communicative action" works to legitimate the democratic state.

Just as Rawls proposed a democratic process of deliberation, Habermas too believes

democratic legitimization is an ongoing project. For this project to be successful, an ongoing

process of democratic communication must include all eligible citizens. As such, Habermas

cleaves to his own version of an overlapping consensus, however this consensus is obtained

through a different procedure. Communicative action is an circular process because actors are

both "indicators" and "products" of it.[27] The actor is an indicator in the sense he is a free-

thinking master of his situation; he participates in the process as an agent with a unique opinion.

He is, however, simultaneously a product of the environment in which he is participates. His

background and socialization are dictated by the very solidarity allowing his free participation.

Communicative action is a general process echoed in part in many other theorists,

including the theory of the development of moral consciousness advanced by Lawrence

Kohlberg.[28] Central to Habermas' specific formation of communicative action, however, is the

"discourse theory of ethics." The theory has two important steps. The second step involves the

institution of reasonable validation through the "pragmatic presuppositions of argumentation."[29] The first is best exemplified by a comparison to Kantian practical reason.

Like Kant, Habermas claims liberal democracies can exercise just rule. Unlike Kant, however, whose concept of "practical reason" asserts a "categorical imperative"[30] unto all individuals, Habermas favors a process of moral *argumentation* to universally legitimate social and moral norms. This is not to say Habermas is not a Kantian, nor to claim he divorces the categorical imperative maxim completely. It is more precisely, rather, to claim Habermas is scaling this imperative down to a "principle of universalization."[31]

This principle is a crucial tenet of discourse ethics. Universalization, or (U) provides the procedure by which truth claims given in the democratic communicative process can be validated as holding universal truths. In practical discourses, (U) is a rule such that; "for a norm to be valid, the consequences and side effects of its general observance for the satisfaction of each person's particular interests must be acceptable to all."[32] Here we see the Kantian spirit remains in discourse ethics, although the actual procedure differs by means of (U) and the argumentative process.

As the principle legitimator of discourse ethics, (U) is also indicative of Habermas' task in offering discourse ethics to answer the call of the democratic legitimization crisis. Whereas Rawls simply forces a theoretical relegation of morality into the private realm, Habermas tolerates religious origins in the communicative process so long as they discourse in an ethically universalizable language; or a language that can hold up to (U). The difference here is Habermas' valiant attempt to offer a process claiming to actually generate a neutral language.

Where it is easy to charge Rawls with a secular bias, it is much more difficult to do so with

Habermas.

My question for Habermas, however, is as follows. Do the Habermasian contentions

endorse a secular religion? By the very nature of needing to authoritatively mandate taking

religious folk seriously, are we not relegating religious thought to an inferior position similarly to

Rawls? As Habermas' first contention in *An Awareness of What is Missing* expresses plainly that

religious folk need submit to the authority of secular reason, it seems he would have little

problem with this authoritative claim, but that doesn't necessarily justify it.

If liberalism is a quasi-religious experiential faith, it would be the case that liberalists are

holders of faith just as religious folk, albeit the liberal faith would be more aligned with reason.

Nevertheless, if this is the case, it seems reasonable religious thought deserves "a seat at the

table," so to speak. But what does this exactly mean for Habermas? Perhaps the above question

raised to Habermas could be problematized as follows. How we are to take religious reasons

seriously as secularists if they are not tolerable in the formal legislative process? If religious

ethic is excluded from the dialogue which shapes my surrounding political infrastructure, then

why would I take its perspective and reasons seriously in my everyday life? If I am now made

aware of what is missing, and what is missing is a religiosity (which ultimately motivates

democratic participation), is it not still missing even after a common heritage is identified and

these particular contentions are enlisted? How could the secular state be further legitimated by

this process when, for these contentions to make sense, the secular state must either hold that

religious arguments need be translated into secular political language (U), or otherwise that

secularists must take irrational religious statements seriously in their original form. Where I

believe that Habermas favors the first, I find it difficult to differentiate the first from the "public reason" revisited by Rawls; and in the second case the formulation seems impossible.

I believe these problems begin with Habermas' treatment of religion. He understands religion from a secularist standpoint; making use of it as a functional tool to increase democratic participation. This is problematic for a series of reasons, not the least of which because it takes for granted that religious people understand their religion on deeper grounds than functionality alone. The larger problem Habermas has here lies in begging secularists to take religion seriously while his own theoretical blueprint seems unable to do just that.

With this said, I do not believe the Habermasian project is a waste. It is quite brilliant; however the formulation offered in *An Awareness of What is Missing* and *Discourse Ethics* seems to need some help. A survey of the late work of Charles Taylor should be sufficient to establish an understanding of modernity from a respectable religious perspective. Both thinkers clearly enter the discussion of solidarity in the modern state with their own baggage. However, both also offer excellent prescriptions for working towards a democratic solidarity in the post-secular world, or a world wherein solely secular practices have become increasingly challenged by various angles. By understanding both prescriptions, and the biases contained therein, I hope to uncover a situation in which the work of Taylor can inform the Habermasian project. In what follows, an understanding of Taylor's approach to democratic solidarity will be offered to answer questions left open in Habermas, and in a final section I will attempt to identify a common ground with the help of William Connolly's inclusion project to supplement the Habermasian project, and satisfy Taylor's spirit of a radical redefinition of secularism.

Here we see the values inscribed within discourse ethics are inherently secular, despite their ability to go beyond the strict institutionalized secularism endorsed by Rawls. Taylor will show that the post-secular state must take much wider strides from an institutionalized secular hegemony if inclusion is to manifest democratic legitimacy. Whereas the procedural values of discourse ethics are much too secular to be common for many religious or spiritually informed milieus, those of the liberal trinity offered by Taylor in the next section seem accessible across creedal delineations. While engaging Taylor, it is important to ask whether these values are restrictive enough to yield a situation in which the process of public reason can actually work towards generating a positive political assemblage. If his values are too broad, it could be at the cost of generating a coherent direction for post-secular polities.

3. Reformulating Secularism, or Indications of the Post-Secular?

i. The Taylorian Inclusion Project

      I have presented an argument as to why solidarity is important for Habermas and Rawls, and how different perspectives (with three clear differences) in both thinkers lead to two distinct problematicals, respectively. In so doing, I have elevated the value in the Habermasian problematical through a comparative argument. Now it is time to trace questions left open by the Habermasian problematical through an alternative perspective. As I have indicated in my conclusion of the previous section, the Habermasian perspective yields an excellent formulation of the problematic but remains too conservative in its proposed solution. Much of this can be accredited to a Habermasian secular-liberal bias, even though this bias is much more modest than his partner in "family quarrel." Recall, as well, I have argued that a legitimate democratic government should become 'post-secular' in the sense that it needs to do more to include individual doctrines of morality, in both religious and non-religious ways, if its democratic participation is truly free. Along this line, I should mention that Taylor's perspective is distinct from that of both Rawls and Habermas in an important way. Where the latter two can be grouped similarly into a 'pluralist' interpretation of liberal democracy, the former appears to sympathize with an 'elitist' reading. Lets put this in another way. Though Habermas and Rawls have distinct perspectives, both perhaps owe their origin to a common 'family' which can be identified as a pluralist perspective. This was clearly shown in the first section, although not directly referenced.

Because both thinkers agree that sovereignty rests in the hands of the citizens, they believe that addressing problems of democratic governance means prescribing a meaningful procedure to citizens, the key point here being they believe that the citizenry can change the discourse of popular politics. As an elitist, Taylor believes that a rigid definition of secularism amongst intellectual and political elites has lead to a system which institutionalizes religious bias, the key here being that elites have the power to offer such a narrow definition in self-servitude. Thus, for Taylor, what is important is not the procedure by which a democratic society is governed, but rather the detailed history leading to the specific orientation of that government. Being cognizant of this master narrative will thus allow the citizenry to rethink the ideas offered by democratic cultural elites in the context of the history creating them. Though all three thinkers seek to address the general citizenry, or at least make an attempt, it seems Taylor's master narrative may be elite in itself, and as such target the intellectual elite rather than the general electorate.

Charles Taylor plays a crucial role in detailing just why traditional and modernist religious ideals should be included in the formal democratic process, albeit from a perspective different (yet highly influential) to my own. To answer the legitimation crisis located by Habermas, it is necessary to formulate an inclusion project that protects the secular-liberal values thought to govern a liberally democratic society. There are certainly more than one type of democratic governments, however in a society rich with pluralism, a pure democracy seems the only alternative with the ability to insure legitimacy.

In this section, I want to take a look at the contemporary work of Charles Taylor with respect to what is unique in his understanding of solidarity in the post-secular West. Both Habermas and Taylor find solidarity of central importance in route to justify secular democratic

governments (which are based in sovereignty, and derive said sovereignty from some version of inclusion project); however their methods for identifying prescriptive solutions for solidarity are vastly different. I will again argue that this difference lends itself primarily to the distinctness of their perspectives, although I find it important to note that while these categories are not perfect, they fit very well, and make a comparative analysis central to the question of democratic legitimacy (by means of solidarity) possible. Where Habermas indicates a detailed procedure for generating solidarity and thus legitimating the democratic state, Taylor favors offering a master narrative detailing secular history to press for solidarity and prescribe a legitimate democratic arrangement. I will contextualize the master narrative approach offered in *A Secular Age* with his essay, *Why We Need a Radical Redefinition of Secularism.* I have selected this combination because it will show Taylor's method for determining democratic solidarity in the master narrative, and also demonstrate what arrangement he feels will best legitimate democratic governance through his redefinition of secularism. Moreover, Taylor's alternative perspective will inform the Habermasian project by giving voice to the religious communities within the post-secular state. Pluralist perspectives, both generally and in the thinkers reviewed in this thesis, certainly capture a component of the truth of democratic governance, however the truths offered by this perspective only capture part of the whole. I hope by including the elitist view found in Taylor and more cynically in Tala Asad will inspire the latter chapters of this thesis, which will ultimately locate a necessary pre-political procedure inspired by a radical rethinking of democratic culture. Thus my own prescription for the inclusion problematic will view (non)religious and religious pre-political moralities as functionally equivalent in various political

contexts. More on this in chapter four, for now we look to Charles Taylor to understand the history of secularism and Latin-Christiandom in the West.

For Habermas, a democratic state only functions properly (legitimately) if there is a real potential for an exhaustively inclusive mode of democratic communication.[33] For his theory of communicative action to take shape, Habermas prescribed moderns a set of dichotomous contingencies to tame the contemporary faith/reason problematical. The problem with these contingencies and this procedure is they seem to solidify a lower ranking of religious thought, even though the aim is to alleviate such a relegation. Taylor will answer the question posed at the end of the previous chapter with respect to equalizing these two conflicted thought processes in showing how a popular misrepresentation of secularism has generated a secular hegemony while subsequently decreasing solidarity. If I was an economist speaking of the economy, this is perhaps analogously problematic to the concept of 'stagflation.' The problem is not only that one valuable facet of social life is being lost, but that another facet identified to have a dangerously negative valuation is increasing at the formers cost. Here a Rawlsian-like reading of secularism has lead politics to become more secularly hegemonic. At the same time, the quest to assimilate individual moralities into the secular state forces them to divorce important components of their respective individual doctrines. In this situation, solidarity, or an ongoing cross-creedal negotiation aiming to manifest a common political ethic, is forgone by the powerful hegemonic nature of secularism cheerlead by intellectual and political elites. His answer, however, is also problematic in its own respect. Following this section, I will trace the problematic nature of a contemporary democratic solidarity through William Connolly, and offer my own conclusion as to how such a concept is potentially tenable amongst moderns.

In the process of identifying Taylor's unique interpretation of secularism and solidarity, I subsequently aim to problematize the method employed in *Secular Age,* the master narrative, at the end of this chapter. In this section I will evaluate Taylor's claim that a master narrative is necessary for understanding experience and determining solidarity in the contemporary West.[34] Where it will become clear Taylor comprehends the nations of the late modern West as imagined communities, it is far less clear just how these products of social imagination can utilize the Taylorian narrative to dissemble a hegemonic political culture and[35] discover a common political ethic in the face of exponentially increasing existential pluralism.

To explain the above charge of hegemony identified by Taylor briefly in the abstract is simple. Taylor could show how a Rawlsian or Habermasian vision providing an "overlapping consensus" (to maintain a legitimate national civil identity) relies on a common secular language in public discourse in both formulations. This effectually relegates individual doctrines of morality to the 'private' sphere, or at the very least relegates their methods and languages. More cynically, this promotes a secular morality (or hegemony) by means of marginalizing religious participation. Under this general formulation, hegemony is achieved through the requirement of secular reason in communicative action and in public reason. Rawls would admit this, and claim, as a majoritarian, that it is a good thing. Habermas, on the other hand, may contend the point that he houses a secular bias, or at least argue that his procedure houses only the most modest secular substance possible if *real* solidarity is the intended consequence. The hegemonic implications of this secularist institutional arrangement, however, must be reconciled for Taylor if the democratic state is to be made legitimate. For Taylor this reconciliation relies on an understanding of the historical master narrative producing it.

Taylor is unsatisfied with these highly abstracted procedural avenues for solidarity due to the strict sanctions they place on religious thought; and he contends that the rigidly institutional definitions of secularism underscoring such understandings are to blame.[36] In these procedures, not only must religious thought be private in the sense that its reasons are inimical to legislative discourse within democracies, but private too in the realm of the public sphere when public reason or communicative action is the object of discussion.[37] Democratic secular hegemony gives merely a facade of solidarity because it silences the numerous religious voices housed within its state, making a seemingly majoritarian system appear totalitarian even to the lesser fundamental of religious groups. This is where the Habermasian project fails for Taylor. Though Habermas takes the project a step further than Rawls in theoretically accommodating religious thought, the process of accommodation governed by the principle of "Universalization" still enlists a secular language detrimental to authentic religious inclusion. If religious thought, reasons, and language must be assimilated into a language independent of any specific religious regime, it seems that universalizability is merely an attempt, however valiant, to show the incontestability of secular language in route to solidify common political values for a given pluralist society.

By excluding religious reasons, this secular avenue for democratic solidarity is problematically ethnocentric. For Taylor's 'imagined community' (the nation) to manifest a legitimate civil identity the ethnocentricity solidified in the traditional institutional definition of secularism underscoring Habermas and Rawls needs to be reevaluated. For Taylor, there are two features encountered in the conventional discussion of secularism providing for the perceived infallibility of the "wall of separation;"[38] or the idea that secularism is a priori a division of

church and state. First, there is a popular certainty in defining secularism as an institutional arrangement. This leads to a second feature, in which characters like Rawls are the hero: if secularism is and institutional arrangement, all one needs to do to determine a universal political ethic is determine the institutional arrangement best fitting as its conceptual counterpart.[39] This institutional arrangement routinely offers secularism as areligious, and then develops an unquestioned separation of religion from the state. Instead, Taylor argues, a state should not concretize secularism in a practical arrangement of the state institution, but rather identify secularism as the constant application of its definitive goals. To this end he identifies three secularist goals in the French Revolutionary trinity: liberty, equality, and fraternity.[40] On this view not only solidarity itself is viewed as an ongoing project of value negotiation, but secularism itself is a product of an ongoing attempt to achieve the goals of liberty, equality, and freedom. To understand secularism in the Taylorian sense, then, it is critical that Taylor presents an argument that suggests secularism is a posteriori an application of the trinity rather than simply an institutional arrangement. To make such an argument, an acutely detailed history of secularism must observe the nature of secularism showing its intentions originally sought to manage pluralism by including pluralities rather than by means of exclusion via political assimilation.

When defining secularism as the active application of these three goals, Taylor finds no reason religious thought should be swept into the private sphere. In fact, he maintains religious reasons, if used appropriately, should be tolerated even in formal legislative processes.[41] If the goal of secularism is to yield individuals who are free, equal, and fraternal, excluding religious thought from the formal fraternity seems unequal, unfree and thus is counterproductive for

secular goals. For Taylor, giving voice to religious thought in the legislative bodies of Western democracies means manifesting a more meaningful interconnectivity amongst its diverse inhabitants. Achieving legitimate democratic rule in the post-secular can not simply expand the electorate to accommodate immigrants and to motivate existing non-voters; the state must open up politics to the religious if the goal is to manifest legitimate popular sovereignty. Moreover, understanding secularism as the active application of its goals provides a thought process motivated and informed by something "deeper" than political experience alone. In this way the "Post-secular" improves upon the mere secular by including non-(institutional)secularism in manifesting solidarity. If our understanding of secular is convention; a look at the master narrative informing a radical redefinition of secularism shows just why Taylor makes this case.

Taylor has no problem with the formal inclusion of religious thought, not because of his own affiliation with any religion, but rather that on his account the substance of secularism should not exclude religion by definition. Historically speaking, the goals of secularism were originally applied to a nation of Christians; no specific sect was to be established as the national brand, each multiplicity was to be protected in free exercise, and each should be heard in the ongoing process of determining the nations political identity. Since inception, argues Taylor, "unbelievers" (of the traditional religions) surfaced, and for fear of being considered atheistic, the term secular took on a new areligious meaning.[42] Today however, argues Taylor, the institutional definition of secularism paradoxically violates its original trinity of goals. Instead of establishing a "wall of separation" between church and state, true secularism should allow for religious positions to be considered equal among areligious positions. In *A Secular Age,* Taylor

articulates the very history summarized above to show how secularism was historically

constructed by Christian reformation.

Taylor's radical redefinition of secularism seeks to further legitimate secular democracies

in the face of the legitimation crisis described in the previous section. To justify such a radical

quest for solidarity Taylor works from a master narrative rather than a detailed deliberative

procedure. To make sense of Taylor's method, it is important to understand two salient features

stemming from *A Secular Age*. First, Taylor identifies a concept he calls "secularity 3."

Secularity 3 is historically unique to contemporary society. Five hundred years ago in the West,

unbelief was unthinkable; but today positions of belief appear as merely one option amongst

many and are even mocked in certain milieus.[43]

Given this first feature, the second must unfold to explain how secularity 3 was

constructed, and what its consequences are. The reform master narrative serves this purpose, and

is centered on demonstrating Christian reform as the vehicle generating secularism. Secularity 3

is ultimately the result of the Christian churches attempt to establish the lowest common

denominator between religious denominations;[44] reforms initially inspired by a desire to make

the religion more broadly appealing. The Christian reform package had various features and

consequences altering the developmental path of the Western world. First it disenchanted the

world.[45] It removed previously the normal belief life was lived in a world surrounded by actual

spirits and ghosts. From this the "buffered self,"[46] developed an existential repositioning in

which the self became impervious to majestic entities. As a product, humans were no longer

directly permeable by God's will and discipline. In the face of the increasing industriousness and

sheer numbers of humans, the individual had to become self-disciplined; both to be ethical and to

maintain a livable environment.[47] These Christian reforms played into a large scale shift in the Western 'social imaginary,' or Taylor's concept of the background of society containing the inarticulate bias, norms and ethics of its given culture.[48]

The *change* to this imagined society, or these nations, is thematized mainly by two constructions. First, where time was formerly ordered through higher agency, and sovereignty was dictated by a higher agent (a transcendent, God), it is now governed by secular time and unmediated by a higher sovereign. From these changes in social imaginary, a physical modern state is manifest. The features materialized by the new social imagination are an economy, a public sphere, and the idea of popular sovereignty.[49] The resulting free, unmediated society now exists within what Taylor calls an "immanent frame,"[50] or a society framed without any necessary reference to a transcendent force. Although Taylor maintains this framework leaves open the possibility to believe in a transcendent, this belief is often unpopular and certainly marginalized in certain aspects of the respective state housing it as shown in the Habermasian project. As presented above, Taylor maintains the redefinition of secularism with hopes of reviving the validity of religious thought in its application towards thinking through and legislating a legitimate political ethic.

For Taylor, generating a democratic solidarity means acknowledging a common narrative. His radical redefinition of secularism is merely a matter of redefining the concept with the most accurate master narrative in mind. Both his redefinition and polemic against subtraction stories operate under the assumption the secular-hegemony has provided an elaborate distaste for religion. This distaste is largely a product of a mutual "fragilization" occurring as original

positions of conflicting lifeworlds are forced to defend their stance by means of increasingly

elaborate secular-language arguments.[51]

      The resulting "super nova"[52] manifests a series of feelings of malaise, forcing many to

return to religious practices of one type or token to fill the deep-seated void advanced politically

by the institutional definition of secularism. Taylor sees this condition as indicative of a post-

secular world order; or an order in which traditional formulations of the secular are being

challenged from all angles.[53] Taylor applauds the challenges of the mainstream narrative, and in

his own version, the reform master narrative argues that a re-incorporation of religious thought

into contemporary democratic processes is necessary to press for the solidarity and answer the

legitimation crisis.

ii. On the Taylorian Perspective.

      Taylor's reading of the history of secularism clearly advances an elitist reading of

Western secular-liberal democracies. There is a clear cycle outlined in his reform master

narrative, in which the new norms of secularization begin amongst the intellectual and political

elite before proliferating amongst the general public.[54] His conclusion, namely that religious

thought and secular thought need be equalized formally to legitimate secularism in the terms of

actually realizing its goals, also needs to be questioned.[55] From the combination of his

understanding of secularism both in method and substance, a clear set of contentions arise.

Methodologically speaking, I would argue the master narrative is flawed for three reasons. First,

the narrative is obviously dense, weighing in at over one thousand pages between its two

installments.[56] From this, two more problems unfold. The narrative is lengthy because its

methodologically ceiling is very high; this method requires one to include all necessary historical

points central to the concept it aims to explain. I will argue that this is impossible, although

highly admirable and still substantively useful. By the nature of the above two points, it is clear

that the narrative targets the intellectual elite, or the academy, whose actual political influence is

questionable at best.

Of the above points, I would like to elaborate on the second, or the idea that a narrative

must accurately portray all historical points central to the development of liberal-secularism. I

have selected the second point because it deals with the academic substance of the Taylorian

narrative; while the other points are strictly procedural. I seek to answer a series of questions to

this end: does Taylor's narrative of secularization accurately portray the conditions of existence

in the current Western climate? This question breaks down nicely into two parts. First, do

moderns actually serve as unmediated sovereign agents in secular democracies? This point is

critically underscores Taylor's own narrative in which a forfeit of higher time and agency has

provided a horizontal concept of agency and secular understanding of time. Within the immanent

frame, Taylor believes individuals generally exist without needing reference to any transcendent,

but is this truly possible?

For Asad, Taylor's notion of free agency within the liberal democracy needs to be

complicated. The definitive characteristic of secular human agency rests on the dual action of

empowerment, which is both an act of giving individuals power, and the individuals' power to

act.[57] But how empowered are modern individuals in a government arranged by secularism?

Asad claims the idea of secular human agency as free of mediation violates a three fold secular

transcendent serving to manipulate the agency of its subjects.[58] In the first tear, what solicits the most government attention and action are a series of interest groups centered upon a very specific, and often elite interest. With copious amounts of money, these interest groups not only persuade governmental legislation, but often the opinions of individuals as well by funding large scale issue campaigns. In the second, Asad cites the usage of opinion polls by the government shows representatives do so to avoid actually answering the societies whims by presupposing them with manipulative legislation to tame tensions while advancing an agenda autonomous to them. In a third tear, the mass media is exposed for its ability to set the public agenda, as well as for its unidimensional corporate ownership. These three tears act as an assemblage, or political medium that transcends pluralism in an effort to manipulate the people of a democratic state.

Asad's critique of the Taylorian narrative serves to identify a serious problem in method. The history which yields free agency, and then utilizes this product to generate a free society who substituted despotic enforcement for self-enforcement, is also a history containing many other stories. These include the stories of industrialization, capitalization and urbanization, or for Asad, the story of "the rise of the modern state."[59] Focusing on the imagined state, or the nation, neglects important developmental agencies and institutions. To Taylor the problem now has been raised of agency. If individuals do not obtain free agency, then it seems Taylor's modern social imaginary will suffer a crippling blow. If individuals are indeed controlled by some transcendent agent, the subsequent tenants of Taylor's narrative, such as the immanent frame, could justifiably be brought into question, while perhaps many others would remain unaffected. In the final section I will review whether quasi-religious mundane transcendent comprehensive moral

doctrines can be equalized in terms of faith in a transcendent in the quest for democratic solidarity.

Secondly, it is evident that Taylor's narrative builds upon the inclusion problems located in the procedurelist approach offered by Habermas; however Taylor's formulation clearly comes with its own set of problems potentially devastating for the secular-liberal project. As Taylor finds a clear problem with the previously described procedurelist modes of addressing the legitimation crisis, he shows how a strictly pluralist reading of contemporary democracies generates an institutionalized wall of separation. As such, a quasi-totalitarian secularist regime crushes the goal trinity of secular-liberalism by solidifying inequality and institutionalizing a non-fraternal orientation of democratic discourse. But Taylor is not the only one who feels this way. A movement in the contemporary American political culture, often called the "New Christian Right" movement.[60] Largely associated with evangelical protestants, this movement defines itself as against the secularization of the state, viewing this history as an existential attack on fundamental Christian values. Additionally, this group is able to form a cross-denominational coalition by connecting to fundamentalist christians from evangelical, mainline protestant, and catholic practices who also feel threatened by the secular state. This is an important point to make. Because the Taylorian prescription seeks to formally incorporate religious thought into democratic deliberation and legislation, if it were achieved, it is clear that a religiously-based coalition already exists in the American case, and in numbers large enough that an actual political mobilization of its fundamentally Christian moral goals is quite possible.

Lets explore this example with two possible outcomes to demonstrate the above mentioned problems. Here it will be my goal to show how Taylor's prescription leads to a

theoretical situation in which his attempt to equalize faith and reason actually serves to invert

direction of the current inequalities. In this example, lets assume the religious persons most able

to mobilize a constituency are the resentful evangelical types central to Connolly's *Capitalism

and Christianity, American Style*.[61] This is fitting both because a discussion of this group will be

featured in the following chapter, but also because it is the most powerful and politically active

religious-political coalition in the contemporary United States.

Two outcomes could come of Taylor's formal inclusion of such a zealot. If he cannot

generate a large enough following, he is laughed at by secularists and the religious left, once

again excluded, and we are back to Habermasian principle of universalizability (i.e.. if religion is

to be respected, it *must* speak in a secular language). Here Taylor's effort to redefine Secularism,

however valiant, has failed, or perhaps even increased the intensity of the current polemical

relationship between religious and non-religious lifeworlds. Here, reasonable discussion amongst

free men and women again marginalizes religious thought because one extremist coalition is

thought to represent the entire concept of politically acceptable religious discourse. If a series of

narrowly informed religious representatives begin to "speak to God" to protect a providential

agenda which thrusts a fundamental Christian morality upon a pluralistic state, the existential

orientation of the modernists, or non-fundamentalists within that state is threatened. This leads to

a Schmittian situation in which the seeds of fundamental Christianity would become specifically

targeted by a modernist coalition of (potentially) liberally religious and non-religious persons

alike, further problematizing the relationship between religion and 'non-religion.'

In another outcome, these fundamentalist religious groups actually mobilize a major force

of constituents, gaining real power in secular governments. Here the situation discourses as the

above, except the voicing of fundamental Christian values politically is actually popularly

legitimated. Contemporary democratic societies pose a series of choices upon their citizens,

ranging from mundane (what to eat) to extreme (ending a relationship) which are both political,

but more importantly are frequently non-political. This system allows individuals to establish

their own morality from which these choices should theoretically discourse, or be consistent

with. In the fundamental-evangelical case, it is clear that the goal is to establish a state with a

clearly professed morality. It remains possible, however, that the absolutist nature of the morality

preached by the New Christian Right, could appeal to many outside of the religion. This points

stems from the observation that the absolutist morality has already had the power to speak across

denominational lines. On this view, it is quite reasonable to assume many will sympathize with

the morality even if not with the entirety of the religion promoting it. Lets assume that when

"God-talk" is popularly legitimated, an absolutist version of fundamental Christianity is

institutionalized. Recall also this all occurs per the theoretical 'equalization' of faith and reason

offered by Taylor, whose reasoning was that such an equalization would legitimate secular-

liberal democracies by continuously applying the three goals of secularism; freedom, equality,

and fraternity. In this outcome, however, an absolutist morality has been established, and thus the

governance of this theoretical democratic society no longer seeks to protect the goals of

secularism, but instead the goals of fundamental Christianity. Non-religious groups are now

marginalized alongside the more liberally religious, and this 'secular-liberal' democracy is once

again illegitimate by the very same measures enlisted to legitimate it.

      From the description of this 'ideal type,'[62] it should be evident these agendas are

counterproductive to secular democratic ends. What fails in the Taylorian formation of the

secular is the fact it applies to the official government and not just the public sphere. In other words, the elitist perspective from which the Taylorian inclusion project discourses has failed to recognize the importance of a physical procedure as outlined by those stemming from a more pluralistic school of thought. As such, the values of the liberal trinity are much to broadly common for an inclusion project to legitimate democratic sovereignty; they clearly provide for the grounds for one camp to marginalize its polarity in either direction. But how else can a secularist be asked to take religious political arguments seriously in the public sphere if the representatives shaping his surrounding political infrastructure are not forced to do the same? It seems clear that a hybridization of pluralist and elitist perspectives and respective prescriptions is necessary when pressing for a common political ethic. Here it seems Taylor's only move is to validate religious thought in official government by cleaving to this trifold schematic of common political values; but as expressed in the above paragraph tolerating religious reasons at the cost of secular ones represents an outcome potentially devastating to the secular-liberal goals it seeks to protect. The question now becomes how one can answer the democratic legitimation crisis when its answer seemingly lurks between the problematical inclusion or exclusion of religious thought in official governmental processes.

When addressing the legitimation crisis, an inclusion project should seek to establish a set of common values such that these values can speak across creedal lines and generate a democratic solidarity. From this, legitimate democratic governance is thought to discourse. Taylor has shown that an adjustment to the elite reading of secularism could better apply the three common values though to be intrinsic to the liberal democracy, include those who have been sidelined, and generate such a solidarity. I hope to have shown how the goals of secular-

liberalism are much too general to actual unite a pluralistic society. As the discussion of Taylor

comes to a close, it is important to understand one more salient feature of Taylor, and perhaps

Rawls and Habermas in a different way: how religion is defined.

Taylor departs from the more traditional notion of religion as an institution that references

belief in some transcendent, further manipulating the definition transcendence to answer the

question; "does the highest, the best life involve our seeking, or acknowledging, or serving a

good which is beyond, in the sense of independent of human flourishing?"[63] What changes here

is a restrictive aim of transcendence, which ultimately plays into narrowing the definition of

religion. Transcendence is no longer some 'good of existence or experience beyond the normal

or physical level,' but it is now moreover a 'good of existence or experience beyond the normal

or physical level that is independent of human flourishing.' In *Title,* Wendy Brown argues that

Taylor's removal of belief from the secular camp is unwarranted.[64] Acknowledging belief can

take both a mundane and spiritual form, Brown advances her claim that the secular left can host a

contentless, spiritual form of belief citing the revival of religiosity in the secular left during the

course of the 2008 Obama "Hope" campaign. Because Obama begged his constituents to believe

in change, not of specific policies but of the possibility that the Federal government could restore

the principals of liberalism itself to civil society despite its numerous preceding failures, the

American left proved that belief in something higher than the mundane was possible outside of

normative religion by electing Obama to the presidential office.

Where I applaud Brown's observation of the mistaken usage of 'belief' and 'unbelief' in

Taylor's work, I side with William Connolly in thinking that it is his restrictive definition of

transcendence which truly motivates his mistaken understanding of non-religious lifeworlds as

"closed."[65] Thinking of religious and nonreligious comprehensive moral doctrines in such a way that something is missing from the latter that is present in the former means viewing the two camps as unequal, and moreover, as opposites. This is the Taylorian problem. The same line of though also motivates my Habermasian contention; namely that viewing these two camps as a posteriori distinct leads Habermas to cleave to a secular bias ultimately generating the same polemical relationship between faith and reason. What I hope to show in the final two chapters is that [1] religious and nonreligious comprehensive moral doctrines are a priori functionally equivalent. That [2] this functional equivalence is especially important when the political contextualizes the discussion. That viewing these two camps as such will show that non-religious /secular camps have comprehensive moral doctrines based in something higher than simply the political [3]. Finally that [3] could perhaps reframe the Habermasian dichotomous contingency such that 'religious' groups can speak freely on an equal political terrain which is composed individuals whose opinions are formulated in deep-seated moral commitments to comprehensive doctrines, and 'nonreligious' groups must acknowledge that the transcendent (and thus mysterious, or unjustifiable) nature of their beliefs places the same limits on their certainty as it does their religious counterparts [4]. This allows each polarity to see the other as equal, and provides a starting point [5] for the public discussion that must discourse to establish what common values legitimately inform the state.

In the following section, I would like to introduce a potential solution to the problems identified thus far with the help of William Connolly's quest to include religious thought in renegotiating pre-political spiritualities (or in determining a set of common values, or solidarity). and Michael Reder's observance of a broader understanding of religion. The goal here will be to

establish what values inform the inclusion project enlisted by William Connolly. It is one thing to

assert a process best serving the post-secular legitimation project, it is quite another, however, to

offer an umbrella of common values allowing such a project to mobilize. Connolly will show

how the broad values of the liberal trinity can be refined to protect post-secular solidarity.

[9] Reply to Habermas, towards the end.

[10] Political Liberalism

[11] Political Liberalism

[12] Political Liberalism

[13] Political Liberalism

[14]

[15]

[16]

[17] Schmitt, Carl. *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1985. Print.

[18]

[19] Habermas, Jürgen. *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1990. Print. 86-108

[20] Habermas, Jürgen, Joeseph Ratzinger, and Florian Schuller. "Pre-political Foundations of the Secular Liberal State?" *Dialectics of Secularization: On Reason and Religion*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 2006. N. pag. 21-23 Print.

[21] Habermas, Jürgen, Michael Reder, and Josef Schmidt. *An Awareness of What Is Missing: Faith and Reason in a Post-secular Age*. Cambridge, U.K.: Polity, 2010. Print.

[22] Cite a bunch of the behaviorist sources after connolly.

[23] Political liberalism

[24] Concept Occurs in: Habermas, Jürgen, Michael Reder, and Josef Schmidt. *An Awareness of What Is Missing: Faith and Reason in a Post-secular Age*. Cambridge, U.K.: Polity, 2010. Print.
As well as in: Habermas, Jürgen, Joeseph Ratzinger, and Florian Schuller. "Pre-political Foundations of the Secular Liberal State?" *Dialectics of Secularization: On Reason and Religion*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 2006.

[25] Habermas, Jürgen, Michael Reder, and Josef Schmidt. *An Awareness of What Is Missing: Faith and Reason in a Post-secular Age*. Cambridge, U.K.: Polity, 2010. Print. Chapter 4. P. 16

[26] Habermas, Jürgen, Michael Reder, and Josef Schmidt. *An Awareness of What Is Missing: Faith and Reason in a Post-secular Age*. Cambridge, U.K.: Polity, 2010. Print. Chapter 4. P. 16

[27] Habermas, Jürgen. *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1990. Print. P. 134-136

[28] Habermas, Jürgen. *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1990. Print.

[29] Habermas, Jürgen. *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1990. Print. P. 116

[30] "Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law" Kant, Immanuel. *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. N.p.: Oxford U.P., 2003. Print.

[31] Habermas, Jürgen. *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1990. Print. P. 86, 121

[32] Habermas, Jürgen. *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1990. Print. P. 197

[33] See Chapter One

[34] Taylor, Charles. *Varieties of Secularism in a Secular Age.* "Afterword." p. 302. Here Taylor explains directly his polemical against the 'subtraction story.' Taylor argues human beings are shaped by a variety of cultures, which affect their outlooks, goals and norms. Because these are shaped in an ongoing process, experience is constructed over time (not achieved by subtracting old things, but through constructing new things). This "construction story" can only be expressed by means of master narrative.

[35] Secular Age; secularization that removes religious rhetoric from the state attempts to nuetralize the affect of religious involvement within it. As such, individual become more alike as this solidifies a hegemonic outlook on just where the state and religion separate.

[36] Mendieta, Eduardo et al. *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere.* 2011. p. 46-48, 50. In the first set of pages listed, Taylor explains that many secularist scholars and nations alike define secularism as an institutional arrangement, consequentially placing a wall between religion and the state without further question. On page 50, he agrees that some form of secular authority is important but questions both Habermas and Rawls as to the rightful extent of its authority in democratic secular nations.

[37] Mendieta, Eduardo et al. *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere.* 2011. p. 50.

[38] Mendieta, Eduardo et al. *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere.* 2011.

[39] Mendieta, Eduardo et al. *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere.* 2011. p. 40-42

[40] Mendieta, Eduardo et al. *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere.* 2011. p. 34-35

[41] Mendieta, Eduardo et al. *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere.* 2011. p. 53. "there is no a priori reason for greater suspicion being directed at it [religious thought]" in the process of public reason.

[42] To be clear, the idea of secularism existed long before the term itself became popular.
Mendieta, Eduardo et al. *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere.* 2011.

[43] Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age.* 2007. p. 3 defines secularity 3.

[44] Asad, Talal. *Formations of the Secular.* p. 3.

[45] Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age.* 2007.

[46] Taylor, Charles. *Varieties of Secularism in a Secular Age.* "Afterword."

[47] Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age.* 2007. Chapter 2. p. 90-145.

[48] Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age.* 2007. p. 159-210.

[49] Asad, Talal. *Formations of the Secular.* Introduction.

[50] Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age.* 2007. Chapter 15. p. 539-593.

[51] Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age.* p. 299-320.

[52] Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age.* 2007. p. 505-524.

[53] Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age.* p. 534.

[54] Find in Secular Age

[55]

[56] Cite the two books that apply here

[57] Asad, Talal. *Formations of the Secular.* p. 79.

[58] Asad, Talal. *Formations of the Secular.* p. 4.

[59] Asad, Talal. *Formations of the Secular.* p. 2-11.

[60] Behavior source and connolly source

[61] Connolly, William E. *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*. Durham: Duke UP, 2008. Print.

[62] As Taylor uses the Ideal Type to describe closed world structures, advancing an argument that disinguishes between belief and unbelief on the grounds of transcendent faith, I find it fitting to use the ideal type, which is actually quite real, to better understand how "open-structures" represent a threat to the very same version of secularism he wishes to protect by incorporating religious thought.

[63] Taylor, Charles *A Secular Age.* 2007 p. 16

[64] Brown, Wendy. Title. Year.

[65] Closed world structure's citation and explanation here.

4. A Broader Understanding of Religion for Post-Secular Democratic Solidarity

i. How does Connolly's perspective compare to those explored thus far?

So Taylor's work informs the Habermasian project in so far as it demonstrates how such a procedural prescription headed by a set of contingencies does not go far enough to equalize theistic and non-theistic positions. In the same breath, however, Taylor's radical redefinition of secularism hosts a series of potentially devastating problems for the system's goals. Engaging William Connolly as a thinker falling somewhere between proceduralists such as Rawls and Habermas and master narrators like Taylor may help settle the dispute. Connolly will serve this predicament in two ways. First, his work modifies the Habermasian project in offering an "ethos of academic engagement" to renegotiate pre-political spiritualities. Second, his assertion that faith and belief are shared amongst religious and nonreligious folk alike will further Michael Reder's call for a broader understanding of religion and demonstrate its worth. From this second point, I will assert that the Habermasian contingencies outlined in chapter one, and problematized in chapter two, can perhaps avoid such a problematization through understanding the mode by which religious and secular individuals share the concept of faith and belief in a discussion of radical and mundane transcendence. Furthermore, by aligning Connolly with Reder, I will assert certain non-theistic existential faiths demonstrate religiosity by formulating quasi-religious structures in the concluding chapter following this discussion of William Connolly. The idea here will not be to redefine religion more broadly, but to rethink the fundamental assumptions of what it means to be faithful, 'secular,' and religious. As such, I seek

not to claim that certain 'secular' comprehensive moral doctrines, such as deep ecology, immanent naturalism, and in another way, neoliberalism are religious doctrines, but rather that they function equivalently in various socio-political contexts.

Recall the debate. Rawls forces individuals to check their comprehensive moral doctrines, or spiritualities at the door upon becoming political. Habermas apparently does not, but under further review the effect of his discourse model presents a two fold schema[66] mirroring the Rawlsian institutional division of church and state. Taylor, on the other hand, differing both in method and prescription, argues inclusion of religious thought outright is necessary for democratic deliberation to legitimately unfold. Like Taylor, Connolly acknowledges the importance that "pre-political" spiritual commitments hold in the democratic process of public reason/communicative action/political discussion. His recent book, *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*, furthers the issues raised here against the Taylorian call for a radical redefinition of secularism while subsequently offering an alternative to the Habermasian project that I believe could satisfy both parties.

I believe this is the case because Connolly does two things quite well. In what I called an elitist reading of the liberal democracy, Taylor seeks to rethink the concept of secularism and the role of religion in the contemporary democratic state by addressing intellectual and political elites in a detailed narrative. On this view, Taylor targets an elite audience. The idea here is a new definition of secularism (actively defined in lieu of statically institutional), is hoped to motivate a new mode of democratic participation amongst religious citizens. As it gains momentum amongst elites, it should 'trickle down' to the general public; and idea consistent with his own interpretation of secularism in the first place.[67] As this paper moves to reconcile this sort of an

approach with that of the proceduralists, it is important to keep in mind the value of both perspectives.

From Habermas, it is evident that democracy is in crisis, and legitimation must deal with the deliberative procedure originating in the citizenry. Once this procedure is fine-tuned, its will should then be passed along to the political parties and interest groups thought to actually shape governmental processes and ethical commitments, creating a legitimate the democratic state. From Taylor, we find that the fundamental assumptions central to the contemporary secular-liberal democracy need be brought into question; that it is not enough to change democratic mechanisms to better reflect equality, freedom, and fraternity: a rethinking of fundamental secular assumptions must precede a realignment of democratic procedure. It is at this point the introduction of William Connolly is most necessary. In what is perhaps considered a 'post-modernist' critique of liberal democracy, I will argue that Connolly hybridizes the two preceding *perspectives* (not necessarily the substance contained therein) such that both are necessary to legitimate democratic discussions. As such, Connolly details a procedural concept of cross-creedal deliberation complete with an ethos of academic engagement hoping to equalize the value of religious and 'non-religious' thought, and ultimately serving to reestablish a democratic solidarity in a given nation. This procedural feature, I will argue, is motivated by Connolly's task to rethink the fundamental liberal-secular assumption that secularists operate outside the landscape of faith, belief, and transcendence.

Before getting into Connolly, it is important to point out how I will cover the above mentioned features of his philosophical outlook. There is an inherent danger when working with 'post-modernism,' perhaps most generally this danger lies in forgoing some of the traditional

normative practices of political theorists in favor of a political theory which strides unashamedly across many aspects of what conventional political theory may stratify into distinct discussions. Certain features of Connolly's theory may stride so far across traditional concepts that his theory could be subject to many contending points; seeing as he both reexamines fundamental democratic assumptions to establish his own, and then constructs an elaborate procedural argument based in these newer, more favorable assumptions. It is also difficult to place Connolly into various traditional philosophical categories. Transcendence and immanence, relativism and absolutism, belief and unbelief, and even our understanding of time is called into question by this 'immanent naturalist.[68]'

With that said, I would like to take a look at Connolly's recent work, which speaks directly to the American legitimation crisis. Though my own thesis does not target a specific case, and instead locates a problem central to democratic theory in general, the American case provides Connolly a platform through which he will develop the above summarized arguments. Moreover, the examples he offers with respect to the evangelical-neoliberal coalition will be formative in the sense that they offer a pragmatic example of just what sort of procedure is necessary for cross-credal coalitions to formulate. Two important notes here. First, Connolly does not find truth in the message of the cross-creedal coalition formulated on the conservative right, instead asserting that their procedural discourse has given way to a strong cross-credal coalition. Second, it is in his assessment of precisely what value links the neo-liberal and evangelical-fundamentalist coalition that he locates the seeds from which his own argument will develop. This view seeking to offer a new 'common' value of tragedy to motivate a cross-creedal discussion amongst non-fundamentalists, and those who are not neo-liberal. Before

contextualizing his theorem as such, it is important to first understand Connolly's perspective, and not simply how it differs from others. To understand Connolly's prescription for the legitimation crisis, it is important first to take a look at what fundamental liberal-secular assumptions he wishes to call into question. These alternative assumptions will then shape the procedure by which Connolly feels the democratic state can be legitimated.

ii. Elite-Pluralist Hybridization: Alternative Assumptions give way to an Alternative Procedure

Perhaps the most salient feature of Connolly's alternative assumptions centers on the concept of time. "Time as becoming" thus brings into question the Kantian notion of linear moral progress. This sort of "chrono-time" takes for granted the relatively minimal capacity human agency has in its quest to realize its own stated ends. The truth, for Connolly, is the dictates of viewing the "world as becoming" provide a platform for understanding human agency as merely one minimal force shaping the world. Nature has many subsequent forces whose power can abruptly halt the direction of human linear 'progress,' and whose interference is entirely agent of a force outside of human manipulation. This is not to say that these forces do not collide; for Connolly, this collision is the world as becoming. Various levels of agency, each shaping some part of the world as we experience it, produce our contemporary disposition; which for Connolly takes the shape of a nearly inevitable complex problematic.

If time is becoming as summarized above, however, it seems impossible for the products of human agency to promise any progress at all if time is not linear. This contention appears to be fair enough, however it has missed the point. For Connolly, the politics in a world of becoming

must be wary of the disposition of human agency amongst many other forces of agency that are perhaps utterly inexplicable. For Connolly, a world of becoming perpetuates time as becoming. It is here that a positive trajectory is not promised, but encouraged. Although this view maintains time is not linear, and is infiltrated and shaped various agencies outside the realm of human manipulation, it remains the case that a positive trajectory is possible so long as the actual tragic nature of the world can be understood in these terms. Viewing the world as becoming, and time as such, means accepting that a providential reading of this-worldly things has become obsolete.

A brief digression is required here. If one views the world through the providence of the transcendent forces to which his (individual comprehensive moral or existential faith) doctrine refers, then he has only the responsibility to do as his doctrine dictates, with no care for the future of this world. If, on the other hand, he recognizes the fundamental tragedy of the human disposition, or the idea that existential certainty leads to existential resentment,[69] then one values this tragedy, and his actions discourse such that the future of this world is important, and in part shaped by human actions. Seeing as human agency arguably gains momentum at the macro level, state governments thought to advance the will of the people represent a 'glimmer of hope' when they can legitimately do so. The huge asterisks here being that this legitimacy rides on a procedure informed by the alternative assumptions advanced under Connolly's theory of the world as becoming.

In *Shock Therapy, Dramatization, and Practical Wisdom,* Connolly does a fair amount of work to demonstrate just what sort of public reason he advocates when compared to the existing modes of Kantian reason. I find it necessary to summarize the argument made here, although I will ultimately pull more from the *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style* text to provide

more detail as to what this procedure actually looks like. The comparison to Kantian modes of inquiry are important to Connolly because they have become "culturally entrenched, even among those who do not confess Kantianism.[70]" Furthermore, Connolly believes that Kantian modes of inquiry

> function to inhibit creative, exploratory experiments in thought and practice, to squeeze explanatory projects into too narrow a compass, to diminish our awareness of the diverse ways the nonhuman world enters into human life and affects our attachment to existence, to define instrumental reason too sharply, and to obscure a needed dimension of ethical life...this makes it more difficult than otherwise to pull presumptive care for the diversity of life and the fecundity of the earth to the forefront of practice...[and] distracts attention from our participation in a larger world of becoming that is in itself replete with differential powers of creativity.

Despite these obvious contentions, Connolly admires that the Kantian mode of inquiry is characterized by a fundamental care for this world, and forces others to explain themselves clearly. With a spirit of academic engagement, Connolly now has proposed his task. With a great amount of care for this world, he continues to develop an argument that is in one sense against preexisting episteme and in another responsible to explain its alternative assumptions through these existing modes.

Connolly defines four crucial alternative assumptions of his procedure for public reason, the "post-Kantian mode of public reason.[71]" These assumptions are clearly alternated as a product of his understanding of the world as becoming. After understanding the alterations made in these three assumptions, the post-Kantian mode of public reason will take shape. At that point, I will give a more detailed assessment of the procedure he offers as being guided by this new form of public reason. All the while, it is important to keep in mind that this procedure, and these reexamined assumptions seek to validate a legitimate democratic process, and I will argue can

only be applicable to a post-secular liberal democratic state. Thus Connolly's work will inform

this thesis in two salient ways. First, by offering a viable alternative mode of democratic

deliberation, which I argue further legitimates democratic governance. Second, though his

reexamined assumptions, Connolly does a nice job of determining just what distinguishes the

'post'-secular from the secular.

The first assumption Connolly wishes to revise in Kantian public reason is its concept of

time as linear progress. Instead of viewing time linearly progressing towards certain human

developmental ends (perhaps of freedom), post-Kantian public reason views time as a

multifaceted complex of differential agencies each acting within the confines of their respective

origins to shape the world as we experience it. Human progress cannot be linear, because it is

infiltrated by so many knowable and unknowable agencies outside of the human context. As

summarized at the onset of this section, this concept of time is central to Connolly's idea of the

"world of becoming;" but it also plays a major role in influencing the substance of the

subsequent assumptions whose reexamination has lead Connolly to call for a post-Kantian mode

of public reasoning.

Time as becoming is the first major amendment to the Kantian mode of public reason.

Next, Connolly turns to the will. To rid society of 'existential resentment,' which is perhaps best

characterized in the tendency of its society to remain closed to competing comprehensive moral

doctrines in order to promote their own, Connolly believes the will should be

> neither an eternal expression of suprasensible freedom, nor reducible to the
> determinations of efficient causality, nor the carrier of an original taint of sin." Rather, it
> must be decriminalized in the first instance, as part of a larger effort to overcome the
> culture of existential resentment that so easily grows up within it. The will is here
> conceived as an emergent, biocultural formation, which bears traces and marks of that

from which it emerged but is not reducible to them. Just as life need not be devalued because it has evolved from nonlife and is now irreducible to it.[72]

From this, it is quite clear how the will should be reconciled if democratic legitimation is the goal. The will now exists in two dimensions.[73] In the first dimension consists of the incipient tendencies we feel when reacting to a given issue. These are normally dictates of the experiences of our political socialization. This dimension then, exists seemingly at odds with the second, or the limited capacity we each possess to "veto" our incipient tendencies, or our limited capacity to actually act as egalitarians, or the fact that no one could actually be expected to adopt an "original position.[74]" This is the tragedy of the human position; that the will one possesses exists in one act as his intuitive reasoning, or is derived from what he is certain about, and as his calculative ability, or is derived from what he understands to be best for all in his society.

In addition to rethinking time and the will, Connolly also calls for a new understanding of the ethical and citizen responsibility. The latter assumption is quite simple, and draws from what develops in the former. An individual is responsible to himself and others to the extent that his judgement should not utilize presumptions (socialized by conduit of their respective comprehensive moral doctrine) that are undecipherable to other lifeworlds. In the former assumption, Connolly overplays the connection of politics and ethics as a product of the time as becoming. Because time is framed in such a way that it is infiltrated by various agencies outside of the human capacity, ethical 'progress' is not viewed linearly (as progressing). Instead, the progress of human ethical development is tragic. Linear progress suggests that ethical concerns have been increasingly good at satisfying society, however tragic ethical progress assumes there is no absolute, nor clearly relativistic mode of identifying just what the political ethic of a society should be. As such, Connolly advocates a constant process of discussion and application to

which ethical concerns are central, terming this concept an "ethic of cultivation [of political morality].[75]" For a political ethic to be legitimatly manifest, this ethos must take priority over the establishment of a universal moral law even though its goal is to establish an adaptable version of such a morality. As such, Connolly suggests it is likely that a government enlisting such an ethos would cycle through periods of the cultivation of ethics and the experience of an absolutely legitimate political ethic. As time becomes, however, what was once absolutely legitimate will be influenced by various agents, and will thus need to be reestablished through the same procedure.

Thus Connolly reexamines the Kantian mode of public reason such that "the will [is viewed] as [a] biocultural emergent, an ethic of cultivation [determines legitimate solidarity], a world of becoming [contextualizes experience], periodic dwelling [is inevitable], presumptive responsiveness [is discouraged]... [and] attachment to this world[76]" is key. But is this argument cycle in the sense that it both professes relativism while asserting that an absolute truth will ultimately be realized by the virtue of this process? William Connolly thinks not, and I am inclined to agree with him here. The 'absolute truth' will never be absolute unless contextualized by that specific time and place. As time is not linear, and place is contingent upon its timeliness, a given 'absolute' political ethic will only reflect the ethical conflicts, concerns, and struggles that its respective ethic of cultivation has established. The theorem is also not relativistic. Connolly argues this is because his theory seeks to overcome forces it has deemed recurrent, does not automatically accept normal existing practices, and frequently commends "militant engagement with prevailing forces.[77]" Partially in the perspective from which his theory discourses, what I have called a hybrid elitist-pluralistic perspective, Connolly has addressed the elitist schools by reexamining fundamental assumptions of traditional public reason as well as

the pluralist schools by offering a procedure by which a more legitimate state can be realized

through the coalition and assemblage building ultimately thought to establish an accurate

political ethic. But what does this procedure actually look like?

In *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style* Connolly details the procedure referred to

above as an 'ethic of cultivation,' or this is at least my take on the matter. What is found in the

brief essay from which the information above was extracted is mainly a comparative approach,

pointing out similar tendencies (care for this world, commitment to explainability of message)

and various differences (time, ethics, responsibility, the will). All of these features are detailed in

The World as Becoming, however the above comparative discussion is sufficient in describing

these. As this is a solidarity thesis focusing first on perspectives, and then how these perspectives

influence the substantive aspects contained therein. After examining Connolly's hybridized

perspective, seeking to address both elitist and pluralist schools from the former perspective to

understand how his fundamental assumptions alter conventions, it is now important to

understand how the pre-political variant of Kantian modes of public reason change procedurally

before concluding that this vision promises a unifying political ethic that subsequent thinkers

have been unable to offer. Because Connolly seeks to challenge so mans presumptive

conventions, his procedure takes an almost 'pre-political' form, although I would argue this is

only one facet of public reason; it seems that his post-Kantian mode of public reason could take

many forms, including distinctly political ones. What I find important is the pre-political

procedure, which seeks to build coalitions and meaningful assemblages across creedal lines. One

final note on what I am calling the 'elitist' side of Connolly's thought: more of his fundamental

alternative assumptions will be explored as this chapter develops, including those of

transcendence/immanence, belief/unbelief, and providence/tragedy.

But just what sort of procedure does Connolly see developing from his alternative

hybridized perspective? Connolly wishes to develop meaningful connections across creedal

lines, but this is an altogether difficult task which is already presupposed by a complex

problematic. This problematic will be exemplified through Connolly's example in American

politics in the following section, but the sort of complex problematical he describes easily

applies to various degrees to any post-secular democracy, or a democracy whose citizenry is

compromised of a complex of religious and quasi-religious existential faiths/comprehensive

moral doctrines. In such a post-secular arrangement, religious/quasi-religious reasons, though

perhaps frowned upon politically, cannot be separated from political public reason. For Connolly,

it is time to start treating them as such.

Perhaps it is best to begin at what Connolly sees as the 'ends' of the procedure he

describes, although it is admittedly cyclical by nature and thus cycles in and out of two domains.

Connolly hopes that an apparent absolute moral truth will be established, and able to legitimately

govern the states discourse; but the process of legitimation differs substantially from those

offered by Habermas and Rawls. Like these two, Connolly believes that a process of political

discussion must presuppose any absolutely legitimate government orientation; however by

including religious reasons equilaterally I argue his is the only procedure that takes the post-

secular inclusion project far enough without overstating nor understating the value of religious

reasoning.

Thus the ends are justified by the means, but what are the means exactly? We already know they must be dominated by an ethic of cultivation and responsibility to understand the position of the other. We also know that Connolly assumes that manifesting a democratic cross-creedal solidarity means dealing with pluralism through the formulation of democratic coalitions.[78] But just how are we supposed to formulate such coalitions with individuals whose comprehensive moral doctrines dictate a lifeworld vastly different than others prospective to the same cohort? It is here that the pre-political post-Kantian mode of public reason can be most meaningfully observed. Connolly believes that existential faiths, or comprehensive moral visions, are loosely composed in three salient parts. Each existential faith has a corresponding method, sensibility, and creed; and between the substance and salient features of a given existential faith, a spirituality is comprised.[79] Connolly presents a process for negotiating this pre-political spirituality so multifaceted pluralities of believers can incorporate such a spirituality across creedal and methodological lines. This process is underscored by an understanding of existential faiths as a triad. This triad also represents an existential faiths "problematic.[80]" To create a cross-creedal assemblage, the pre-political spiritualities composed of this triad must locate a common sensibility that resonates with the elements of faith and method instituted by that respective existential faith. This sensibility may be extraneous to any of the specific triads, and may translate politically into a contemporary political issue. The idea is that this common sensibility will nonetheless be assimilated and in part govern how this lifeworld (and its respective cohorts) experience spirituality.[81]

Thus these extraneous elements can enter specific triads at the point of sensibility to become incorporated within them. After entering, they loop continuously and unpredictably into,

out of, and throughout the triad. Entering at the point of sensibility, this spirituality is absorbed

by the specific faiths creed and understood through its method. It then alters that faiths sensibility

of its position within the rest of the world, manifesting a coherent paradigm through which

political activism and public reason can discourse across traditional barricades.[82]

For Connolly the point is different creeds can be united in a pluralistic universe without

jeopardizing faith; and this alteration in sensibility encouraged by a common spirituality holds

the potential to reunite competing lifeworlds towards a common imagined future. He believes

this spirituality speaks across creedal lines to sensibilities of a diverse congregation. Whereas

Habermas' procedure speaks to a political discourse, ultimately manifesting a strikingly similar

problematical as Rawls, Connolly's understanding of faith as universal motivates him to describe

a process of public reason cognizant of pre-political spiritual commitments. Here religious and

areligious folks alike come together by virtue of their own methods and creeds to discuss the

existential direction their government should pursue.

If Habermas were to abide by a similar assumption; that we are all holders of faith, I see

his dichotomous contingency being rearranged as follows. Here Habermas forces religious

persons to submit to the authority of the secular, and mandating that secularists have no business

in judging faith (because for Habermas, they are not faithful in a religious-like sense). Instead,

with a view that secularists too are holders of faith, and in the religious-like sense, the

contingency for entering the process of public reason would be reframed as: secularists must take

religious persons seriously once they realize they too are holders of a faith which can only be

contingently propound. Religious persons, then, would also have to take secularists seriously as

the various secular faiths believe in something higher than what is simply immanent and

political. The morality of secularist existential faiths are rooted in something deeper than the politically mundane, and should be respected equally as such.

I would now like to conclude my assessment of William Connolly in the proximity of the legitimation crisis by contextualizing his theory. This will be a nice way to further understand the theory. All the while, it is important to keep in mind the preceptive differences employed by Connolly. In addition, it will be important to pay attention to some of the additional alternative assumptions that will be further developed in the final section of this chapter as these assumptions largely thematize Connolly's specific position.

iii. Contextualizing the Theory: How does a value of Tragedy displace that of Providence?

Connolly argues a coalition of evangelical Christians and neoliberal capitalists has generated a resonance machine through a shared providential perspective of God and market in contemporary America. This perspective links those of lower socio-economic classes with a set of neoliberal market values even though these values are often to their own economic determent. The providential perspective is key here. It resonates in the evangelical subsets by upholding the belief that divine intervention will save the "faithful," and in the neoliberal capitalists by upholding the free, unmediated market is divine in itself. This unregulated market is divine in the sense its discourse should not be manipulated for the best existential outcome to be achieved. The providential perspective does not only links these two chords, however. Furthermore, it inflicts a twofold disregard for the future; curtailing ecological and egalitarian concerns.[83] Here the problem located by Taylor, namely that an increasing hegemony is coupled with a decrease in

democratic solidarity, is furthered in the sense that a lack of democratic solidarity has lead to

actual, devastating results. As arguably the most powerful, influential nations in the world,

contemporary liberal-democracies would do well to establish a democratic solidarity such that

large-scale developmental concerns can be addressed. A democratic solidarity is key in changing

the trajectory of a given nation; however enlisting a value of providence requires one simply to

discover the proper doctrine, and think no further than within the confines of that doctrine in a

literal sense.

Thus for Connolly, this providential disregard for human intervention is dangerous for the

very goals of liberal secularism. This linkage represents a powerful resonance machine on the

right, necessitating an immediate counter-movement on the left. A lesson in this spiritual

commitment across creedal lines thus needs to be learned on the "left" as well. A value of

tragedy is thus juxtaposed against the providential to begin fathoming such a counter-resonance

machine. A tragic position maintains responsibility for the future, because it is underscored by a

belief this future remains transcendently undetermined.[84] As argued above, understanding

Connolly's call to action will inform both the Habermasian and Taylorian positions.

The American left remains unorganized and unable to generate a resonance machine of its

own to unify its increasingly diverse "existential faiths[85]" for Connolly. He believes a tragic

perspective of history and imagined future can unite and mobilize a coalition around a spiritual

goal common to all (if not most all) spiritualities. The existing capitalist assemblage has done an

excellent job of linking pre-political spiritualities with political activism, largely due to its

successful usage of popular media.[86] Its left-sided equivalent has failed to do so. The task of the

academy, as Connolly sees it, is then to identify a pre-political spirituality in a similar manor,

across creedal lines of theistic and non-theistic faiths. Before detailing this abstract procedure, it

is important to understand the fundamental assumptions of secular-liberal democracy which

Connolly wishes to rethink; namely the notion that secularists are unbelieving, merely political

actors. Under the traditional view, secularists are merely humanists, or those who believe all

existential truths can be explained immanently and can only be manifest in the political practice

of egalitarianism.[87]

Connolly believes we are all holders of faith, and generates a theory of radical and

mundane transcendence in *A World of Becoming* to exemplify the concept. Though those who are

traditionally considered faithful see the world as governed by a transcendent being, those of us

who are not theistically religious also hold a transcendent faith, albeit mundane by comparison.

For this reason, Connolly argues even existential faiths normatively confined to immanent

frameworks do indeed believe in transcendence in the latter case. For Connolly, "too many

devotees of radical transcendence, perhaps impressed with the productive power of

transcendence as they experience it, miss this spiritual intensification as we [non-theists]

experience it."[88] The problem with this for Connolly is "it is precisely at this juncture that

generous devotees of both traditions can foster positive political assemblages,"[89] an idea that I

will trace throughout the remainder of this chapter in a look at the connection between

Connolly's prescribed procedural solution and call for a radical reexamination of fundamental

secular-liberal assumptions.

Thus, for Connolly, we are all believers in our respective existential faiths,[90] with faith

being used in a deliberate sense. As such, our faith, or the truths we hold without immanent

reasons, are what unite us. More specifically, faith is held by most, if not all of us. As such, no

line should be drawn between religious and areligious camps on behalf of belief or faith. This is important to understand, because it is a crucial first step in moving toward a responsible democratic solidarity. But the absence of legitimate solidarity cuts deeper than political legitimacy alone for Connolly. Without renegotiating the pre-political spiritual conditions of our existence across creedal lines, contemporary politics lack a real possibility of ecological and egalitarian meliorism, however this idea can be expanded in any number of directions. The thought underscoring this idea; that a tragic orientation to the world allows for human actions to shape the ultimate discourse of this-worldly things, is perhaps most important here. If we recognize our past as tragic, then our future is equally so. Connolly uses the idea of tragedy deliberately. The human condition is tragic because it can never realize any ultimate reality at the whims of its own sensibility. Instead, only through an inclusive discussion of the contemporary complex problematical can a variant of absolute morality be achieved. Existential resentment bleeds from those sensibilities who see theirs as a providentially, and thus inherently unquestionable and uncompromiseable doctrine. When these doctrines do not lead to a divine perfection, or become obviously fallible, individuals begin to resent their existence and exemplify this through various behaviors.[91]

Connolly presents a process for negotiating this pre-political spirituality so multifaceted pluralities of believers can incorporate such a spirituality across creedal and methodological lines. This process is underscored by an understanding of existential faiths as a triad. This triad represents an existential faiths "problematic," and is triangulated between creed, method, and sensibility.[92] For the counter resonance assemblage, the pre-political spirituality to which Connolly refers is a tragic perspective concerned with the future of ecology and egalitarianism.

This spirituality is governed by elements of faith and method extraneous to any specific triad, however these extraneous elements can enter specific triads at the point of sensibility to become incorporated within them. After entering, they loop continuously and unpredictably into, out of, and throughout the triad. Entering at the point of sensibility, this spirituality is absorbed by the specific faiths method and understood through its creed. It then alters that faiths sensibility of its position within the rest of the world, manifesting a coherent paradigm through which political activism and public reason can discourse across traditional barricades.[93]

For Connolly the point is different creeds can be united in a pluralistic universe without jeopardizing faith; and this alteration in sensibility encouraged by a common spirituality holds the potential to reunite competing lifeworlds towards a common imagined future. He believes this spirituality speaks across creedal lines to sensibilities of a diverse congregation. Whereas Habermas' procedure speaks to a political discourse, ultimately manifesting a strikingly similar process as does Rawls, Connolly's understanding of faith as universal motivates him to describe a process of public reason cognizant of pre-political spiritual commitments. Here religious and areligious folks alike come together by virtue of their own methods and creeds to discuss the existential direction their government should pursue.

Given this difference, I would equate the Habermasian dichotomous contingencies to Connolly's "ethos of academic engagement."[94] To a degree, this ethos represents the Habermasian call for us to "speak to one another instead of at each other." The major difference between the two, however, is also important to understand. Habermas' contingencies maintain a prioritization of the secular over the religious, asking the secular directly to tolerate, or to take its religious counterparts seriously. Connolly, however, divorces this prioritization by asking each

side to recognize the fallibility of its own faith. In other words, Habermas asks areligious camps to take religious camps more seriously, whereas Connolly asks both camps to take their own existential contingencies less seriously. This opens up a meaningful and inclusive dialogue.

One of the critical lessons contained by Connolly's work is the idea of existential faith. No matter where one falls on the religious-areligious spectrum, each subscribes to a set of beliefs that can only be held in faith. There is, after all, no exhaustively accurate and thus entirely proven vision of the world. Michael Reder's essay, *How Far can Faith and Reason be Distinguished,* given in a conference on Habermas's essay, *An Awareness of What is Missing,* deserves some attention here. Within it lies a call for "a broader understanding of religion," and it is here I believe Connolly's idea of existential faith could be realigned.

First, I must admit, along with Habermas in one way and perhaps Taylor in another, that a large scale redefinition of religion aiming to include many secularist world views may be overstepping the task of philosophy. With this said, understanding the various functions of religions as autonomous of their historical narratives may serve to solidify the point that we are all subscribes to an existential faith of one sort or another. As it has become clear Connolly is the hero in this reading of the democratic legitimation crisis, his work posing a real potential to unite religious and areligious constituencies, I find it necessary now to input a perspective tying his work to Reder.

Reder does an excellent job of pointing to the shortcomings underscoring the Habermasian project. Namely, Habermas's understanding of religion, though admittedly functional, is nonetheless incomplete. Religion functions in many ways. Reder's observance honors its role as the dictator of a given ultimate reality, source of an absolute truth, supplier of

corresponding valuations of good and bad, and ability to allow its subscribers to cope with contingency and thematize the discussion of transcendence and immanence.[95] For Taylor, however, religion must also reference a transcendent, and not simply thematize the discussion of transcendence and immanence.[96] This precise fact leads Taylor to distinguish theists from non-theists along the lines of belief and faith. Other thinkers, Habermas included, rely on similar assumptions: yet these distinctions do not resonate with Connolly's understanding of faith and belief. Why is this the case?

Connolly believes we are all holders of faith, and thus generates a theory of radical and mundane transcendence in *A World of Becoming*. Though those who are traditionally considered faithful see the world as governed by a transcendent being, those of us who are not theistically religious also hold a transcendent faith, albeit mundane by comparison. For this reason, Connolly argues even existential faiths normatively confined to immanent frameworks believe in transcendence in the latter case. For Connolly, "Too many devotees of radical transcendence, perhaps impressed with the productive power of transcendence as they experience it, miss this spiritual intensification as we [non-theists] experience it."[97] The problem with this for Connolly is "it is precisely at this juncture that generous devotees of both traditions can foster positive political assemblages,"[98] as explicated above.

When this crossing of immanence and transcendence is neglected by moderns, the press for contemporary democratic solidarity suffers a troubling blow. Acknowledging the linkage between mundane and radical transcendence is precisely where an inclusive democratic deliberative process can unfold and establish a political identity across creedal boundaries. When the various secularist existential faiths can see themselves as the practitioners of quasi-religions,

taking other religions seriously should be structured into their communicative processes. Because their own quasi-religious structure does not exhaustively explain away contingency, there is something mysterious within their own creed and for that reason some degree of mystery should be tolerated in parallel structures. What is important when pressing for solidarity, when legitimating post-secular democracies, is not the fallibility of our own existential commitments, but the degree to which we can learn from others and mobilize a shared spiritual vision. From Connolly's own perspective, this means agreeing the earth is being degraded, and income distribution blanks out large segments of diverse socio-economic groupings, and action should be taken to curtail these things across creedal delineations.

Where Reder's broader call comes back into play is somewhere along these lines. For religious and areligious structures to take the other's perspective seriously, both must listen to arguments informed by the other's existential faith. This process is difficult, as expressed by Connolly, as it seems in routine cases neither side would have the other categorized as similar enough to his own to agree in certain spiritual dimensions. For Reder, a grammatical correction could ease the process described by Connolly as an "ethos of academic engagement." Perhaps with a broader understanding of religion through a functional analogy rather than outright equivalency, quasi-religious structures could coincide with religious structures to generate a fraternal discussion pragmatically. A quasi-religious structure provides a morality, political motivation, method to cope with contingency, and understanding of what is transcendent whether it be radical or mundane.[99]

Let's conclude with taking Rawlsian political liberalism in general, say in the American formulation, as an example. Though I will be describing an ideal type here and it is possible there

is no actual individual possessing such an existential faith, the example should serve in defining

quasi-religious structures. To be clear: the idea of quasi-religious structures will be developed in

more concrete example in the concluding chapter of this thesis, the example of political

liberalism serves merely to introduce the concept. For now, the idea of quasi-religious structures

serves simply to understand the assumption that secularist/areligious lifeworlds can indeed

posses a morality that is seated in something deeper than the political.

The very fundamentals of liberalism necessarily conceive a comprehensive concept of

"the truth of the whole" as a relative truth. Because of this, reciprocity is considered the utmost

virtue of the people. Moreover, various concrete moral valuations are employed by the liberal

system to protect its concept of the whole, or to protect its existential formulation of truth as

relative. To protect this existential truth liberalism must create for itself a physical polity that

prioritizes the protection of diversity. The liberal creed both supplies the truth of the whole and a

road map for its achievement. Within this doctrine, a series of moral valuations are set forth

(liberty, equality, fraternity, and property or individualism). When individual citizens employ

these values in their judgement processes, they are acting virtuously. But the reason their practice

is considered virtuous is not merely because they abide by the liberal moral values, but more

accurately in practicing these virtues they are conducting their lives with the aim of achieving the

ultimate good; the preservation of their respective whole as liberals, as holders of faith in relative

truth, and as the protectors of diversity.

In as much as I understand this example to be ideal, it does a nice job of showing where

transcendence resides within the formation of this quasi-religious structure. This notion of the

transcendent in a mundane sense is exemplified by the intangible structure of liberalism. Its

morality, its coping mechanism for contingency, its ultimate good and its form of truth comprehensively generate a transcendent. Relative truth, equality, freedom; these things cannot be experienced physically or normally, they are ideals and values that are impossible to define or experience without a coherent, immanent lifeworld structure. This is where immanence and transcendence cross on both religious and areligious sides. Religion must offer some immanent structure to reference its transcendent, just as areligious structures host a degree of mundane mystery that can be understood as none other than a variant of transcendence. Not only does liberalism offer a mundane transcendent, but additionally exhibits the qualities of a religion as an aggregate. If a similar functional understanding can be applied to various "existential faiths" formerly considered "secular," post-secular pluralism appears to be a matrix of faiths whether quasi-religious or religious in origin. Other examples perhaps reside in "deep ecology," and in another way in Connolly's "immanent naturalism."

What, then, are the common values uniting existential faiths in this pre-political negotiation? The best way to think through this perhaps begins with assessing the existing political assemblage to which Connolly is polemical. The unity between neoliberal capitalists and evangelical Christians is undoubtedly grounded in a shared providential image. Though the latter transcends radically and the former merely in the mundane, there is a shared value here. Some agency other than human not only exists, but exists infallibly. As such, an "ethos of academic engagement" belies the value of providence uniting these existential faiths. Such a providential transcendent cannot be questioned. It is de facto the dictator of reality. For the post-secular inclusion project to thrive, providential values must be foregone.

Valuing providence is extremely problematic for Connolly. The post-secular inclusion project does not only call for something deeper than the values of discourse ethics expressed by Habermas and of the liberal trinity expressed by Taylor. In addition, it must oppose providence. What value curtails the ability of existential faiths in the above example to remain unconcerned with future endeavors? Lets recall a positive example to identify the common value necessary for the post-secular inclusion project favored by this thesis. A look at Connolly's "immanent naturalism" and imagined future shows how a value of tragedy better serves the post-secular. The triadic nature of any given existential faith demonstrates how a value of tragedy provides for an "ethos of academic engagement" to bridge creedal walls. Whether our transcendent is radical or mundane, valuing tragedy means accepting responsibility for the future. Though we cannot determine it, we realize nothing immanent nor transcendent can either. This means our actions in part shape an unpredictable future. Thus imagining and discussing a spirituality under which politics can discourse is a responsibility for religious and quasi-religious actors alike. For Connolly's existential faith, "immanent naturalism," ecological sustainability and egalitarianism are central sensibilities. Many faiths, theistic and otherwise, can agree to the importance of these sensibilities. By enlisting the value of tragedy, the polity actually generates a shared spirituality and a complementary set of policies to materialize this spirituality by including constituencies excluded in Rawlsian and Habermasian procedures.

It is pretty clear just what sort of spirituality Connolly wishes to manifest, but the value of tragedy is independent of his vision. Though the socio-political values of the liberal trinity (Taylor) and procedural values of discourse ethics (Habermas) are important developments, the tragic serves to anchor both of these values in a system spanning creedal lines. This is necessary in a productive post-secular state. The tragic allows us to see our own position as contingent, and

the future as unpredictable. By utilizing discourse ethics in a quest for solidarity, a common tragic value allows us to imagine our own desirable future and reconcile it with futures desired by others. If we are tragically linked, we now understand the weight of the discussion in which we must participate. Post-secular legitimacy is not only justified by an inclusive popular sovereignty, but moreover by the ability it has to discuss the pre-political spiritualities directing its politics. This means faiths sidelined by Rawls, and in another way by Habermas, are included in the discussion; but not necessarily as expressed by Taylor. For Connolly, religious thought is to be respected in public reason in so far as it is equal in negotiating the spiritual direction of the state. In governmental processes, however, this spirit should retain the values enlisted by Habermas in discourse ethics to mobilize policies complementary of this cross-creedal spirituality.

The post-secular democratic state can no longer afford to ignore the imbrications of faith and reason. A common history, analogous function, and the structural necessity of inclusion speak to this end. For a contemporary solidarity to be manifest, the traditional delineation of "secular" and "religion" needs to be rethought. A cross-creedal dialogue must be opened up for the legitimation crisis to be answered, and inclusion project satisfied. This applies to Habermas and the political, Taylor and the historical, and Connolly and the spiritual. The future of the post-secular is bright for many great minds are dedicated to encouraging progress in its direction, and away from the secular past yielding democratic crisis. To value the future, the post-secular must acknowledge life as tragedy, not chaos nor providence. We cannot predict the future; however we can unite to take actions correlative of our imagination of it. In the following chapter, I would

like to conclude with three examples religiousness in what are normally considered areligious

knowledge structures: immanent naturalism, deep ecology, and neo-liberalism.

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[66] The principle of Universalization and the necessity of structured argument.
Habermas, Jürgen. *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1990. Print. Chapter 3.

[67] Secular Age, Taylor shows how secularization and its defining evolutionary features cycle through the elite, and then take some years before resonating in the general public.

[68] Immanent Naturalism explained.

[69] This occurs in almost all Connolly sources reviewed, find the one with the most detail and cite it here.

[70] Page 95

[71] Page 109 of Joys of secularism

[72] Page 109 of Joys

[73] Joys 110

[74] As contended in Rawls in chapter one.

[75] Page 111 of Joys

[76] Page 113 of Joys

[77] Joys of secularism, page 114

[78] Joys, find page

[79] Same as footnote 22

[80] "A problematic consists of a method, an existential creed congenial to it, and the sensibilities attached to both..."
Connolly, William E. *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*. Durham: Duke UP, 2008. Print. p. 77.

[81] Capitalism

[82] "Immanent Naturalism" expresses this concept for Connolly.
Connolly, William E. *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*. Durham: Duke UP, 2008. Print. p. 79-81.

[83] Connolly, William E. *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*. Durham: Duke UP, 2008. Print. p. 35-37.

[84] Connolly, William E. *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*. Durham: Duke UP, 2008. Print. p. 119-144.

[85] Connolly, William E. *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*. Durham: Duke UP, 2008. Print. Throughout.

[86] in connolly

[87] Taylor, sec age

[88] Connolly, William E. *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*. Durham: Duke UP, 2008. Print. p.75

[89] Connolly, William E. *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*. Durham: Duke UP, 2008. Print. p.75

[90] Connolly, William E. *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*. Durham: Duke UP, 2008. Print. Throughout. Special attention to the third chapter.

[91] Just cite it from Joys.

[92] "A problematic consists of a method, an existential creed congenial to it, and the sensibilities attached to both..." Connolly, William E. *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*. Durham: Duke UP, 2008. Print. p. 77.

[93] "Immanent Naturalism" expresses this concept for Connolly. Connolly, William E. *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*. Durham: Duke UP, 2008. Print. p. 79-81.

[94] "ethos of academic engagement," Connolly, William E. *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*. Durham: Duke UP, 2008. Print. p. 88-92.

[95] Habermas, Jürgen, Michael Reder, and Josef Schmidt. *An Awareness of What Is Missing: Faith and Reason in a Post-secular Age*. Cambridge, U.K.: Polity, 2010. Print. Chapter 4. p. 40-44.

[96] Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age.* 2007. Introduction.

[97] Connolly, William E. *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*. Durham: Duke UP, 2008. Print. p.75

[98] Connolly, William E. *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*. Durham: Duke UP, 2008. Print. p.75

[99] From Mike Reder in Role of religion in the secular state.

5. Findings: "Secular" Comprehensive Moral Doctrines that Exemplify Quasi-Religions.

Before exemplifying the concept of quasi-religious structures, I would like to briefly restate the concept abstractly. A functional comparison of "religious" and "non-religious" groups should hold in political contexts; however these contexts are not as strictly political as one may think. Political contexts include the form of political participation central to this thesis: public reason. Whether the discourse of this action takes place in the classroom, home, market place, or any other of the possible locations, it is at its core political and intended to be considered as such in light of understanding quasi-religious structures as equal to "religious" ones. Additionally, my task is not to take aim at coining a new phrase, even in political contexts. The value of understanding the concept of quasi-religion lies not in changing what we should call different groups. Instead, the goal of understanding religions and non-religions as quasi-religious structures in political contexts refers rethinking the nature of liberal-democratic political discourse as such.

In this view, I take a look at what William Connolly calls "existential faiths," or what Rawls would call "comprehensive moral visions" to further the concept that non-religions and religions exhibit certain functions that shape how their patrons understand the 'truth of the whole.' In part with Michael Reder, but perhaps mostly paralleled in Connolly's work, I argue that the way we understand religion needs to change. Redefining non-religions as religions, however, would miss the point in my view. Instead, I hope understanding how the distinct schools of thought stemming from Jerusalem and Athens share a connection not historically but in practice (functionally) will ease the existential tensions leading to "existential resentment.[100]"

When subscribing to this understanding, the aspects problematized in Habermasian and

Taylorian philosophical perspectives can be alleviated. To Taylor, I would argue a

(re)incorporation of religious thought into the formal legislative process perhaps takes the project

of democratic inclusion too far. I would then argue that his master narrative does a really nice job

of showing how an "institutional[101]" secularism in part lends itself to illegitimating the

democratic state by discriminating that the political is de jure non-religious. I believe Taylor then

informs the Habermasian project insofar as it shows how a de jure segregation of religious

thought has lead to the relegation of religious thought de facto. While I am not an advocate for

the Taylorian inclusion project, which seeks to legalize religious thought in formal democratic

processes (ie. congressional legislation), I am an advocate for normalizing such thought in the

informal and numerous milieus in which public reason loosely describes the discussion. The

intention of the Habermasian dichotomous contingency indicates first that religious thought is

not taken seriously, and secondly that it should be taken more so (so long as its aesthetic is

generalizable, and submittable to the secular tenet of egalitarianism and argument). As such, it is

clear that Habermas is making valiant efforts to end the segregation of religious thought in

practice amongst mere citizens, while he maintains that a legal desegregation would ultimately

be detrimental to the goals of a democracy which seek to maintain an equal, free, and fraternal

series of pluralities.

In my own version of this project, then, I argue that the state cannot desegregate

normative religions and non-religions legally. This becomes problematical when considering

that, without the endorsement of the state, it is difficult to view the other as equal. If my

representatives in office do not see religious reasons as relevant, then why should I?[102] Instead, to

manifest a de facto equality between these polarized camps, I argue an alternative understanding of religions and non-religions alike provides the conceptual weight necessary to promote equality in the population while avoiding the potential risk associated with a legalized equality. Though the actual proliferation of religion and non-religion as both becoming quasi-religious in political contexts covets a popular basis for any real change to take shape, this is an observation that plagues most all theorists. The idea, generally speaking, is that we all enter political discussion with a series of unavoidable assumptions. For most, these assumptions are partly product of our "comprehensive moral visions" whether these beliefs preceded the respective doctrine or took shape more authoritatively, or were passed on to us by these comprehensive visions specifically. It is important to note that quasi-religious structures holds for both of these types, however would not hold for those who do not associate with any comprehensive moral vision. Although I hope future research can make a viable argument as to how the concept holds for the true nihilist, I cannot speak to these ends in this thesis. Thus, I admit one of the current assumptions of this theorem lie is assuming that all, or at least most all people are members of one comprehensive doctrine or another.

To review, my argument for quasi-religious structures maintains that various functional equivalencies exist between religious and non-religious comprehensive moral doctrines. Both comprehensions claim to know an absolute truth about the world. In some religions, namely the fundamentalist versions, the reference to the absolute truth is quite directly found in scripture. In some non-religions, say those subscribing to some version of 'relativism,' the absolute truth is somewhat disguised. The absolute truth is that the truth of the whole is relative. In either case, the 'absolute truth' is entirely contingent. The world is this way because of this fundamentally

assumed truth, however without this truth, the world could have easily been otherwise. Regardless, this truth is our (respectively) truth. After a fair degree of interpretation and experience, this truth is then utilized to motivate a series of moral and ethical valuations. From it, an ultimate reality takes shape. By accepting this truth as absolute, a certain ultimate reality can be obtained so long as the masses practice accordingly. By adopting this truth and these moral values, we are coping with the contingency of this world. We then justify our actions by how well they 'measuring up' to our respective comprehensive moral vision. Also contained in these structures is some version of a vertical transcendent, or as Reder says, a way to thematize the discussion between immanence and transcendence. Not all will follow Connolly in his distinction of mundane and radical transcendence.[103] Thus not all will believe that a 'non-religious' comprehensive morality references something higher than that which is merely a construct of human agency. Whatever way one may side on this debate, the fact remains that only upon becoming a quasi-religious structure does the discussion of transcendent agencies form.

  In the future, it will be my goal to make the above argument in a more detailed manor, the goal there being that it will better address the inclusion problematical when the concept can be conceived for all, and not only those who are consciously members of quasi-religious structures. I will return to this point at the end of this chapter. For now, I will simply give three examples to demonstrate some contemporary quasi-religious structures. First, however, I must indicate that the concept of quasi-religious structures in this thesis apply politically when the political is generally conceived to include various forms of public reason. Next, I must admit that the concept of quasi-religions is not a stand alone theory. Instead, it relies heavily upon Connolly's

mode of post-Kantian public reason, which was described in the previous section. Here is a flow

chart depicting this process of pre-political public reason central to both Connolly and myself.
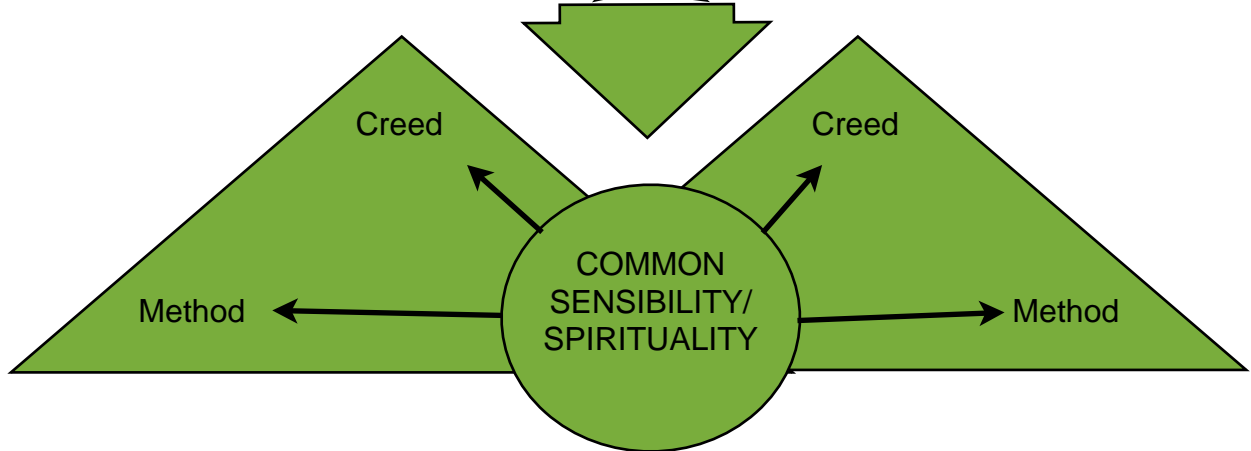
1.
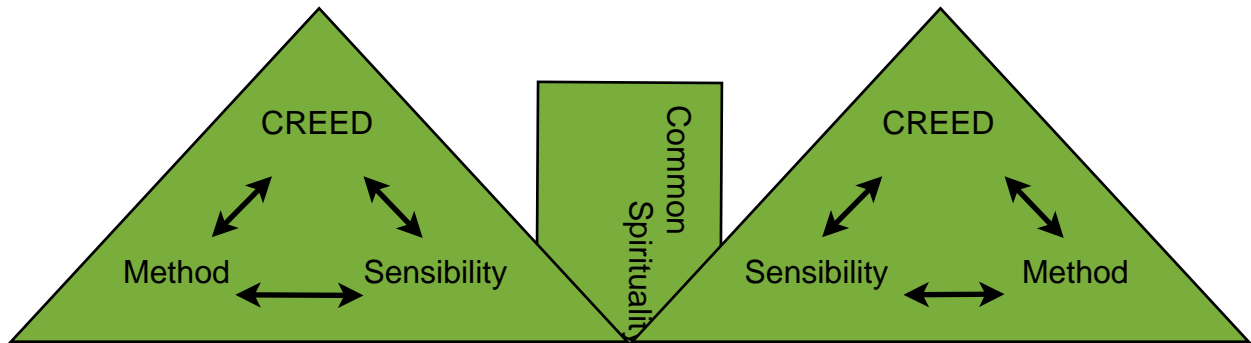
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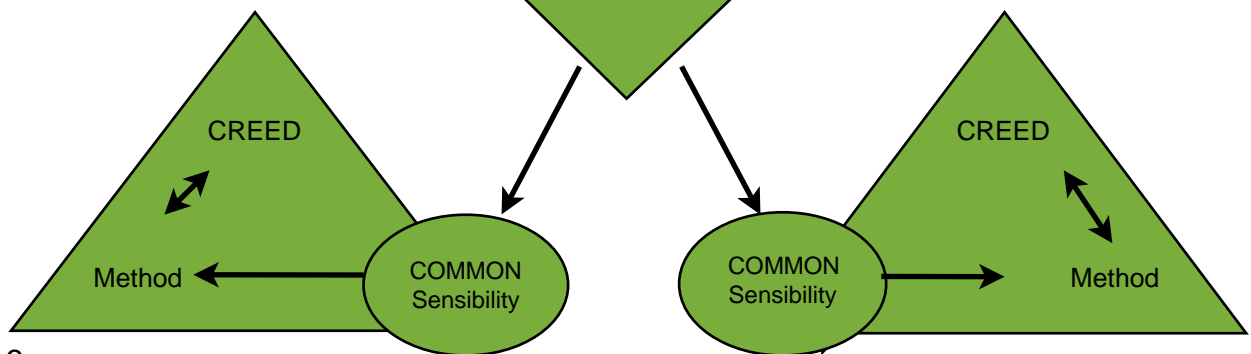
3.

As I have already detailed this process in the previous chapter, my assessment here will be brief and more targeted at situating my concept of quasi-religious structures in relation to Connolly's proposed democratic procedural revision. The figure depicts a 'pre-political' process in the sense that it advocates that individual comprehensive moralities should bring the full weight of their beliefs into the discussion. Instead of being merely refined to the political, this mode of public reason reserves the right to address problems that by their very nature may be more comprehensive than simply political. I see the concept of quasi-religious structures entering just before step [1] listed above. Instead of pitching this as a pre-political procedure, I would favor presenting it as political in the sense that its ultimate goal, to discover a solidarity under which politics should discourse, is inherently political by its nature. Operating under this assumption, the concept of quasi-religious structures becomes applicable.

My point is that nothing in the above flow chart shows how this model could actually apply to society at large. Even if specific examples hold in practice, such as the cross-creedal, quasi-religious mobilization of fundamentalists groups, there is no obvious reason that different quasi-religious groups will be motivated to take each other seriously enough to achieve a common spirituality. To be fair, Connolly does a great deal of work detailing how an "ethos of academic engagement" level's the playing field. He also constructs the concept of existential faith, complete with variations of transcendence. While distinct, both religious and non-religious sorts of lifeworlds exhibit some degree of faith in something higher than mere human agency.[104] My contention is that Connolly downplays the importance of "existential faith" by not showing how 'non-religious' existential faiths equate to 'religious' existential faiths by means of various comparable functions. I think that the concept, while powerful in its observances of the nature of

transcendence, lacks the empirical weight necessary to equate what seem to be two extremely polarized groups. By imputing the observations made in the theory of quasi-religious structures, it is my hope that these two similar concepts[105] can collide in a way that makes plausible the endeavor of recognizing ourselves in what we see ourselves polarized to. Recognizing just how similar our contemporary dispositions are is the first step in reconciling a democratic solidarity. Only upon truly seeing the other as our equal can we begin to respect what is different in the other. The idea is upon doing so, we could truly begin to weight opposing opinions as equal in value though not in substance to our own.

In what follows, I would like to take a look at three "existential faiths," or "comprehensive moral visions" as quasi-religious structures: Immanent Naturalism and Deep Ecology, Christian evangelicalism, and Neo-Liberalism. I have selected the first example due to their graphic ability to show faith in a transcendent force while not being 'religious.' I have chosen the second example to show how the same functions apply to the transcendent force in which evangelicals are faithful while still being 'religious.' I have chosen the final example because it is a structure which is traditionally seen as neither religious or non-religious, but instead is viewed normally as exogenous to the concept of religion completely.

It may also be important to note that these distinct groupings do not always appear to be mutually exclusive. Though it may be difficult to imagine an evangelical environmentalist, it is quite possible. It may be easier to imagine a neo-liberal evangelical, however the point remains. One religion does not exclude the others; and this is precisely the point of Connolly's pre-political procedure of post-Kantian public reason. Though our existential faiths are "comprehensive" in the sense that they attempt to explain the truth of the whole, they can also be

open to the positions of others so long as they can absorb these positions at the point of sensibility and translate it into a language they can understand through their usual methodology. Now this common spirituality can be applied to that existential faith's creed, understood through it, and assimilated into it. The hope is that through incorporating a set of common values into as many cohorts as possible, a democratic coalition could arise under its solidarity is just this; finding a political morality set of values that may appear slightly differently to varying groups

i. Immanent Naturalism and Deep Ecology

I see these as two-three pages each. First page applies the concept to that specific lifeworld. The second page details how this application should be interpreted.

ii. Christian Evangelicalism.

iii. Neo-Liberalism.

iv. Future Research.

This should introduce many directions, not the least of which applying this thing to liberalism in general as an era. Fixing the liberal problematical may be the only direct route to a legitimate state. If it is not fixed, we can expect religious wars to rise and fall as history proceeds.

v. Which Way is Forward?

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[100]

[101]

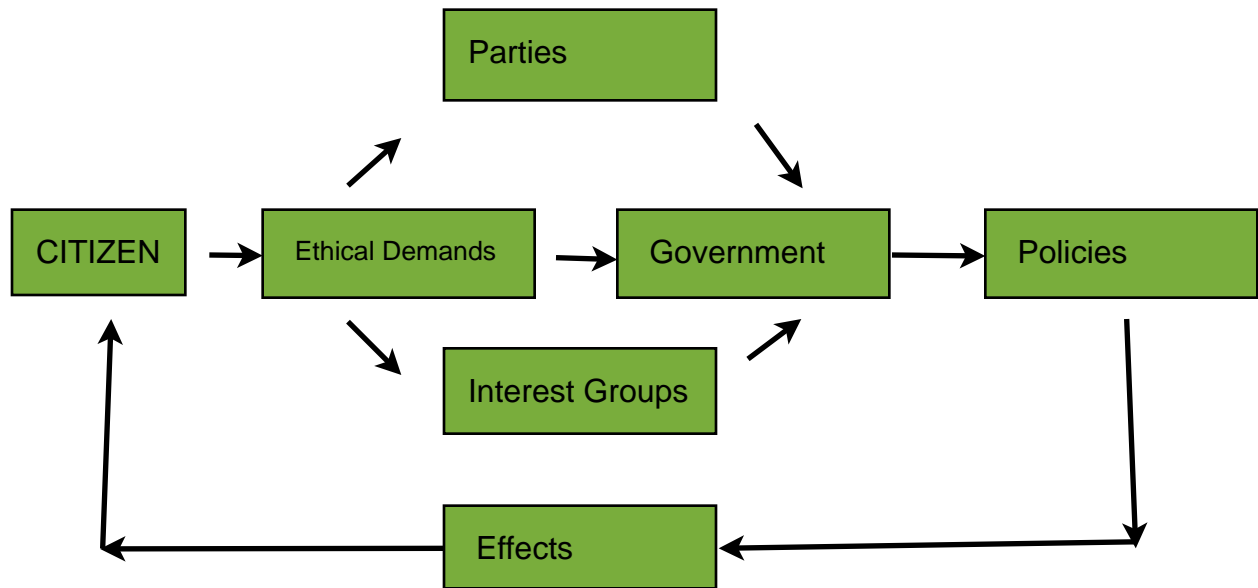[102] Occurs in Taylor chapter

[103] Chapter on connolly

[104] This satisfies the Taylorian call in SECULAR AGE

[105] Existential faith and Quasi-religious structures.
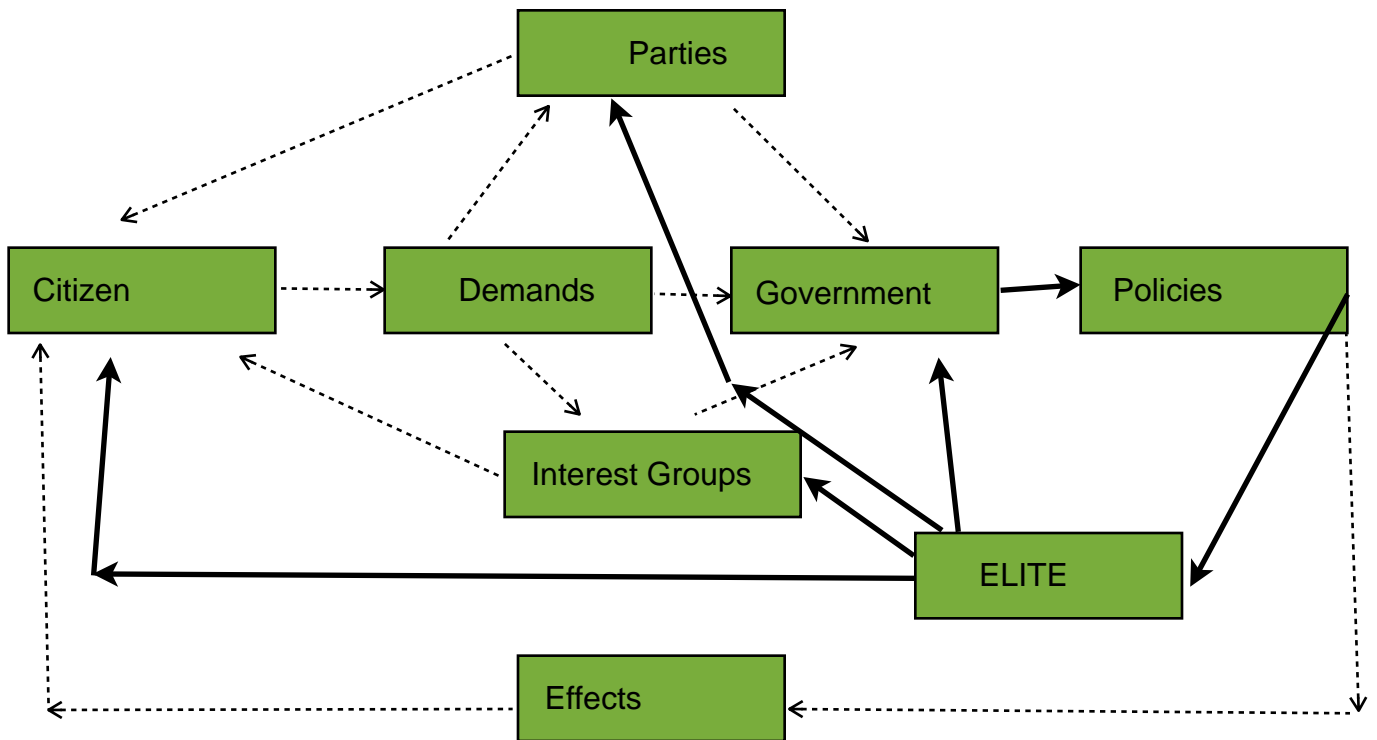
6. Conclusion

7. Figures

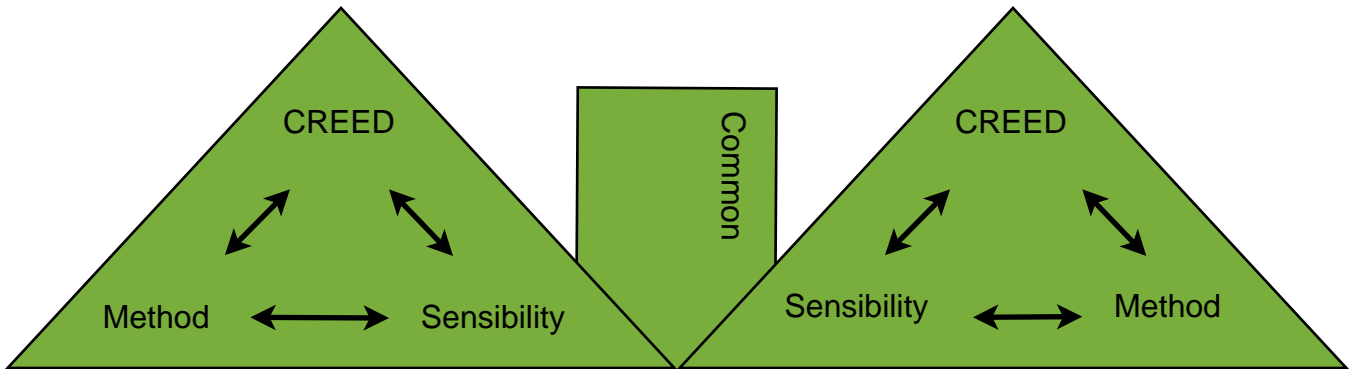i. Pluralist Perspective, Rawls and Habermas.

A Brief Blurb, including the legend/explanation of the chart applied to the context of this paper will be given for each figure in this listing.
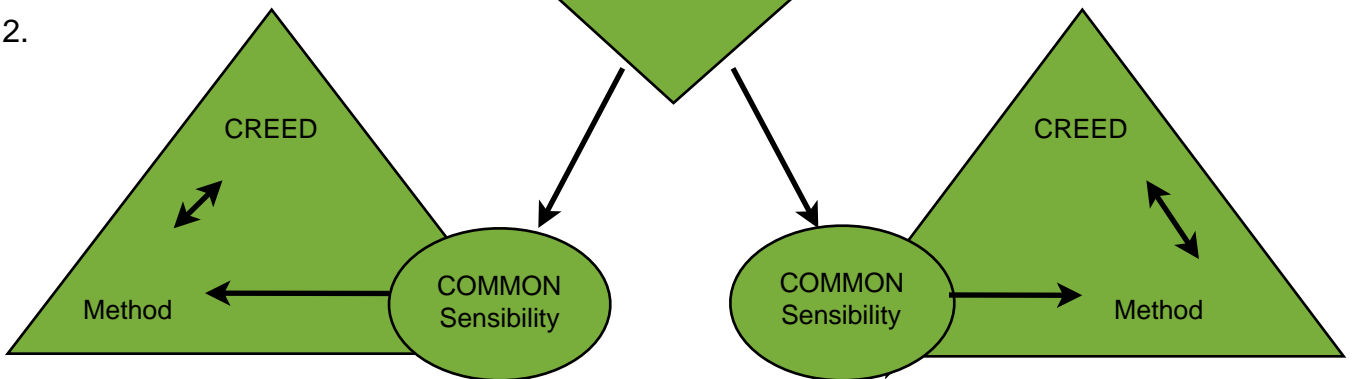
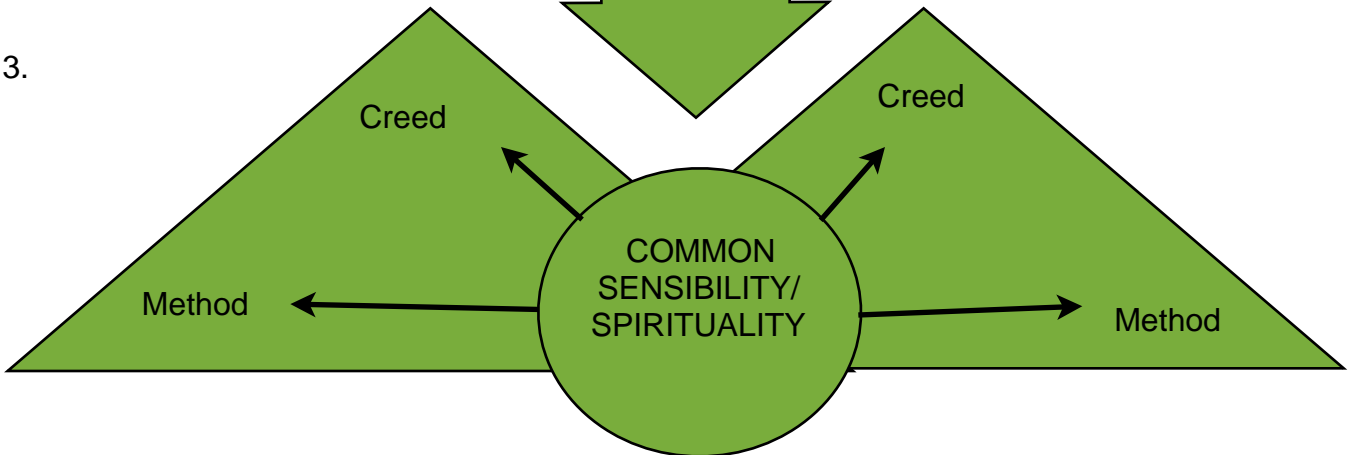ii. Elitist Perspective, Taylor and   Asad.

1.

CREED

Method ⟷ Sensibility

Common

CREED

Sensibility ⟷ Method

Sensibility

2.

CREED

Method

COMMON
Sensibility

COMMON
Sensibility

CREED

Method

3.

Creed

Creed

COMMON
SENSIBILITY/
SPIRITUALITY

Method

Method

iii. Pre-Political Public Reason.

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