

## A Critique Of Reason For Anglican Eucharistic Theology: Dialogue Approach

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### Abstract

This article provides a critique of reason for Anglican eucharistic theology. It examines the mutiformity of theological and philosophical assumptions underlying that theology and recognises the difficulty created in the discourse of the Anglican eucharistic tradition where hermeneutic idealism operates in an exclusive manner. Further, the article uses the insights of Habermas, arguing for a critique of reason for the tradition through a dialogue approach based on the intersubjectivity of communicative action where there is distinction between 'lifeworld' and 'system paradigm' and where there is subject-subject relationship.

### 1. The Multiformity of Anglican Eucharistic Theology

Anglican eucharistic theology is inherently multiform reflecting different underlying theological and philosophical assumptions.<sup>1</sup> This multiformity creates tension for the Anglican tradition. How, for example, do Anglicans engage in discourse about what happens in the Eucharist when there is an inherent multiformity of theological and philosophical assumptions underlying the tradition? How can Anglicans with such different and often entrenched party positions engage in dialogue in a way that promotes critical interest? This tension particularly arises when the discourse between Anglicans is marked by hermeneutic idealism,<sup>2</sup> that is, where individuals and parties adopt

<sup>1</sup> See Christopher Cocksworth, 'Eucharistic Theology', in Kenneth Stevenson and Bryan Spinks (eds), *The Identity of Anglican Worship* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Moorehouse, 1991), p. 49; Brian Douglas and Terence Lovat, 'The Integrity of Discourse in the Anglican Eucharistic Tradition: A Consideration of Philosophical Assumptions', *The Heythrop Journal* 51 (2010), pp. 847–861; and Brian Douglas, *A Companion to Anglican Eucharistic Theology* (2 Volumes) (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> This term is used by Thomas McCarthy, 'Translator's Introduction', in Jurgen Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*,

exclusive theological and philosophical assumptions, seeing their particular hermeneutic as the only 'correct' view. In such a situation the need exists for a critique of reason in the Anglican eucharistic tradition aimed at facilitating dialogue in a tradition where hermeneutic idealism is present.<sup>3</sup> Moving past hermeneutic idealism allows for engagement in discourse at a more critical level, where the discourse is not solely determined by particular interests and where the inherent multiformity of the Anglican eucharistic tradition is recognised and dialogued. The work of the modern philosopher, Jurgen Habermas will be used in this article to provide a framework for dialogue between different theological and philosophical assumptions through a critique of reason.

Before the potential of Habermas is explored in relation to the discourse of the Anglican eucharistic tradition some further comments on the inherently multiformity of the theological and philosophical assumptions are needed. Some Anglicans in their understanding of eucharistic theology adopt a sacramental principle based on the doctrine of the incarnation and on the philosophical notion of realism, connecting signs with what they signify and thus conveying sacramental grace in a real way<sup>4</sup> while others reject these notions and adopt a nominalist separation of entities where signs are not seen to be connected in any real way to what they signify and where thankful remembrance as an act of bringing to mind alone dominates.<sup>5</sup> Realists argue that sacramental signs function as more than bare signs in that they are instances or vehicles of what they signify and as such participate in or instantiate the signified. Particular signs in such a realist analysis really convey what they signify. Realists therefore see the possibility of what philosophers call multiple

Volume 1 (Boston: Beacon, 1984), p. xxvi. See also Terence Lovat and Brian Douglas, 'Dialogue Admidst Difference in Anglican Eucharistic Theology: A Habermasian Break-through', *Australian eJournal of Theology*, 9 (March 2007), pp. 1–11. Lovat and Douglas define the term in the following way: 'Hermeneutic idealism is that conceptualizing of reality that is totally dependent on one's own (or one's communal groups') beliefs, values and interpretations, whilst at the same time remaining blind to their causes, background and those wider connections that would contextualize them and help those holding them to see that they are in fact just one set of beliefs, values and interpretations in a sea of related and unrelated sets', *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> See the case studies in Douglas, *A Companion to Anglican Eucharistic Theology*, Volumes 1 and 2, where many examples of hermeneutic idealism are detailed from the Reformation to the present.

<sup>4</sup> For comment on realism in the Anglican eucharistic tradition see Douglas and Lovat, 'The Integrity of Discourse in the Anglican Eucharistic Tradition', pp. 848–850 and Douglas, *A Companion to Anglican Eucharistic Theology*, Volume 1, pp. 20–25.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

exemplification or localization<sup>6</sup> and instantiation<sup>7</sup> of sacramental grace. Rowan Williams, using such realist assumptions based on an incarnational theology, argues that the signs of the Eucharist are as much carriers of Christ's life and identity as are Jesus' literal flesh and blood.<sup>8</sup> This sacramental theology resonates with the modern secular philosophy of philosophers such as David Armstrong who argues that a universal can be identical in different instantiations. Armstrong says that 'it is an intelligible possibility that there should be two particulars with exactly the same nature',<sup>9</sup> where, for example, two numerically different particulars share exactly the same nature. Armstrong goes on to argue that: 'It is universals [properties and relations] that give a thing its nature, kind or sort,<sup>10</sup> meaning that universals are strictly identical in their different instantiations.<sup>11</sup> This means, crucially for any exposition of a realist sacramental theology, that universals are therefore 'strictly identical in their different instances and the "powerful truism", entails that for two instantiations of the same universal, the sameness of type involved must be strict identity,<sup>12</sup> that is, for the universal but not the particular. In such a scheme there is a difference between particulars in that the particular sign is not strictly or numerically identical to the particular signified, even though the universal is strictly identical in both instantiations of sign and signified, such that each particular shares a universal property. Whereas there is no strict or numerical identity between particulars, such as Christ's literal body and blood and the signs of the Eucharist, there is a strict or numerical identity of the universal in its different instantiations, in that Christ's life and identity are strictly identical in both particulars, that is, the bread and wine and Christ's body and blood. This means that there can be both 'identity in nature' and 'numerical identity',<sup>13</sup> but that identity of nature is strictly identical in both instantiations, even though the particulars themselves do not possess numerical identity. Williams in much the same way argues that Christ's identity of nature, is strictly identical in both instantiations, that is, whatever it is that Christ is, is in both

<sup>6</sup> See Michael Loux, *Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 20–53.

<sup>7</sup> David Armstrong, *A World of States of Affairs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

<sup>8</sup> Rowan Williams, *Tokens of Trust: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2007), p. 116.

<sup>9</sup> David Armstrong, *Nominalism and Realism. Universals and Scientific Realism Volume 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 42.

<sup>10</sup> David Armstrong, *Universals: An Opinionated Introduction* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1989), p. 94.

<sup>11</sup> Armstrong, *A World of States of Affairs*, p. 27.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>13</sup> Armstrong, *Nominalism and Realism*, p. 111.

instantiations, that is, the signs of the Eucharist and the signified body and blood of Christ. The life and identity of Christ are therefore to be found in both his literal body and blood and in the signs of the Eucharist, but the signs of the Eucharist can never be strictly identical with his literal body and blood in the sense that bread cannot turn into flesh and wine cannot turn into blood. Williams says, in an attempt to exclude any fleshy realism implied by numerical or strict realism, but at the same time attempting to affirm identity of nature, that:

the force of the Gospel text . . . seems to be more to do with a kind of extension of the reality of Jesus' presence to the bread and wine. They too bear and communicate the life of Jesus, who and what he is. By eating these, the believer receives what the literal flesh and blood have within them, the radiant action and power of God the Son, the life that makes him who he is'.<sup>14</sup>

This means that Christ's identity of nature is in both instantiations of bread and wine and their eucharistic offering on the one hand, and Christ's literal body and blood and sacrifice on the other. Williams' thinking is reflected in the much earlier work of William Forbes who argues that 'in the Supper, moreover, by the wonderful power of the Holy Ghost we invisibly communicate with the substance of the body [and blood] of Christ, of which we are made partakers no otherwise than if we visibly ate and drank his flesh and blood.'<sup>15</sup> For both Williams and Forbes, instantiation of the nature of Christ, his life and identity, is seen to be present in both the literal body and blood of Christ and in the Eucharist and its signs as an identity of nature.

Realists in the Anglican tradition, therefore, are careful to distinguish between a literal or fleshy presence and sacrifice of Christ in the Eucharist, what has been called immoderate realism,<sup>16</sup> and a real and yet not fleshy presence and sacrifice, which has been called moderate realism.<sup>17</sup> Realists therefore use terms such as 'the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist' or 'eucharistic sacrifice' as long as it is understood that this implies a non-fleshy or moderate type of realism.

<sup>14</sup> Williams, *Tokens of Trust*, p. 116.

<sup>15</sup> William Forbes, *A Moderate and Peaceful Consideration of the Present Very Serious Controversy Concerning the Sacrament of the Eucharist*, (2 volumes) (ed. G.H. Forbes) (Oxford: Parker, 1856), II, p. 421.

<sup>16</sup> See Douglas and Lovat, 'The Integrity of Discourse in the Anglican Eucharistic Tradition', p. 857 and Douglas, *A Companion to Anglican Eucharistic Theology*, Volume 1, pp. 57–58.

<sup>17</sup> See Douglas and Lovat, 'The Integrity of Discourse in the Anglican Eucharistic Tradition', p. 856–857 and Douglas, *A Companion to Anglican Eucharistic Theology*, Volume 1, pp. 55–57.

Nominalists deny this realist analysis of sacramental instrumentality and argue that all we have are particular signs which function in a metalinguistic<sup>18</sup> manner to remind us to give thanks for a past and completed transaction, that is, the saving fleshy presence of Christ on earth at a certain point in time and his sacrificial death, without any real participation in or instantiation of these signs or events in what they signify in the present in the Eucharist. This is essentially a memorialist approach where remembering means a conscious act of bringing to mind with thanksgiving. Paul Zahl argues in this way against the idea that Christ can ever be present in any objective manner in the elements of the Eucharist on the grounds that ‘no physical object can be impregnated with divinity’.<sup>19</sup> Other nominalists argue that any talk of a real presence or eucharistic sacrifice is problematic and creates divisions. A resource produced in the Anglican Diocese of Sydney, for example, called *Better Gatherings*, argues that:

Reference to the Holy Spirit in some modern liturgies has suggested *an effect on the bread and wine*, rather than the transformation of believers. Including certain petitions in ‘The Great Thanksgiving’ has sometimes introduced a hint of ‘eucharistic sacrifice’ – the idea that we offer the consecrated bread and wine to God, together with our praise and our selves, in the one action. Such developments move away from the theology of the Prayer Book and create divisions amongst Anglicans.<sup>20</sup>

This argument presents a hermeneutic idealism, denying the existence of different theological and philosophical assumptions, since any departure from the standard and particular interpretation of a particular text, such as ‘the Prayer Book’,<sup>21</sup> is seen as problematic and divisive if there is a move away from a particular theological interpretation. Any other hermeneutic, such as a realist analysis, is seen to be unhelpful and to create divisions. Perhaps such views are caused not only by rigid commitment to a particular interest but also because there is a lack of dialogue and a paucity of critical thinking in regard to notions such as real presence and eucharistic

<sup>18</sup> The metalinguistic analysis adopted by nominalists argues that talk about universals which are capable of multiple exemplification or localization is really only talk about particulars as separated entities. In such an account bread and wine are on earth in the Eucharist and Christ’s body and blood are in heaven without any participation in or instantiation of one in the other. See Michael Loux, *Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 54 and pp. 73–83.

<sup>19</sup> Paul Zahl, *A Short Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2000), p. 29.

<sup>20</sup> Anglican Diocese of Sydney, *Better Gatherings – Learning from the Communion Service – Modern Revisions*. Online at: [http://www.bettergatherings.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=52&Itemid=82](http://www.bettergatherings.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=52&Itemid=82). Accessed 31 July, 2012.

<sup>21</sup> Presumably the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*.

sacrifice with no adequate analysis of the underlying philosophical multiformity in the Anglican eucharistic tradition. Such an argument also presents a naïve assumption that realism necessarily, and mistakenly, implies a fleshy presence and sacrifice and that a particular hermeneutic, such as a Reformed Evangelical view is the only correct view.

Realists not only argue for a real presence of Christ in the Eucharist but also that Christ's sacrifice is dynamically remembered in the Eucharist such that the effects of that sacrifice are re-newed and re-presented using the notion of *anamnesis* or dynamic remembrance. Gregory Dix for example speaks 'of "re-calling" or "re-presenting" in the Eucharist before God the sacrifice of Christ, and thus making it here and now operative by its effects in the communicants'.<sup>22</sup> Nominalists deny this analysis and argue that there is no realist connection between Christ's sacrifice and the Eucharist since they reject the notion of multiple exemplification or localization as incoherent. Peter Jensen, for example, following this line of thinking, describes the Eucharist as a meal that takes place at millions of places around the world on a weekly basis where the aim is to 'share a meal in memory of a certain man'.<sup>23</sup> This meal is described as 'a sort of perpetual wake' which 'has lasted for two thousand years so far'.<sup>24</sup> He also describes the Eucharist as 'a projectile launched from antiquity into our own time; it constantly turns up amongst us and says, "never forget this man"'.<sup>25</sup> Jensen's central thought here seems to concern remembering and eating and drinking as an act of faith, will and mind. He speaks of 'remembering' in the sense of bringing to mind an event, completed in the past but remembered in the present with thanksgiving but without sacramental instrumentality or dynamic remembrance and without the idea of multiple exemplification or localization. For Jensen, the Eucharist is 'a perpetual and effective reminder of the sheer stature of Jesus Christ'.<sup>26</sup> The Eucharist therefore functions principally as a reminder only, acting as the moment of remembering a past and completed action and the giving of thanks and praise for the benefits of that action in people's lives without any realist linking between the signs and what they signify. It therefore remains fixed within a past context rather than transcending the hermeneutic of human thought.

<sup>22</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: A and C Black, 1986), p. 161.

<sup>23</sup> Peter Jensen, 'Come to the Supper of the Lord's table to share a meal', p. 1. Online at [http://sydneyanglicans.net/seniorclergy/archbishop\\_jensen/79a](http://sydneyanglicans.net/seniorclergy/archbishop_jensen/79a) Accessed 31 July, 2012.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, p. 2.

These distinctions between realism and nominalism are pervasive in Anglican eucharistic theology<sup>27</sup> but at the same time they can limit critical discourse when the discourse descends into the acrimony of entrenched party positions and the prosecution of hermeneutic idealism. A critical analysis of the Anglican eucharistic tradition requires acknowledgement of the multiformity of philosophical assumptions underlying the tradition and preparedness to enter into dialogue with other interests or hermeneutics. Such a critique of reason requires an acknowledgement that hermeneutic idealism is not an adequate analysis of the whole tradition. The work of Jürgen Habermas provides a way forward for the Anglican eucharistic tradition through a critique of reason which allows for the intersubjectivity of what Habermas calls communicative action.

## 2. Habermas and the Critique of Reason

Jürgen Habermas acknowledges that since the beginning of the modern Enlightenment era, Western thought has often taken the view that science and technology hold out the promise of limitless advances, with accompanying moral and political improvement.<sup>28</sup> Not all commentators, including Habermas, agree with this vision. Stephen White, for example, points out that one of the most distinctive features of the intellectual activity of the final years of the twentieth century has been the doubts raised about the conceptual foundations of Western modernity, with hard questions being asked about these predominant understandings of reason, subjectivity, nature, progress and gender.<sup>29</sup> Habermas does not however advocate the abandonment of the project of the Enlightenment, but rather argues for its redirection. He puts the case that reason can be defended only by way of a critique of reason. In so doing his concept of rationality is one that is no longer tied to and limited by subjectivistic and individualistic premises, and as such can be applied to the entrenched party positions and the hermeneutic idealism of church parties when

<sup>27</sup> See the many case studies in Douglas, *A Companion to Anglican Eucharistic Theology*, which illustrate the pervasive nature of this distinction in the Anglican tradition from the Reformation to the present. The presence of both moderate realist and nominalist assumptions is shown in all eras of the Anglican eucharistic tradition.

<sup>28</sup> Jürgen Habermas, (trans. Thomas McCarthy) *The Theory of Communicative Action. Volume 1. Reason and Rationalization of Society*, (Boston: Beacon, 1984) and Jürgen Habermas, (trans. Thomas McCarthy) *The Theory of Communicative Action. Volume 2. Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, (Boston: Beacon, 1989).

<sup>29</sup> Stephen White, 'Reason, modernity and democracy', in Stephen White (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to Habermas*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 3.

they come to prosecute particular theological positions in relation to eucharistic theology. Rather Habermas argues for an integration of what he calls the 'lifeworld' and 'system paradigm'. 'System' and 'lifeworld' Habermas views as the fundamental problem of social theory, that is, how to connect in a satisfactory manner these two conceptual strategies. Systems are understood as open and to maintain themselves even in the face of unstable and hypercomplex environments through interchange processes across their boundaries.<sup>30</sup> Systems are concerned with the maintenance of society and their fundamental nature and identity is the means by which a society stands or falls. The concerns of system paradigms include matters such as culture, social integration and socialisation, and it is these that function as boundary-maintaining systems for the society as a whole. System paradigms steer society in powerful and persistent ways with universal significance, whereas lifeworlds are often characterised by the separation of culture, society and personality.<sup>31</sup> Lifeworld for Habermas has a particularity about it and is made up of the 'culturally transmitted and linguistically organised stock of interpretative patterns'<sup>32</sup> often sedimented in texts, traditions and cultural artefacts or in organised institutions, systems and structures, such that ideas are embodied in cultural value spheres, in personality structures and in social institutions with their particular conflicts and interests<sup>33</sup> based on the organization of authority and political power.<sup>34</sup> Lifeworlds often differ from system paradigms in that lifeworlds are associated with particular individuals or groups of people and the traditions they see as sacred. The various hermeneutic traditions within Anglicanism, such as Anglican Catholic and Anglican Evangelical function in the lives of individuals and groups and assume a sacred and exclusive character that promotes hermeneutic idealism. System paradigms are world centred and seen as more fundamental, involving criticisable validity claims, based on a frame or categorical scaffolding that serves to order problematic situations,<sup>35</sup> involving 'suppositions of commonality'.<sup>36</sup> Communicative action, for Habermas, therefore points beyond the particular to the more universal aspects of society. Habermas says that: 'The aspects of the rationality of action we found in communicative action should now permit us to grasp processes of societal rationalization across the

<sup>30</sup> Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action. Volume 2*, p. 151.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>33</sup> Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action. Volume 1*, p. 108.

<sup>34</sup> McCarthy, 'Translator's Introduction', p. xiv.

<sup>35</sup> Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action. Volume 2*, p. 125.

<sup>36</sup> Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action. Volume 1*, p. 102.



whole-breadth, and no longer solely from the selective viewpoint of purposive rational action.<sup>37</sup>

World-concepts and system paradigms point beyond the circle of those immediately involved and have claims valid for outside interpreters as well, whereas 'lifeworlds' are seen as being already substantially interpreted and as such often prevent those in such a lifeworld from stepping outside of it.<sup>38</sup> Lifeworlds therefore are the unquestioned ground of everything given in a person's experience and the unquestionable frame in which all the problems I have to deal with are located. Lifeworlds are said to be intuitively present and therefore familiar and transparent as well as being a vast and incalculable web of presuppositions that need to be satisfied if an actual utterance is to be meaningful, that is, valid or invalid. Lifeworlds are very much taken for granted and maintain themselves beyond the threshold of criticisable convictions.<sup>39</sup> Lifeworlds therefore can take the form of sacred truth, and for those who find it impossible to free themselves from the naïve, situation-oriented attitude of being actors caught up in the communicative practice of everyday life within their lifeworld, it is impossible to grasp the limitations of that lifeworld since these actors cannot get behind the context of their lifeworld and examine it with critical intent. Further they see their lifeworld in the sense that it cannot in principle be exhausted and so their critical interest is limited by their hermeneutic idealism.<sup>40</sup>

Habermas' response to this decline of the paradigm of consciousness, where a person is prevented, by the very constraints of their lifeworld, from stepping out of their lifeworld and engaging with world-concepts or system paradigms, is to propose an explicit shift to the paradigm of language – not to language as a syntactic or semantic system, but to what he calls language-in-use or speech or communicative action.<sup>41</sup> Habermas says that:

The concept of *communicative action* refers to the interaction of at least two subjects capable of speech and action who establish interpersonal relations (whether by verbals or by extra-verbal means). The actors seek to reach an understanding about the action situation and their plans of action in order to coordinate their actions by way of agreement. The central concept of *interpretation* refers in the first instance to negotiating definitions of the situations which admit of consensus. . . . Language is given a prominent place in this model.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 335.

<sup>38</sup> Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action. Volume 2*, p. 126.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

<sup>41</sup> McCarthy, 'Translator's Introduction', p. ix.

<sup>42</sup> Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action. Volume 1*, p. 86.

Communicative action involves discourse where there is a shift of focus from the teleological to the communicative dimension where the analysis of language as social action is the basic medium of communication. The teleological aspect refers to the realising of one's aims or the carrying out of one's plan of action, perhaps related to certain commitments to particular interests, whereas the communicative aspect refers to the interpretation of a situation and arriving at some agreement.<sup>43</sup> Rationality therefore, for Habermas, 'has less to do with the possession of knowledge than with how speaking and acting subjects *acquire and use knowledge*.'<sup>44</sup> This suggests that the means of reaching understanding are important matters to be considered in a process of dialogue and for Habermas this involves intersubjective recognition by all actors of the various validity claims of those who may hold differing positions and views, and that the reasons and grounds of these differing positions become important. Habermas argues that:

In communicative action, the very outcome of interaction is even made to depend on whether the participants can come to an agreement among themselves on an *intersubjectively valid* appraisal of their relations to the world. On this model of action, an interaction can succeed only if those involved arrive at a consensus among themselves, a consensus that depends on yes/no responses to claims potentially based on grounds.<sup>45</sup>

Habermas argues that it is possible to reach agreement about differing and disputed positions by means of argument and shared insights that do not depend on force, but rather on reasons and grounds. It is this process of critique or argumentation that allows communicative action and rationality to proceed.<sup>46</sup> Agreement between parties then rests on the sharing of common convictions<sup>47</sup> and functions as communicatively shared intersubjectivity, where reflection on one's own affective and practical nature means that people act in a self-critical attitude. Habermas says that:

This concept of *communicative rationality* carries with it connotations based ultimately on the central experience of the unconstrained, unifying, consensus bringing force of argumentative speech, in which different participants overcome their merely subjective views and, owing to the mutuality of rationally motivated conviction, assure themselves of both the unity of the objective world and the intersubjectivity of their lifeworlds.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action. Volume 2*, p. 126.

<sup>44</sup> Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action. Volume 1*, p. 8.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17–18.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 287.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

Not only does this result in mutual convictions, but also ‘in coordinating their actions by way of intersubjectively recognizing criticisable validity claims, they are at once relying on membership in social groups and strengthening the integration of those same groups.’<sup>49</sup> There are therefore important benefits deriving from communicative action, not only for mutual understanding but also for group integration and harmony within a tradition as a whole.

This way of acting however, means that people, in order to adopt a critical interest and engage in communicative action, would need to objectify their lifeworld as a boundary-maintaining system, among other lifeworlds which also function as boundary-maintaining systems, rather than assuming that one lifeworld is ‘the’ system and the way things are in a universal sense. Here Habermas distinguishes between ‘instrumental mastery’ and ‘communicative action’, such that instrumental mastery is often employed in the appropriation of a hermeneutic but where communicative action maintains a critical focus.<sup>50</sup> This means ‘an interpreter can go beyond this *subjectively* purposive-rational orientation and compare the actual course of action with the constructed case of a corresponding *objectively* purposive-rational course of action’.<sup>51</sup> Communicative action or communicative rationality therefore, Habermas argues, pays attention to the seams between system and lifeworld, since it is the seams that hold the potential for emancipation from the power of particular hermeneutic interests as well as resistance to more self-critical attitudes. These ‘seams’ are the points of intersection, where there can be both harmony and conflict, and it is these seams that form the basis for the dialogue that is the argumentation of communicative action and rationality.

Any process of dialogue is severely constrained by a desire to maintain control and ownership of the system in the sense that the system is seen by some to be equivalent to the lifeworld of an individual, group or tradition. Habermas therefore states that ‘in the context of communicative action, only those persons count as responsible who, as members of a communicative community, can orient their actions to intersubjectively recognized validity claims.’<sup>52</sup> This greater degree of communicative rationality in turn expands ‘the scope for unconstrained coordination of actions and consensual resolution of conflicts.’<sup>53</sup>

Habermas argues that the Enlightenment’s promise of life informed by reason cannot be redeemed so long as the rationality that finds

<sup>49</sup> Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action. Volume 2*, p. 137.

<sup>50</sup> Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action. Volume 1*, p. 11.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

expression in society is deformed by capitalist modernisation or by the laws of history.<sup>54</sup> Ownership exerts itself through hermeneutic idealism, where the view or views of some participants in society are taken, by these participants and others, to be ‘the’ view or ‘the’ system paradigm and where such a perspective only succeeds in blinding the participants to causes, connections and consequences that lie beyond the lifeworld of the everyday practice of an individual, groups or institutions. For Habermas therefore, intersubjective understanding, based on communicative expression, cannot be carried out in a solipsistic manner. Participation with others in a process of reaching understanding is therefore seen as essential. Where understanding is seen to be hermetically sealed in a particular tradition or hermeneutic interest, the lifeworld remains closed and can only be opened when there is a desire and competence to speak and act in a spirit of participation and where there is communication which encourages people to become at least potential members of a lifeworld.<sup>55</sup> This means that the ‘processes of reaching understanding are aimed at a consensus that depends on the intersubjective recognition of validity claims; and these claims can be reciprocally raised and fundamentally criticized by participants in communication’.<sup>56</sup> This suggests that the purpose of rational communicative action is not egocentric ownership of knowledge or power but the act of reaching and sharing understanding. Participants can still be oriented to their own interests but they do this under conditions that harmonise their plans of action on the basis of common situation definitions.<sup>57</sup> This is what Habermas calls ‘an ideal communicative community’<sup>58</sup> where critical interest is beyond the understanding of a particular hermeneutic interest and where communicative action performs the task of co-ordinating and mediating. Such a critical interest brings about ‘the emergence of a higher-level form of life characterized by a linguistically constituted form of intersubjectivity that makes communicative action possible’.<sup>59</sup> In such a form of life, language functions as a medium of not only reaching understanding and transmitting cultural knowledge, but it also functions as a means of socialisation and social integration. These take place through acts of reaching understanding<sup>60</sup> where the authority of the holy (that is, the lifeworld and its particular hermeneutic interest) is gradually replaced by the authority of

<sup>54</sup> McCarthy, ‘Translator’s Introduction’, p. xxxvi.

<sup>55</sup> Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action. Volume 1*, p. 112.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 286.

<sup>58</sup> Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action. Volume 2*, p. 2.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10–12.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 24–25.

an achieved consensus.<sup>61</sup> This suggests a moving beyond a particular hermeneutic interest, that is, the holy, and into the area of the binding and bonding force of criticisable validity. When this occurs there is a movement towards social integration that is no longer dependent on institutionalised values but on intersubjective recognition of validity claims.<sup>62</sup> When a situation is communicatively mediated, the action norms of the participants depend on shared situation definitions that refer simultaneously to the objective, the normative and the subjective facets of the situation in question.<sup>63</sup> Dialogue or communicative rationality in action does not therefore mean the abandonment of subjective meaning or particular technical or hermeneutic interests and the focussing on the intersubjective alone, but rather an acknowledgement of the ‘ego’ of the speaker who has expressed his or her experiences, the subjective aspect of a hermeneutic interest, but also the ‘ego’ that refers to someone as a member of a social group who is entering into an interpersonal relation, the intersubjective, with at least one other member.<sup>64</sup> Communicative action seeks this type of shared understanding.

The question then arises: How can communicative action be useful in assisting the critique of reason for the Anglican eucharistic tradition? The greatest use may be in the enabling of access to the tradition as a whole while at the same time seeking to explore the seams between the system paradigm and particular lifeworlds. These ideas will be explored in the remainder of this article.

### 3. Habermas and the Enabling of Access

Habermas’ theory of communicative action has the potential to enable Anglican eucharistic theology by resolving questions of access across an entire system paradigm. This is so because Habermas bases his work not on ‘action’ but ‘interaction’<sup>65</sup> of different interests. Habermas’ contribution to philosophy, as Siobhan Garrigan argues:

Has been to shift it from the ‘work’ model of activity to one based on communicative action. Prior to Habermas, the essence of philosophy of the subject was that the subject was defined by his or her ‘work’; after Habermas, philosophy is required to explore the ramifications of

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>65</sup> Siobhan Garrigan, *Beyond Ritual: Sacramental Theology After Habermas* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004), p. 72.

a theory of the subject wherein it is the subject-subject relation, not the subject-object relation, that gives the point of access to the subject.<sup>66</sup>

Garrigan's analysis of Habermas points the way to an emphasis in any one area of intellectual endeavour, such as Anglican eucharistic theology, where the importance of interactions between speakers and hearers (subject-subject) is emphasised rather than the work of individual thinkers (subject-object) with the specific aim of enabling access to the whole tradition rather than particular interests. It is in this sense that Habermas' insights have particular relevance for the Anglican eucharistic tradition since they suggest the value of dialogue and interaction (subject-subject) as opposed to the division and acrimony that often occurs when there is too much or exclusive concentration on the object, that is 'my work' or the 'sacred' work of particular hermeneutic interest of a group or party, as subject-object. Habermas' suggestion that reason be transformed, rather than abandoned, implies that rationality can no longer be tied to and limited by the subjective and individual hermeneutic interests or the hermeneutic idealism of church parties and the particular theologians and theological views that inform those interests but rather that a critique of reason is necessary. As Garrigan points out, there is a distinction here between 'communication' and 'communicative action'. This distinction rests on the idea of 'speech acts as *bringing about* an understanding (through 'communicative action') rather than presuming, or even necessarily arriving at the point of understanding ('communication')'.<sup>67</sup>

There is a case then to be made for viewing the Anglican eucharistic tradition in the context of the Habermasian analysis discussed above, that is, as a system paradigm containing a number of different lifeworlds, such as an Anglican Catholic lifeworld and an Anglican Evangelical lifeworld. Such a system paradigm exists within the larger system paradigm of the Anglican tradition of Christianity, which itself exists within the larger system paradigm of Christianity and perhaps even the system paradigm of human society. Viewing the Anglican eucharistic tradition as a system paradigm rather than as a number of separate and particular lifeworlds, such as those that exist within the various church parties of Anglicanism, has the potential to move the tradition past hermeneutic idealism into the intersubjectivity of communicative action. This means that by a process of interaction, there is an enabling of access to the system paradigm of Anglican eucharistic theology in a more critical manner. The lifeworlds of the Anglican eucharistic tradition are often distinct from system paradigms since they are substantially determined and

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

interpreted by particular commitments and interests, perhaps even hermetically sealed, and so lacking in critical interest, such as knowledge and acceptance of the multiformity of philosophical assumptions underlying Anglican eucharistic theology. In order to become a true 'communicative community' the Anglican tradition needs to recognise that lifeworlds, such as those found in church parties, really function as boundary-maintaining devices, which are important and perform the valuable function of defining a hermeneutic, but that they themselves are not the system paradigm of the Anglican eucharistic tradition. The case studies presented by Douglas<sup>68</sup> supply substantial evidence to show that the system paradigm of the Anglican eucharistic tradition is not solely the lifeworld of Anglican Evangelicals or Anglican Catholics. Rather the system paradigm is a multiformity of philosophical assumptions underlying Anglican eucharistic theology, involving various lifeworlds, and that the system paradigm or world-concepts encompass this multiformity which functions according to the different philosophical concepts of moderate realism and nominalism. The case studies presented by Douglas suggest that this multiformity is pervasive throughout the Anglican eucharistic tradition, not only as found in the history of the Anglican tradition but also more broadly in relation to the various theological and philosophical assumptions which can be found throughout the entire Christian tradition. This means that uniformity is not a characteristic essence of the Anglican eucharistic tradition and that the essence of the Anglican eucharistic tradition is not limited by the hermeneutic idealism of the Evangelical lifeworld or the Catholic lifeworld or any other single lifeworld. The Anglican eucharistic tradition is, in such an analysis, a system paradigm that is distinguished by its multiformity. Habermas' theory of communicative action has the potential to enable access to this tradition by engaging with its multiformity through the intersubjectivity of communicative action in a dialogue of shared meaning as, what Habermas calls, an ideal communicative community. While this potential exists the continuing presence of entrenched hermeneutic idealism significantly limits the enabling of access and the functioning of such an ideal communicative community.

#### 4. Hermeneutic Idealism and the Anglican Eucharistic Tradition

Within the Anglican eucharistic tradition hermeneutic idealism exists within the particular interests of church parties. Some examples will help to establish this point. The manual of Anglican Catholic

<sup>68</sup> Douglas, *A Companion to Anglican Eucharistic Theology*, Volumes 1 and 2.

eucharistic texts, entitled *The Holy Eucharist*,<sup>69</sup> and developed by Bishop Silk in the Anglican Diocese of Ballarat are one such example and the Anglican Evangelical eucharistic texts developed by the Diocese of Sydney in *Common Prayer*,<sup>70</sup> are another. Both present eucharistic liturgies expressing particular Catholic and Evangelical lifeworlds and particular hermeneutic interests in an exclusive manner. In each case they suggest that only a particular lifeworld and its hermeneutic interest is the genuine expression of the Anglican eucharistic tradition. Silk in *The Holy Eucharist* proceeds in a manner which specifically sets out to correct what are seen as deficiencies in the authorised prayer books of the Anglican Church of Australia.<sup>71</sup> Silk states his aims as providing liturgies ‘capable of Catholic interpretation’<sup>72</sup> and ‘patient of a Catholic interpretation’.<sup>73</sup> In practice this means identifying the signs of bread and wine in the Eucharist more closely with the body and blood of Christ<sup>74</sup> or more closely linking Christ’s sacrificial death with the celebration of the Eucharist as a memorial *anamnesis*.<sup>75</sup> The intention of these Ballarat resources is to present liturgical material firmly based on an Anglican Catholic hermeneutic with the assumption that this is the ‘correct’ view. In the Anglican Diocese of Sydney, *Common Prayer: Resources for Gospel-Shaped Gatherings* was published by the Archbishop of Sydney’s Liturgical Panel and sets out to provide resources ‘for gospel-shaped gathering in the evangelical Anglican tradition’.<sup>76</sup> Earlier editions of these materials produced in the Diocese of Sydney, known as *Sunday Services*,<sup>77</sup> claim that they stand firmly within the Reformation tradition of Archbishop Cranmer and so present several eucharistic liturgies, or Services of the Lord’s Supper or Holy Communion, which reflect this tradition.<sup>78</sup> Both *Sunday Services* and *Common Prayer* express Anglican Evangelical interests, with the assumption these interests are the ‘correct’ view, and so focus on the death of

<sup>69</sup> David Silk, *The Holy Eucharist. Alternative and Additional Texts for use with the Order of the Eucharist in AAPB and APBA* (Ballarat: Anglican Diocese of Ballarat, 1995 and 2002).

<sup>70</sup> Archbishop of Sydney’s Liturgical Panel, *Common Prayer: Resources for Gospel-Shaped Gatherings* (Sydney: Anglican Press Australia, 2011).

<sup>71</sup> The Church of England in Australia, *An Australian Prayer Book* (Sydney: AIO Press, 1978) and Anglican Church of Australia, *A Prayer Book for Australia* (Sydney: Broughton Books, 1995).

<sup>72</sup> Silk, *The Holy Eucharist 1995*, p. 198.

<sup>73</sup> Silk, *The Holy Eucharist 2002*, p. 8.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.

<sup>75</sup> Silk, *The Holy Eucharist 1995*, p. 111.

<sup>76</sup> Archbishop of Sydney’s Liturgical Panel, *Common Prayer*, p. 4.

<sup>77</sup> Archbishop of Sydney’s Liturgical Panel, *Sunday Services. A Contemporary Liturgical Resource* (Sydney: Anglican Press Australia, 2001).

<sup>78</sup> Archbishop of Sydney’s Liturgical Panel, *Sunday Services. A Contemporary Liturgical Resource*, p. 115.



Jesus Christ and give emphasis to the theological concepts of atonement and justification by faith. In so doing the notions such as the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist or of memorial remembrance or *anamnesis* which mentions the saving actions of Christ in death, resurrection, ascension and coming again are not used and particular Evangelical notions are used in an exclusive manner.

These eucharistic texts, both Anglican Catholic and Anglican Evangelical, and their particular points of emphasis for various Anglican traditions show how different lifeworlds have become tied to particular texts, traditions and artefacts and their appropriation, which themselves present and perpetuate narrow interests.<sup>79</sup> Such exclusive analyses of the Anglican eucharistic tradition appear to be distinctly different from the characteristic and pervasive multiformity which functions as the essence of the Anglican eucharistic tradition.

## 5. Conclusion

If Anglicanism is to become or make significant progress towards becoming an ideal communicative community then there will need to be a rationality of shared understanding instead of the acrimony of party spirit. This can be assisted by the consensual resolution of actions, based not on the possession and appropriation of particular knowledge within a particular hermeneutic interest, but on the way knowledge is acquired and used. This is a redirection of reason and not its abandonment and as such suggests that a critique of reason in the Anglican eucharistic tradition based on the acknowledgement of multiformity and the acceptance of the intersubjectivity of communicative action, is possible. The common conviction or shared understanding becomes the idea that the system paradigm of Anglicanism is not one lifeworld or hermeneutic interest. Subjectivistic and individualistic premises need not be the centre of rationality, although of course they will continue to exist in the Anglican eucharistic tradition, as authentic expressions of particular interest, alongside a dialogue approach based on communicative action. Rather the shared understanding and common conviction is that the Anglican eucharistic tradition is multiform and not uniform – that there is a complexity which extends beyond individual texts, traditions, cultural artefacts and institutional forms, and this can be known

<sup>79</sup> For a more detailed analysis of these Eucharistic liturgies in the Australian context see Brian Douglas, 'The Development of Eucharistic Liturgies in the Anglican Church of Australia: Part 1 – A Case Study in Multiformity up to 1995', *Questions Liturgiques/Studies in Liturgy*, 94 (2013), pp. 175–195 and Brian Douglas, 'The Development of Eucharistic Liturgies in the Anglican Church of Australia: Part 2 – A Case Study in Multiformity – 1995 to the present', *Questions Liturgiques/Studies in Liturgy*, 94 (2013), pp. 196–219.

when an ideal communicative community takes shape. A supposition of commonality and standing together, especially at the eucharistic table, become more powerful and more fundamental than particular technical or hermeneutic interests and separation and so function as an important seam connecting system paradigm with particular lifeworlds. This also means that participants must be able to step outside their own lifeworld and consider the system as a whole, apart from their own hermeneutic idealism to the maximum extent that is possible for them, so that there can be an enabling of access to the tradition in a critical manner by means of dialogue and communicative action. At no point does this mean that the particular hermeneutic traditions or lifeworlds need to surrender their own presuppositions or propositional content, but it does mean that each of the lifeworlds needs to acknowledge the existence of other lifeworlds and their presuppositions and propositional content. A participant in a lifeworld needs to acknowledge that their lifeworld is a boundary-maintaining system for that particular hermeneutic, but that their lifeworld is not the system paradigm itself. It is this process of communicative action or dialogue and shared understanding that has the potential of emancipating the system paradigm of the Anglican eucharistic tradition from the domination of particular lifeworlds which admit only an idealised hermeneutic. Such a process of emancipation has the potential to create a communicative community. This is only possible where the tradition is enabled in access by a critique of reason and where the members of the tradition are prepared to stand with others, acknowledging the seams of the system paradigm and lifeworlds and listening to others, acknowledging and respecting difference but at the same time seeking the genuine dialogue of intersubjectivity that is found in what Habermas calls communicative action.

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