Religion in the Public Sphere

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1

Religious traditions and communities of faith have gained a new, hitherto unexpected political importance since the epochmaking change of 1989–90.[1] Needless to say, what initially spring to mind are the variants of religious fundamentalism that we face not only in the Middle East, but also in Africa, Southeast Asia, and in the Indian subcontinent. They often lock into national and ethnic conflicts, and today also form the seedbed for the decentralized form of terrorism that operates globally and is directed against the perceived insults and injuries caused by a superior Western civilization. There are other symptoms, too.

For example, in Iran the protest against a corrupt regime set in place and supported by the West has given rise to a veritable rule of priests that serves other movements as a model to follow. In several Muslim countries, and in Israel as well, religious family law is either an alternative or a substitute for secular civil law. And in Afghanistan (and soon in Iraq), the application of a more or less liberal constitution must be limited by its compatibility with the Sharia. Likewise, religious conflicts are squeezing their way into the international arena. The hopes associated with the political agenda of *multiple modernities* are fueled by the cultural self-confidence of those world religions that to this very day unmistakably shape the physiognomy of the major civilizations. And on the Western side of the fence, the perception of international relations has changed in light of the fears of a 'clash of civilizations'—'the axis of evil' is merely one prominent example of this. Even Western intellectuals, to date self-critical in this regard, are starting to go on the offensive in their response to the image of Occidentalism that the others have of the West.[2]

Fundamentalism in other corners of the earth can be construed, among other things, in terms of the long-term impact of violent colonization and failures in decolonization. Under unfavorable circumstances, capitalist modernization penetrating these societies from the outside then triggers social uncertainty and cultural upheavals. On this reading, religious movements process the radical changes in social structure and cultural dissynchronies, which under conditions of an accelerated or failing modernization the individual may experience as a sense of being uprooted. What is more surprising is the political revitalization of religion at the heart of the United States, where the dynamism of modernization unfolds most successfully. Certainly, in Europe ever since the days of the French Revolution we have been aware of the power of a religious form of traditionalism that saw itself as counter-revolutionary. However, this evocation of religion as the

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power of tradition implicitly revealed the nagging doubt that the vitality of that which is already reflexively passed down *as* tradition may have been broken. By contrast, the political awakening of an ongoing strong religious consciousness in the United States has apparently not been affected by such doubts.

There is statistical evidence of a wave of secularization in almost all European countries since the end of World War II—going hand in hand with social modernization. By contrast, for the United States all data show that the comparatively large proportion of the population made up of devout and religiously active citizens has remained constant over the last six decades.[3] More importantly: the religious Right is not traditionalist. Precisely because it unleashes a spontaneous energy for revivalism, it causes paralyzing irritation among its secular opponents.

The movements for religious renewal at the heart of Western civilization are strengthening, at the *cultural* level, the *political* division of the West that was prompted by the Iraq War.[4] The divisive issues include, among others, the abolition of the death penalty; more or less liberal regulations on abortion; setting homosexual partnerships on a par with heterosexual marriages; an unconditional rejection of torture; and in general the prioritization of rights over collective goods, e.g., national security. The European states appear to keep moving forward alone on that path which, ever since the two constitutional revolutions of the late 18th century, they had trodden side by side with the United States. The significance of religions used for political ends has meanwhile grown the world over. Against this background, the split within the West is rather perceived as if Europe were isolating itself from the rest of the world. Seen in terms of world history, Max Weber's 'Occidental Rationalism' now appears to be the actual deviation.

From this revisionist viewpoint, religious traditions appear to continue with undiminished strength, washing away or at least leveling the thresholds hitherto assumed to pertain between 'traditional' and 'modern' societies. In this way, the Occident's own image of modernity seems, as in a psychological experiment, to undergo a switchover: the normal model for the future of all other cultures suddenly becomes a special-case scenario. Even if this suggestive Gestalt-switch does not quite bear up to sociological scrutiny and if the contrasting evidence can be brought into line with more conventional explanations of secularization,[5] there is no doubting the evidence itself and above all the symptomatic fact of divisive political moods crystallizing around it.

Two days after the last Presidential elections, an essay appeared, written by a historian, and entitled 'The Day the Enlightenment Went Out'. He asked the alarmist question: 'Can a people that believes more fervently in the Virgin Birth than in evolution still be called an Enlightened nation? America, the first real democracy in history, was a product of the Enlightenment values ... Though the founders differed on many things, they shared these values of what then was modernity ... Respect for evidence seems not to pertain any more, when a poll taken just before the election showed that 75% of Mr. Bush's supporters believe Iraq either worked closely with Al Qaeda or was directly involved in the attacks of 9/11'.[6]

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Irrespective of how one evaluates the facts, the election analyses confirm that the cultural division of the West runs right through the American nation itself: conflicting value orientations—God, gays and guns—have manifestly covered over more tangibly contrasting interests. Be that as it may, President Bush has a coalition of primarily religiously motivated voters to thank for his victory.[7] This shift in power indicates a mental shift in civil society that also forms the background to the academic debates on the political role of religion in the state and the public sphere.

Once again, the battle is over the substance of the first sentence of the First Amendment: 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof'. The United States was the political pacemaker en route to establishing a freedom of religion that rested on the reciprocal respect of the religious freedom of the others.[8] The marvelous Article 16 of the Bill of Rights penned in Virginia in 1776 is the first document of freedom of religion guaranteed as a basic right that democratic citizens accord *each other* across the divides between the different religious communities. Unlike in France, the introduction of the freedom of religion in the United States of America did not signify the victory of laicism over an authority that had at best shown religious minorities tolerance in line with imposed standards of its own. Here, the secularization of state powers did not serve primarily the negative purpose of protecting citizens against the compulsion to adopt a faith against their own will. It was instead designed to guarantee the settlers who had turned their backs on Old Europe the positive liberty to continue to exercise their respective religion without hindrance. For this reason, in the present American debate on the political role of religion all sides have been able to claim their loyalty to the constitution. We shall see to what extent this claim is valid.

In what follows I shall address the debate that has arisen in the wake of John Rawls' political theory, in particular his concept of the 'public use of reason'. How does the constitutional separation of state and church influence the role which religious traditions, communities and organizations are allowed to play in civil society and the political public sphere, above all in the political opinion and will formation of citizens themselves? Where should the dividing line be in the opinion of the revisionists? Are the opponents who are currently out on the warpath against the liberal standard version of an ethics of citizenship actually only championing the pro-religious meaning of a secular state held to be neutral, versus a *narrow secularist* notion of a pluralist society? Or are they more or less inconspicuously changing the liberal agenda from the bottom up—and thus already arguing from the background of a *different* self-understanding of Modernity?

I would like first of all to bring to mind the liberal premises of the constitutional state and the consequences which John Rawls's conception of the public use of reason has on the ethics of citizenship (2). I shall then go on to treat the most important objections to this rather restrictive idea of the political role of religion (3). Through a critical discussion of revisionist proposals that do touch on the foundations of the liberal self-understanding I shall develop a conception

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of my own (4). However, secular and religious citizens can only fulfill the normative expectations of the liberal role of citizens if they likewise fulfill certain cognitive conditions and ascribe to the respective opposite the corresponding epistemic attitudes. I shall explain what this means by discussing the change in the form of religious consciousness which was a response to the challenges of Modernity(5). By contrast, the secular awareness that one is living in a post-secular society takes the shape of post-metaphysical thought at the philosophical level (6). In both regards, the liberal state faces the problem that religious and secular citizens can only acquire these attitudes through complementary learning processes, while it remains a moot point whether these are 'learning processes' at all, and ones which the state cannot influence by its own means of law and politics anyway (7).

2

The self-understanding of the constitutional state has developed within the framework of a contractualist tradition that relies on 'natural' reason, in other words solely on public arguments to which supposedly *all* persons have *equal access*. The assumption of a common human reason forms the basis of justification for a secular state that no longer depends on religious legitimation. And this in turn makes the separation of state and church possible at the institutional level in the first place. The historical backdrop against which the liberal conception emerged were the religious wars and confessional disputes in early Modern times. The constitutional state responded first by the secularization and then by the democratization of political power. This genealogy also forms the background to John Rawls's *Political Liberalism*.[9]

The constitutional freedom of religion is the appropriate political answer to the challenges of religious pluralism. In this way, the potential for conflict at the level of citizens' social interaction can be restrained, while at the cognitive level deep-reaching conflicts may well continue to exist between the existentially relevant convictions of believers, believers of other denominations, and non-believers. Yet the secular character of the state is a necessary though not a sufficient condition for guaranteeing equal religious freedom for everybody. It is not enough to rely on the condescending benevolence of a secularized authority that comes to tolerate minorities hitherto discriminated against. The parties themselves must reach agreement on the always contested delimitations between a positive liberty to practice a religion of one's own and the negative liberty to remain spared from the religious practices of the others. If the principle of tolerance is to be above any suspicion of oppressive features, then compelling reasons must be found for the definition of what can just about be tolerated and what cannot, reasons that all sides can equally accept.[10] Fair arrangements can only be found if the parties involved learn to take the perspectives of the others. The procedure that fits this purpose best is the deliberative mode of democratic will formation. In the secular state, government has to be placed on a non-religious footing anyway. The liberal

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constitution must flesh out the loss of legitimation caused by a secularization that deprives the state of deriving its authority from God. From the practice of constitution-making, there emerge those basic rights that free and equal citizens must accord one another if they wish to regulate their co-existence reasonably on their own and by means of positive law.[11] The democratic procedure is able to generate legitimation by virtue of two components—first the equal political participation of all citizens, which guarantees that the addresses of the laws can also understand themselves as the authors of these laws;—and second the epistemic dimension of a deliberation that grounds the presumption of rationally acceptable outcomes.[12]

These two legitimacy components explain the kind of political virtues the liberal state must expect from its citizens. It is precisely the conditions for the successful participation in the shared practice of democratic self-determination that define the ethics of citizenship: For all their ongoing dissent on questions of world views and religious doctrines, citizens are meant to respect one another as free and equal members of their political community. And on this basis of civic solidarity when it comes to contentious political issues they are expected to look for a way to reach a rationally motivated agreement—they owe one another good reasons. Rawls speaks in this context of the 'duty of civility' and 'the public use of reason': 'The ideal of citizenship imposes a moral, not a legal, duty—the duty of civility—to be able to explain to one another on those fundamental questions how the principles and policies they advocate and vote for can be supported by the values of public reason. This duty also involves a willingness to listen to others and a fairmindedness in deciding when accommodations to their views should reasonably be made'.[13]

Only with the legal frame for a self-governing association of free and equal citizens does the point of reference arise for the use of public reason which requires citizens to justify their political statements and attitudes before one another in light of a (reasonable interpretation)[14] of valid constitutional principles. Rawls refers here to 'values of public reason' or elsewhere to the 'premises we accept and think others could reasonably accept'.[15] In a secular state only those political decisions are taken to be legitimate as can be impartially justified in the light of generally accessible reasons, in other words equally justified vis-à-vis religious and non-religious citizens, and citizens of different confessions. A rule that cannot be justified in an impartial manner is illegitimate as it reflects the fact that one party *forces* its will on another. Citizens of a democratic society are obliged to provide reasons for one another, as only thus can political power shed its repressive character. This consideration explains the controversial 'proviso' for the use of non-public reasons.

The principle of separation of state and church obliges politicians and officials within political institutions to formulate and justify laws, court rulings, decrees and measures only in a language which is equally accessible to all citizens.[16] Yet the proviso to which citizens, political parties and their candidates, social organizations, churches and other religious associations are subject is not quite so strict in the political public sphere. Rawls writes: 'The first is that reasonable

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comprehensive doctrines, religious or non-religious, may be introduced in public political discussion at any time, *provided that in due course proper political reasons—and not reasons given solely by comprehensive doctrines—are presented that are sufficient to support whatever the comprehensive doctrines are said to support*'.[17] This means that political reasons may not simply be put forward as a pretext, but must 'count' irrespective of the religious context in which they are embedded.[18]

In the liberal view, the state guarantees citizens freedom of religion only on the condition that religious communities, each from the perspective of its own doctrinal tradition, accept not only the separation of church and state, but also the restrictive definition of the public use of reason. Rawls insists on this requirement even when confronted by the objection, which he himself raises: 'How is it possible . . . for those of faith . . . to endorse a constitutional regime even when their comprehensive doctrines may not prosper under it, and indeed may decline?'[19]

Rawls's concept of public reason has met with resolute critics. The objections were leveled not at his liberal premises per se, but against an overly narrow, supposedly secularist definition of the political role of religion in the liberal frame. This is not to play down the fact that eventually the dissent also touches the real substance of the liberal state. What interests me (here) is what line gets drawn to claims that reach beyond a liberal constitution. Arguments for a more generously dimensioned political role for religion that are incompatible with the secular nature of the state should not be confused with justifiable objections to a secularist understanding of democracy and the rule of law.

The principle of separation of church and state demands that the institution of the state operate with strict impartiality vis-à-vis religious communities; parliaments, courts, and the administration must not violate the prescription not to privilege one side at the cost of another. But this principle is to be distinguished from the laicist demand that the state should defer from adopting any political stance which would support or constrain religion per se, even if this affects all religious communities equally. That would amount to an overly narrow interpretation of the separation of state and church.[20] At the same time, the rejection of secularism must not succumb to leaving the door wide open for revisions that would undermine the principle itself. The toleration of religious justifications within the legislative process is, as we shall see, a case in point. That said, Rawls's liberal position has tended to direct his critics' attention less to the impartiality of state institutions than to the ethics of citizenship.

3

Rawls's opponents cite historical examples of the favorable political influence that churches and religious movements have actually had on the assertion of democracy and human rights. Martin Luther King and the US Civil Rights Movement illustrate the successful struggle for a broader inclusion of minorities and marginal groups in the political process. In this context, the religious roots to

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the motivations of most social and socialist movements in both the United States and European countries are highly impressive.[21] There are obvious historical examples to the contrary, namely for the authoritarian or repressive role of churches and fundamentalist movements; however, in well-established constitutional states, churches and religious communities generally perform functions that are not unimportant for stabilizing and advancing a liberal political culture. This is especially true of the form of civil religion that has developed in American society.[22]

Paul J. Weithmann makes use of these sociological findings for a normative analysis of the ethics of democratic citizenship. He describes churches and religious communities as actors in civil society who fulfill functional imperatives for the reproduction of American democracy. They provide arguments for public debates on crucial morally-loaded issues and handle tasks of political socialization by informing their members and encouraging them to take part in the political process. The churches' commitment to civil society would, however, wither away, so the argument goes, if each time they had to distinguish between religious and political values in keeping with the yardstick set by Rawls' 'proviso'—in other words if they were obliged to find an equivalent in a universally accessible language for every religious statement they pronounce. Therefore, if only for functional reasons, the liberal state must refrain from obliging churches and religious communities to comply to such standards of self-censorship. And it must then eschew all the more imposing a similar limitation on its citizens.[23]

That is, of course, not the central objection to Rawls's theory. Irrespective of how the interests are weighted in the relationship between the state and religious organizations, a state cannot encumber its citizens, whom it guarantees freedom of religious expression, with duties that are incompatible with pursuing a devout life—it cannot expect something impossible of them. This objection bears closer scrutiny.

Robert Audi clothes the duty of civility postulated by Rawls in a special 'principle of secular justifications' when he writes: 'One has a prima facie obligation not to advocate or support any law or public policy . . . unless one has, and is willing to offer, adequate secular reasons for this advocacy or support'.[24] Audi adds to the principle a requirement that goes even further, namely the demand that the secular reasons must be strong enough to direct the citizen's own behavior, for example when voting in elections, quite independent of simultaneous religious motivations.[25] With regard to a moral judgment on any individual citizen, the link between the actual motivation for his actions and those reasons he gives in public may be relevant. But a gap between reason and action is of no consequence from the perspective of what is necessary for maintaining the democratic system as a whole, namely in terms of the contribution citizens must make to maintain a liberal political culture. At the end of the day only manifest reasons can, and only those do have an impact on the political system as actually affect the formation of majorities and their decisions within political bodies.

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As regards the political consequences, all and only those issues, statements, and reasons 'count' that find their way into the impersonal flow of public communication and contribute to the cognitive motivation of *any* decision (backed and implemented by state power)—be it directly in support of the decisions of voters or indirectly in support of the decisions taken by party leaders, members of parliament or by persons holding office (such as judges, ministers or staff attached to the administration). This is why I shall disregard Audi's additional requirement for motivation and his distinction between publicly expressed reasons and those motivating behavior in the polling booth.[26] What is of material import for the standard version of political liberalism is simply the requirement of 'secular justifications': Given that in the liberal state only secular reasons count, citizens who adhere to a faith are obliged to establish a kind of 'balance' between their religious and their secular convictions—in Audi's words a theo-ethical equilibrium.[27]

This demand is countered by the objection that many religious citizens would not be able to undertake such an artificial division within their own minds without jeopardizing their existence as pious persons. This objection is to be distinguished from the empirical observation that many citizens who take a stance on political issues from a religious viewpoint, do not have enough knowledge or imagination to find secular justifications for them that are independent of their authentic beliefs. This fact is compelling enough given that any 'ought' implies a 'can'. Yet we can go one step further. There is a normative resonance to the central objection, as it relates to the integral role that religion plays in the life of a person of faith, in other words to religion's 'seat' in everyday life. A devout person pursues her daily rounds by *drawing* on belief. Put differently, true belief is not only a doctrine, believed content, but a source of energy that the person who has a faith taps performatively and thus nurtures his or her entire life.[28]

This totalizing trait of a mode of believing that infuses the very pores of daily life runs counter, the objection goes, to any flimsy switchover of religiously rooted political convictions onto *a different* cognitive basis: 'It belongs to the religious convictions of a good many religious people in our society that *they ought to base* their decisions concerning fundamental issues of justice *on* their religious convictions. They do not view it as an option whether or not to do it. It is their conviction that they ought to strive for wholeness, integrity, integration in their lives: that they ought to allow the Word of God, the teachings of the Torah, the command and example of Jesus, or whatever, to shape their existence as a whole, including, then, their social and political existence. Their religion is not, for them, about *something other* than their social and political existence'.[29] Their religiously grounded concept of justice tells them what is politically correct or incorrect, meaning that they are incapable of discerning 'any ''pull'' from any secular reasons'.[30]

If we accept this to my mind compelling objection, then the liberal state, which expressly protects such forms of life in terms of a basic right, cannot at the same time expect of *all* citizens that they also justify their political statements independently of their religious convictions or world views. This strict demand can only be laid at the

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door of politicians, who within state institutions are subject to the obligation to remain neutral in the face of competing world views; in other words it can only be made of anyone who holds a public office or is a candidate for such.[31]

The institutional precondition for guaranteeing equal freedom of religion for all is that the state remains neutral towards competing world views. The consensus on constitutional principles, which all citizens must mutually assume their fellow citizens share, pertains also to the principle of the separation of church and state. However, in light of the afore-mentioned objection it would be to over-generalize secularization if we were to extend this principle from the institutional level and apply it to statements put forward by organizations and citizens in the political public sphere. We cannot derive from the secular character of the state a direct obligation for all citizens personally to supplement their public statements of religious convictions by equivalents in a generally accessible language. And certainly the normative expectation that all religious citizens when casting their vote should *in the final instance* let themselves be guided by secular considerations is to ignore the realities of a devout life, an existence led *in light of* belief. This proposition has however been countered by pointing to the actual situation of religious citizens in the secular milieus of a modern society.[32]

The conflict between a person's own religious convictions and secularly justified policies or bills can only arise by virtue of the fact that the religious citizen should also have accepted the constitution of the secular state for good reasons. He no longer lives as a member of a religiously homogeneous population within a religiously legitimated state. And therefore certainties of faith are always already networked with fallible beliefs of a secular nature; they have long since lost—in the form of 'unmoved' but not 'unmovable' movers—their purported immunity to the impositions of modern reflexivity.[33] In the differentiated architecture of modern societies, the religious certainties are in fact exposed to an increasing pressure for reflection. This epistemological objection meets in turn a counterargument: By dint of their possibly even rationally defended reference to the dogmatic authority of an inviolable core of infallible revelatory truths, religiously rooted existential convictions evade that kind of *unreserved* discursive deliberation to which other ethical orientations and world views, i.e., secular 'concepts of the good' expose themselves.[34]

4

The liberal state must not transform the requisite *institutional* separation of religion and politics into an undue *mental* and *psychological* burden for those of its citizens who follow a faith. It must of course expect of them that they recognize the principle that political authority is exercised with neutrality towards competing world views. Every citizen must know and accept that only secular reasons count beyond the institutional threshold that divides the informal public sphere from parliaments, courts, ministries and administrations. But all that is required here is the epistemic ability to consider one's own faith reflexively from

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the outside and to relate it to secular views. Religious citizens can well recognize this 'institutional translation proviso' without having to split their identity into a public and a private part the moment they participate in public discourses. They should therefore be allowed to express and justify their convictions in a religious language if they cannot find secular 'translations' for them.

This need by no means estrange 'mono-glot' citizens from the political process, because they do take a position with political intent even if they field religious reasons. Even if the religious language is the only one they can speak in public, and if religiously justified opinions are the only ones they can or wish to put into political controversies, they nevertheless understand themselves as members of a civitas terrena, which empowers them to be the authors of laws to which as its addressees they are subject. Given that they may only express themselves in a religious idiom under the condition that they recognize the institutional translation proviso, they can, trusting that their fellow citizens will cooperate for accomplishing a translation, grasp themselves as participants in the legislative process, although only secular reasons count therein.

The permissibility of non-translated religious utterances in the political public sphere can be normatively justified not only in view of the fact that we must not *expect* Rawls's proviso to apply to those of the faithful who cannot abstain from the political use of 'private' reasons without endangering their religious mode of life. For functional reasons, we should not over-hastily reduce the polyphonic complexity of public voices, either. For the liberal state has an interest in unleashing religious voices in the political public sphere, and in the political participation of religious organizations as well. It must not discourage religious persons and communities from also expressing themselves politically *as such*, for it cannot know whether secular society would not otherwise cut itself off from key resources for the creation of meaning and identity. Secular citizens or those of other religious persuasions can under certain circumstances learn something from religious contributions; this is, for example, the case if they recognize in the normative truth content of a religious utterance hidden intuitions of their own.

Religious traditions have a special power to articulate moral intuitions, especially with regard to vulnerable forms of communal life. In the event of the corresponding political debates, this potential makes religious speech a serious candidate to transporting possible truth contents, which can then be translated from the vocabulary of a particular religious community into a generally accessible language. However, the institutional thresholds between the 'wild life' of the political public sphere and the formal proceedings within political bodies are also a filter that from the Babel of voices in the informal flows of public communication allows only secular contributions to pass through. In parliament, for example, the standing rules of procedure of the house must empower the house leader to have religious statements or justifications expunged from the minutes. The truth content of religious contributions can only enter into the institutionalized practice of deliberation and decision-making if the necessary translation already occurs in the pre-parliamentarian domain, i.e., in the political public sphere itself.

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This requirement of translation must be conceived as a cooperative task in which the non-religious citizens must likewise participate, if their religious fellow citizens are not to be encumbered with an asymmetrical burden. Whereas citizens of faith may make public contributions in their own religious language only subject to the proviso that these get translated, the secular citizens must open their minds to the possible truth content of those presentations and enter into dialogues from which religious reasons then might well emerge in the transformed guise of generally accessible arguments.[35] Citizens of a democratic community owe one another good reasons for their political statements and attitudes. Even if the religious contributions are not subjected to self-censorship, they depend on cooperative acts of translation. For without a successful translation there is no prospect of the substantive content of religious voices being taken up in the agendas and negotiations within political bodies and in the broader political process. By contrast, Nicholas Wolterstorff and Paul Weithman wish to jettison even this proviso. In so doing, contrary to their own claim to remain in line with the premises of the liberal argument, they violate the principle that the state shall remain neutral in the face of competing world views.

In Weithman's opinion citizens have the right to justify public political statements in the context of a comprehensive world view or a religious doctrine. In the process they are supposed to meet two conditions. First, they must be convinced that their government is justified in carrying out the laws or policies they support with religious arguments. Second, they must be willing to declare why they believe this. This milder version of the proviso[36] amounts to the demand that a universalization test be undertaken from a first-person perspective. In this way, Weithman wishes to have citizens make their judgment from the viewpoint of a conception of justice even if they conceive 'justice' in terms of a religion or another substantive world view. Citizens are to consider, if only from the respective perspective of their own doctrine, what would be equally good for everyone. However, the Golden Rule is not the Categorical Imperative; it does not oblige each person among all the people involved to *reciprocally* assume the perspective of everybody else.[37] For with this method each person's own perspective on the world forms the insurmountable horizon of her deliberations on justice: 'The person who argues in public for a measure must be prepared to say what she thinks would justify the government in enacting it, *but the justification she is prepared to offer may depend on claims, including religious claims, which proponents of the standard approach would deem inaccessible*'.[38]

Since no institutional filter is envisaged between the state and the public domain, this version does not exclude the possibility that policies and legal programs will be implemented solely on the basis of the religious or confessional beliefs of a ruling majority. This is the conclusion explicitly drawn by Nicholas Wolterstorff, who does not wish to subject the political use of religious reasons to any restraints whatsoever. At any rate, he allows for a political legislature making use of religious arguments.[39] If one thus opens the parliaments to the battle on religious beliefs, governmental authority can evidently become the agent of a religious majority that asserts its will and thus violates the democratic procedure.

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What is illegitimate is of course not the majority vote, assuming it has been correctly carried out, but the violation of the other core component of the procedure, namely the discursive nature of the deliberations preceding the vote. What is illegitimate is the violation of the neutrality principle according to which all enforceable political decisions *must be formulated* in a language that is equally accessible to all citizens, and it *must be possible to justify them* in this language as well. Majority rule turns into repression if the majority deploys religious arguments in the process of political opinion and will formation and refuses to offer those publicly accessible justifications which the losing minority, be it secular or of a different faith, is able to follow and to evaluate in the light of shared standards. The democratic procedure has the power to generate legitimacy precisely because it both includes all participants and has a deliberative character; for the justified presumption of rational outcomes in the long run can solely be based on this.

Wolterstorff pre-empts this argument by rejecting the whole idea of a reasonable background consensus on constitutional essentials. In the liberal view, political power only loses its inherent violence by virtue of a legal domestication which accords to agreed upon principles.[40] Wolterstorff raises empirical objections here to counter this conception. He ridicules the idealizing presuppositions, inscribed in the very practices of the constitutional state, as some 'Quaker meeting ideal' (though the Quaker principle of unanimity is untypical of the democratic process). He maintains that the argument between different conceptions of justice grounded in competing religions or world views can never be solved by the common presupposition of an however formal background consensus. Although he wishes to retain the majority principle from the liberal consensus, Wolterstorff imagines that majority resolutions in an ideologically divided society can at best yield reluctant adaptations to a kind of *modus vivendi*. A defeated minority will feel like saying: 'I do not agree, I *acquiesce*—unless I find the decision truly appalling'.[41]

It is unclear why under this premise the political community should not at any time be in danger simply of disintegrating into religious struggle. Certainly, the usual empiricist reading of liberal democracy has always construed majority decisions as the temporary subjection of a minority to the actual power of a numerically prevailing party. But this utilitarian theory explains the acceptance of the voting procedure by the willingness of rational choosers to compromise; it reckons with parties who concur in their preference for the largest possible share of basic goods such as money, security or leisure time. The parties can conclude compromises because all of them aspire to the *same* categories of divisible goods. Yet precisely this condition is not met as soon as the conflicts no longer flare up over the share in the same kind of material goods, but on competing values and mutually exclusive 'goods of salvation'. The conflict on existential values between communities of faith cannot be solved by compromise. They can be contained, however, by losing any political edge against the background of a presupposed consensus on constitutional principles.

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Conflicts between world views and religious doctrines that lay claim to explaining man's position in the world as a whole cannot be laid to rest at the cognitive level. As soon as these cognitive dissonances penetrate as far as the foundations for a normative integration of citizens, the political community disintegrates into irreconcilable segments so that it can only survive on the basis of an unsteady *modus vivendi*. In the absence of the uniting bond of a civic solidarity, which cannot be legally enforced, citizens do not perceive themselves as free and equal participants in the shared practices of democratic opinion and will formation wherein they *owe one another reasons* for their political statements and attitudes. This reciprocity of expectations among citizens is what distinguishes a community integrated by constitutional values from a community segmented along the dividing lines of competing world views. The latter frees religious and secular citizens in their dealings with one another from any reciprocal obligation to justify themselves in political debate *before one another*. In such a community the dissonant background beliefs and sub-cultural bonds outtrump the supposed constitutional consensus and the expected civic solidarity; in the case of conflicts that cut deep, citizens need not adapt to or face *one another* as second persons.

The assumption of forgoing reciprocity and of mutual indifference seems to be justified by the fact that the liberal standard version is intrinsically self-contradictory if it equally imputes to all citizens a political ethos which in fact distributes cognitive burdens unequally between secular and religious citizens. The translation requirement for religious reasons and the subsequent institutional precedence of secular reasons demand of the religious citizens an effort to learn and adapt that secular citizens are spared having to make. This would concur at any rate with the empirical observation that even within the Churches a certain resentment has persisted for so long toward the secular state. The duty to 'make public use of reason' can only be discharged under certain cognitive preconditions. Yet required epistemic attitudes are the expression of a given mentality and cannot, like motives, be made the substance of normative expectations and political appeals. Every 'ought' presupposes a 'can'. The normative expectations of an ethics of citizenship have absolutely no impact unless a required change in mentality has been forthcoming first; indeed, they then serve only to kindle resentment on the part of those who feel misunderstood and their capacities over-taxed.

However, in Western culture we do indeed observe a change in the form of religious consciousness since the Reformation and Enlightenment. The sociologists have described this 'modernization of religious consciousness' as a response to the challenge religious traditions have been facing in view of the fact of pluralism, the emergence of modern science, and the spread of both positive law and profane morality. In these three respects, traditional communities of faith must process cognitive dissonances that do not arise for secular citizens, or arise

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for them only if they adhere to doctrines that are anchored in a similarly dogmatic way:

> Religious citizens must develop an epistemic attitude toward other religions and world views that they encounter within a universe of discourse hitherto occupied only by their own religion. They succeed to the degree that they self-reflectively relate their religious beliefs to the statements of competing doctrines of salvation in such a way that they do not endanger their own exclusive claim to truth.
>
> Moreover, religious citizens must develop an epistemic stance toward the independence of secular from sacred knowledge and the institutionalized monopoly of modern scientific experts. They can only succeed if from their religious viewpoint they conceive the relationship of dogmatic and secular beliefs in such a way that the autonomous progress in secular knowledge cannot come to contradict their faith.
>
> Finally, religious citizens must develop an epistemic stance toward the priority that secular reasons enjoy in the political arena. This can succeed only to the extent that they convincingly connect the egalitarian individualism and universalism of modern law and morality with the premises of their comprehensive doctrines.

This arduous work of hermeneutic self-reflection must be undertaken from within religious traditions. In our culture, it has essentially been performed by theology, from the Catholic side also by a philosophy of religions that proceeds apologetically in explicating the reasonableness of a faith.[42] Yet in the final instance it is the faith and practice of the religious community that decides whether a dogmatic processing of the cognitive challenges of modernity has been 'successful' or not; only then will the true believer accept it as the result of a 'learning process'. We may describe the new epistemic attitudes as 'acquired by learning' only if they arise from a reconstruction of sacred truths that did indeed convince people of faith in the light of modern living conditions for which no alternatives any longer exist. If those attitudes were merely the contingent result of drill and forced adaptation, then the question, how those cognitive preconditions for imputing a liberal ethics of citizenship are met, has to be answered *à la* Foucault—namely in the wake of the kind of 'discursive power' that asserts itself in the purported transparency of enlightened knowledge. Of course, this answer would contradict the normative self-understanding of the constitutional state. Such a response contradicts, of course, the normative self-understanding of any constitutional state.

Within this liberal framework, what interests me is the unanswered question whether the revised concept of citizenship that I have proposed in fact imposes an asymmetrical burden on religious traditions and religious communities after all. Historically speaking, religious citizens had to learn to adopt epistemic attitudes

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toward their secular environment, attitudes that enlightened secular citizens enjoy anyway, since they are not exposed to similar cognitive dissonances in the first place. However, secular citizens are likewise not spared a cognitive burden, because a secularist attitude does not suffice for the expected cooperation with fellow citizens who are religious. This cognitive act of adaptation needs to be distinguished from the political virtue of mere tolerance. What is at stake is not some respectful feel for the possible existential significance of religion for some other person. What we must also expect of the secular citizens is moreover a self-reflective transcending of a secularist self-understanding of Modernity.

As long as secular citizens are convinced that religious traditions and religious communities are to a certain extent archaic relics of pre-modern societies that continue to exist in the present, they will understand freedom of religion as the cultural version of the conservation of a species in danger of becoming extinct. From their viewpoint, religion no longer has any intrinsic justification to exist. And the principle of the separation of state and church can for them only have the laicist meaning of sparing indifference. In the secularist reading, we can envisage that, in the long run, religious views will inevitably melt under the sun of scientific criticism and that religious communities will not be able to withstand the pressures of some unstoppable cultural and social modernization. Citizens who adopt such an epistemic stance toward religion can obviously no longer be expected to take religious contributions to contentious political issues seriously and even to help to assess them for a substance that can possibly be expressed in a secular language and justified by secular arguments.

Under the normative premises of the constitutional state, the admission of religious statements to the political public sphere only makes sense if all citizens can be expected not to deny from the outset any possible cognitive substance to these contributions—while at the same time respecting the precedence of secular reasons and the institutional translation requirement. This is what the religious citizens assume anyway. Yet on the part of the secular citizens such an attitude presupposes a mentality that is anything but a matter of course in the secularized societies of the West. Instead, the insight by secular citizens that they live in a post-secular society that is *epistemically adjusted* to the continued existence of religious communities first requires a change in mentality that is no less cognitively exacting than the adaptation of religious awareness to the challenges of an ever more secularized environment. In line with this changed yardstick, the secular citizens must grasp their conflict with religious opinions as a *reasonably expected disagreement*.

In the absence of this cognitive precondition, a public use of reason cannot be imputed to citizens, at least not in the sense that secular citizens should be willing to enter and engage in a discussion of the content of religious contributions with the intention of translating, if there is such a content, morally convincing intuitions and reasons into a generally accessible language.[43] An epistemic mindset is presupposed here that would originate from a self-critical assessment of the limits of secular reason.[44] However, this cognitive precondition indicates

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that the version of an ethics of citizenship I have proposed may only be expected from all citizens equally if both, religious as well as secular citizens, already have undergone complementary learning processes.

6

The ostensibly critical overcoming of what to my mind is a narrow secularist consciousness is itself an essentially contested issue—at least to the same extent as the demythologizing response to the cognitive challenges of Modernity. While we already observe the 'modernization of religious consciousness' with hindsight and consider it the subject matter of theology, the naturalist background of secularism is still the object of an ongoing and open-ended philosophical debate. The secular awareness that we live in a post-secular world is reflected philosophically in the form of post-metaphysical thought. This mode of thought is not exhausted by an emphasis on the finiteness of reason, or by the combination of fallibilist and anti-skeptical attitudes that has characterized modern science since Kant and Peirce. The secular counterpart to religious modernization is an agnostic, but non-reductionist philosophical position. It refrains on the one hand from passing judgment on religious truths while insisting (in a non-polemical fashion) on drawing a strict line between faith and knowledge. It rejects, on the other, a scientistically limited conception of reason and the exclusion of religious doctrines from the genealogy of reason.

Post-metaphysical thought admittedly refrains from passing ontological statements on the constitution of the whole of beings; but this does not mean reducing our knowledge to the sum total of statements that at each time represents the respective 'state of science'. Scientism often tempts one to blur the borderline between proper scientific knowledge, which gains relevance with regard to how man interprets himself and his position in nature as a whole, on the one hand, and a naturalist world view synthetically derived from this, on the other.[45] This radical form of naturalism devalues all categories of statements that cannot be reduced to controlled observations, nomological propositions or causal explanations; in other words moral, legal and evaluative judgments are no less excluded than are religious ones. As the renewed discussion on freedom and determinism shows, advances in biogenetics, brain research and robotics provide stimuli for a kind of naturalizing of the human mind that casts into question our practical self-understanding as responsibly acting persons and encourages a call for revisions to criminal law.[46] A naturalistic self-objectification of persons that penetrates everyday life is incompatible with any idea of political integration that imputes to all citizens the presupposition of a normative background consensus.

One promising route to a multi-dimensional concept of reason that is no longer exclusively fixated on its reference to the objective world but becomes self-critically aware of its boundaries is to reconstruct the history of its own genesis. In this respect post-metaphysical thought does not restrict itself to the heritage of Western metaphysics. At the same time, it also makes sure of its internal

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relationship to those world religions whose origins, like the origins of Classical Greek philosophy, date back to the middle of the first millennium before Christ—in other words to what Jaspers termed the 'Axis Age'. The religions which have their roots in this period achieved the cognitive leap from mythical narratives to a logos that differentiates between essence and appearance in a very similar way as did Greek philosophy. And in the course of the 'Hellenization of Christianity', philosophy in turn took on board and assimilated many religious motifs and concepts, specifically those from the history of salvation.[47]

The complex web of inheritance cannot be understood solely along the line of a history of Being, as Heidegger claimed.[48] Greek concepts such as 'autonomy' and 'individuality' or Roman concepts such as 'emancipation' and 'solidarity' have long since been shot through with meanings of a Judeo-Christian origin.[49] Philosophy has recurrently found in its encounters with religious traditions, and they include Muslim traditions as well, that it receives innovative stimulation if it succeeds in liberating the cognitive substance from its dogmatic encapsulation in the melting pot of rational discourse. Kant and Hegel are the best examples of this. And further evidence provides the encounter of prominent philosophers of the 20th century with a religious writer such as Kierkegaard, who thinks in a post-metaphysical, but not a post-Christian vein.

Some religious traditions would appear, even if they at times take the stage as the opaque Other of reason, to have remained present in a more vital manner than has metaphysics. It would not be reasonable to reject out of hand the idea that the world religions—as the only remaining element of the distant cultures of the Old Empires—assert a place for themselves in the differentiated architecture of Modernity because their cognitive substance has not yet waned. We cannot at any rate exclude the thought that they still bear a semantic potential that unleashes an inspiring energy for *all of* society as soon as they release their profane truth content.

In short, post-metaphysical thought is prepared to learn from religion, but remains agnostic in the process. It insists on the difference between the certainties of faith, on the one hand, and validity claims that can be publicly criticized, on the other; but it refrains from the rationalist presumption that it can itself decide what part of the religious doctrines is rational and what part irrational. The contents which reason appropriates through translation must not be lost for faith. However, an apology of faith with philosophical means is not the task of philosophy proper. At best, philosophy *circles* the opaque core of religious experience when reflecting on the intrinsic meaning of faith. This core must remain so abysmally alien to discursive thought as does the core of aesthetic experience, which can likewise only be circled but not penetrated by philosophical reflection.

Post-metaphysical thought's ambivalent attitude to religion corresponds to the epistemic attitude which secular citizens must adopt, if they are to be prepared to learn something from the contributions to public debates made by their religious counterparts, something that can also be expressed in a generally accessible language. The philosophical appropriation of the genealogy of reason appears to

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play that role for a self-reflection of secularism as the reconstruction work of theology plays for the self-reflection of religious faith. The required work of philosophical reconstruction goes to show that the ethics of democratic citizenship assumes secular citizens exhibit a mentality that is no less demanding than the corresponding mentality of their religious counterparts. This is why the cognitive burdens that both sides have to shoulder in order to acquiring the appropriate epistemic attitudes are by no means asymmetrically distributed.

The fact that the 'public use of reason' (in the interpretation I have given of it) depends on cognitive preconditions which require learning processes has interesting, but ambiguous consequences. It reminds us firstly that that the democratic constitutional state, such as relies on a deliberative form of politics, is an epistemically discerning form of government that is, as it were, truth-sensitive. A 'post-truth democracy', such as the *New York Times* saw on the horizon during the last Presidential elections, would no longer be a democracy. Moreover, the requirement of complex mentalities draws our attention to an improbable functional imperative that the liberal state can hardly meet by employing its own means. The polarization of world views in a community that splits into fundamentalist and secular camps, shows, for example, that an insufficient number of citizens matches up to the yardstick of the public use of reason and thereby endanger political integration. Such mentalities are pre-political in origin, however. They change incrementally and unforeseeably in response to changed conditions of life. A long-term process of this kind gets at best accelerated in the medium of public discourses among the citizens themselves. Yet is this a cumulative cognitive process at all, one that we may describe as a learning process in the first place?

7

A third consequence is most disquieting of all. So far, we have assumed that citizens of a constitutional state can acquire the functionally requisite mentalities by embarking on 'complementary learning processes'. The following consideration shows that this assumption is not unproblematic: From what perspective may we claim that the fragmentation of a political community, if it is caused by a collision of fundamentalist and secularist camps, can be traced back to 'learning deficits'? Let us bring to mind here the change in perspective which we have made when moving from a normative explanation of an ethics of citizenship to an epistemological investigation of the cognitive preconditions for the rational expectation that citizens are able to meet the corresponding obligations. A change in epistemic attitudes must occur for the religious consciousness to become reflective and the secularist consciousness to transcend its limitations. But it is only from the viewpoint of a specific, normatively charged self-understanding of Modernity that we can qualify these mentality changes as complementary 'learning processes'.

Now, this view can of course be defended in the framework of an evolutionary social theory. Quite apart from the controversial position which such theories

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have within their own academic discipline, from the viewpoint of normative political theory we may at no point impose on citizens our expectation that they describe themselves in terms, for example, of a theory of religious evolution, or even rate themselves as cognitively 'backward'. Only the participants and their religious organizations can resolve the question of whether a 'modernized' faith is still the 'true' faith. And whether or not, on the other side, a scientistically justified form of secularism will not in the end win out against a more comprehensive concept of reason conceived in terms of some post-metaphysical thought is, for the time being, a moot point even among philosophers themselves. However, if political theory must leave it unanswered whether the functionally requisite mentalities can at all be acquired through learning process, then political theorists must accept that a normatively justified concept such as 'the public use of reason' may for good reasons remain 'essentially contested' among citizens themselves. For the liberal state is allowed to confront its citizens only with duties which the latter can perceive as reasonable expectations; this will be the case only if the necessary epistemic attitudes are in turn acquired from insight, i.e. through 'learning'.

We must not be misled into drawing the wrong conclusions from this self-limitation of political theory. As philosophers and as citizens, we can well be convinced that a strong reading of the liberal and republican foundations of the constitutional state should *and can* be successfully defended both intra muros and in the political arena. However, this discourse on whether a liberal constitution and an ethics of democratic citizenship is correct and we have the right understanding of it inevitably leads us into a terrain where the normative arguments no longer suffice. The controversy also extends to the epistemological question of the relationship between faith and knowledge, which itself touches on key elements of Modernity's background understanding of itself. Interestingly enough both the philosophical and the theological efforts to define the relationship between faith and knowledge generate far-reaching questions as to the genealogy of Modernity.

Let us return to Rawls's question: 'How is it possible for those of faith, as well as the nonreligious, to endorse a secular regime even when their comprehensive doctrines may not prosper under it, and indeed may decline?'[50] In the final analysis, the question cannot be answered just by reference to the normative explanations of political theory. Let us take the example of 'radical orthodoxy',[51] an approach that takes up the intentions and fundamental ideas of the political theology of a Carl Schmitt and develops them with the tools of deconstruction. If theologians of this ilk deny Modernity any intrinsic right[52] with the intention to once again give a nominalistically uprooted Modern world ontological anchors in the 'reality of God', then the debate has to be conducted on the respective opponent's playing field. In other words, theological propositions can only be countered by theological arguments, and historical or epistemological propositions by historical and epistemological arguments.[53]

The same applies to the opposite side. Rawls's question is leveled equally at both the religious and the secular sides. A differentiated debate on fundamental

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philosophical issues is most certainly necessary if a naturalist world view overdraws the account of scientific knowledge in the proper sense. There can be no deriving the public demand that religious communities must now at long last cast aside the traditional statements on the existence of God and or an eternal after-life from recent neurological insights into the dependence of all mental operations on brain processes, not that is until we have clarified, from the philosophical point of view, the pragmatic meaning such Biblical statements assume in the context of the doctrine and practice of religious communities.[54] The question as to how from this angle science relates to religious doctrine again touches on the genealogy of Modernity's self-understanding. Is modern science a practice that is completely understandable in its own terms, establishing the measure of all truths and falsehoods? Or should modern science rather be construed as resulting from a history of reason that includes the world religions?

Rawls developed his 'Theory of Justice' into 'Political Liberalism' because he increasingly recognized the immeasurable relevance of the 'fact of pluralism'. He did posterity a great service in thinking at an early date about the political role of religion. Yet precisely these phenomena should have made a supposedly 'free-standing' political theory aware of the limits of normative arguments. After all, whether the liberal response to religious pluralism can be accepted by the citizens themselves as the single right answer depends not least on whether secular and religious citizens, each from their own respective angle, are prepared to embark on an interpretation of the relationship of faith and knowledge that first enables them to behave in a self-reflexive manner toward each other in the political public sphere.[55]

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NOTES

[1] Cf. Berger (ed.) 1999.
[2] Cf. Buruma and Margalit 2004.
[3] Cf Norris and Inglehart 2004: Ch.4.
[4] Cf. Habermas 2004.
[5] Norris and Inglehart 2004: Ch. 10 defend the classical hypothesis that secularization wins out to the extent that along with improved economic and social conditions for life it also spreads the feeling of 'existential security'. Alongside the demographic assumption

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that fertility rates in developed societies are falling, this hypothesis initially explains why secularization today has all in all only seized root in the 'West'. The United States forms an exception, mainly because of two facts. First of all a rather blunt kind of capitalism has effects which are less cushioned by a welfare state and thus exposes the population on average to a higher degree of existential uncertainty. And second the comparatively high rate of immigration from traditional societies where the fertility rates are correspondingly high explains the stability of the relatively large proportion of religious citizens.

[6] Wills 2004.

[7] Goodstein and Yardley 2004. Bush was voted for by 60% of the Spanish-speaking voters, by 67% of the white Protestants, and by 78% of the Evangelical or Born-Again Christians. Even among the Catholics, who previously tended to vote Democrat, Bush turned the traditional majorities around. The fact that the Catholic bishops took sides is astonishing, for all the concurrence on the question of abortion, if we bear in mind that unlike the Church the administration defends the death penalty and put the lives of tens of thousands of US soldiers and Iraqi civilians at risk for a war of aggression that violated international law for which it could only cite dubious reasons.

[8] On this 'concept of respect' see the wide-ranging historical and yet systematically convincing study in Forst 2003.

[9] Rawls 1971: §§ 33f.

[10] On the concept of tolerance as reciprocal respect see Forst 2003.

[11] See Habermas 1996: Ch. 3.

[12] See Rawls 1997: 769: 'Ideally citizens are to think of themselves as if they were legislators and ask themselves what statutes, supported by what reasons satisfying the principle of reciprocity, they would think it most reasonable to enact.'

[13] Rawls 1993: 217.

[14] Rawls speaks of a 'family of liberal conceptions of justice' to which the use of public reason can refer when interpreting constitutional principles; see Rawls 1997: 773f.

[15] Rawls 1997: 786.

[16] For a specification of the demand for reasons in a 'generally accessible' language see Forst 1994: 199–209.

[17] Rawls 1997: 783f. (my italics). This amounts to a revision of the more narrowly formulated principle in Rawls 1994: p. 224f. Rawls confines the proviso to key issues relating to 'constitutional essentials'; I consider this reservation unrealistic with regard to modern legal systems in which basic rights in both, legislation and adjudication apply immediately to specific statutes so that almost all controversial legal issues can be redefined such as to become issues of principle.

[18] Rawls 1997: 777: 'They are not puppets manipulated from behind the scenes by comprehensive doctrines'.

[19] Rawls 1997: 781. I shall return to this objection later.

[20] See the debate between Robert Audi and Nicholas Wolterstorff in Audi and Wolterstorff 1997: 3f., 76f. and 167f.

[21] Cf. Birnbaum 2002.

[22] See the influential study by Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler and Tipton 1985.On Bellah's decisive publications in this field see the festschrift: Madson, Sullivan, Swindler and Tipton (eds.) 2003.

[23] On this empirical argument see Weithman 2002: 91: 'I argued that churches contribute to democracy in the United States by fostering realized democratic citizenship. They encourage their members to accept democratic values as the basis for important political decisions and to accept democratic institutions as legitimate. The means by which

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they make their contributions, including their own interventions in civic argument and public political debate, affect the political arguments their members may be inclined to use, the basis on which they vote, and the specification of their citizenship with which they identify. They may encourage their members to think of themselves as bound by antecedently given moral norms with which political outcomes must be consistent. The realization of citizenship by those who are legally entitled to take part in political decision-making is an enormous achievement for a liberal democracy, one in which the institutions of civil society play a crucial role'.

[24] Audi and Wolterstorff 1997: 25

[25] Audi and Wolterstorff 1997: 29

[26] This distinction also prompts Paul Weithman to differentiate the argument in line with his modified proviso; see Weithman 2002: 3.

[27] Meanwhile, Robert Audi has introduced a counterpart to the principle of secular justification: 'In liberal democracies, religious citizens have a prima facie obligation not to advocate or support any law or public policy that restricts human conduct, unless they have, and are willing to offer, adequately religiously acceptable reasons for this advocacy or support' (Audi 2005: 217). This principle of religious justification is evidently meant to impose an act of critical self-scrutiny on citizens who are informed in their thinking by religious reasons.

[28] On the Augustinian distinction of *fides quae creditur* and *fides qua creditur* see R. Bultmann 1984: 185 ff.

[29] Wolterstorff in Audi and Wolterstorff 1997: 105.

[30] Weithmann 2002: 157.

[31] This brings us to the interesting question of the extent to which during an election campaign candidates may confess or indicate that they are religious persons. The principle of separation of church and state certainly extends to the platform, the manifesto, or the 'line', which political parties and their candidates promise to realize. Seen normatively, electoral decisions that boil down to a question of personality instead of programmatic issues are problematic anyway. And it is all the more problematic if the voters take their cue from candidates' religious self-presentations. See on this point the ideas elaborated by Weithman 2002: 117–20: 'It would be good to have principles saying what role religion can play when candidates are assessed for what we might call their ''expressive value''—their fittingness to express the values of their constituencies. . ..What is most important to remember about these cases, however, is that elections should not be decided nor votes cast entirely or primarily on the basis of various candidates' expressive value'.

[32] Schmidt 2001.

[33] Schmidt bases his objection on Gaus 1966.

[34] Incidentally, this special status prohibits an assimilation of religious convictions to ethical conceptions, as proposed by Forst (1994: 152–61) who, from the perspective of normative political theory, gives the difference between religious and secular reasons a backseat to the precedence of procedural over substantive criteria of justification. Only from competing religious beliefs do we know a fortiori that a justified consensus cannot be reached. In his latest book Forst (2002: 644–47) recognizes the special status of this category of beliefs.

[35] Habermas 2003: 256ff.

[36] Weithman 2002: 3: 'Citizens of a liberal democracy may offer arguments in public political debate which depend on reasons drawn from their comprehensive moral views, including their religious views, without making them good by appeal to other arguments—provided they believe that their government would be justified in adopting

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the measures they favor and are prepared to indicate what they think would justify the adoption of the measures'.

[37] Habermas 1991.

[38] Weithman 2002: 121 (my italics).

[39] Audi and Wolterstorff 1997: 117f.

[40] Rawls 1994: 137: 'Our exercise of political power is fully proper only when it is exercised in accordance with a constitution the essentials of which all citizens as free and equal may reasonably be expected to endorse in the light of principles and ideals acceptable to their common human reason'.

[41] Wolterstorff 1997: 160.

[42] I have my correspondence with Thomas M. Schmidt to thank for the characterization of a philosophy of religion that is not pursued from the agnostic side: it aims at religion's self-enlightenment, but does not speak, like theology, 'in the name of' religious revelation, nor just as 'its observer'. See also Lutz-Bachmann 2000. On the Protestant side, Friedrich Schleiermacher played an exemplary role. He carefully distinguished between the role of the theologian and that of the apologetic philosopher of religion (who did not rely on the Aquinian tradition but instead on Kant's transcendental idealism) and combined both in his own person. See the introduction to his explication of the Christian doctrine in Schleiermacher 1830–1: §§ 1–10.

[43] In this sense, Forst (1994: 158) likewise speaks of 'translation' when he demands that 'a person must be able to make a (gradual) *translation* [his emphasis] of his/her arguments into reasons that are acceptable on the basis of the values and principles of public reason'. However, he considers translation not as a joint venture in the search for truth, in which secular citizens should take part even if the other side restricts itself to religious statements. Forst formulates the demand the way Rawls and Audi do, as a civic duty for the religious person, too. Incidentally, the purely procedural definition of the act of translation with a view to a 'unrestricted reciprocal justification' does not do justice to the semantic problem of transposing the contents of religious speech into a post-religious and post-metaphysical form of representation. As a result, the difference between ethical and religious discourse gets lost. See, for example, Arens 1982,who interprets Biblical metaphors as innovative speech acts.

[44] In his masterful study of the history of the notion of tolerance, Rainer Forst termed Pierre Bayle the 'greatest thinker on tolerance' because Bayle provides in exemplary fashion such a reflexive self-limitation of reason in relation to religion. On Bayle see Forst 2003: § 18 as well as §§ 29 and 33 on the systematic argument.

[45] Wolterstorff draws our attention to an all too often blurred distinction between secular reasons, that are meant to count, and secular world views, that like all comprehensive doctrines are not meant to count. See Audi and Wolterstorff 1997: 105: 'Much if not most of the time we will be able to spot religious reasons from a mile away . . . Typically, however, comprehensive secular perspectives will go undetected'.

[46] Geyer (ed.) 2004; Pauen 2004.

[47] Lutz-Bachmann 1992.

[48] See the sketches to a history of Being in Heidegger 1989.

[49] See the interesting discussions in Brunkhorst 2002: 40–78.

[50] See footnote 19.

[51] Milbank 1990; Milbank, Pickstock, and Ward (eds.) 1999.

[52] On the opposite position see the early work of Hans Blumenberg (1985).

[53] Schmidt 2005.

[54] See the final comment by W. Detel in his marvelously informed article Detel 2004.

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[55] My thanks go to Rainer Forst and Thomas M. Schmidt for their insightful comments, both of whom have already published several instructive works on this theme. I am also grateful to Melissa Yates for useful references and stimulating discussions.

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