The Energetics of Attraction: Daniel Hardy's Theological Imagination, Sociopoiesis, and the Measurement of Scriptural Reasoning

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Introduction

"We generally say that to measure something is to estimate its contours,"[1] but how do we measure something like Scriptural Reasoning (SR), whose value is expressed precisely by the inability of familiar forms of measurement to articulate the shape of its discourse? Measurement became an important motif in Daniel Hardy's thought, particularly in *Wording A Radiance: Parting Conversations on God and the Church*, and this paper draws on his work to help to provide Scriptural Reasoners with the tools necessary to develop a form of measurement adequate to SR's *sui generis* practice. Many have suggested that the value of SR, as an inter-faith practice, lies in its unique ability to form friendships and trust across broken boundaries in a world marked by suffering.[2] Hardy, however, was not convinced that these motifs provide a sufficient articulation of the kind of sociality involved in SR, and that they therefore do not adequately equip Scriptural Reasoners to scrutinize the patterns of their shared reasoning or to establish the ways in which their labors are fructified. For him, all disciplines and practices, including SR, should be measured in terms of the dynamics of "sociopoiesis." Sociopoiesis is "the generation and shaping of relations" through the "energetics of divine attraction," and it runs to primordial depths; it is a genuine healing within God's own life through which all creatures are redeemed for their original purpose— namely, for being irresistibly drawn beyond themselves through attraction to God and other creatures.[3]

In setting out Hardy's vision for measuring SR, we must first adapt our axiomatic units of measurement. In the first section of this paper, I explore the nature of Hardy's intellectual imagination, which involved all kinds of transdisciplinary inquiries. I establish how Hardy's study of science affected his understanding of Christian cosmology and hence his idea of what it might mean to "measure" afresh. His cosmology facilitates the emergence of fresh theological reflection on a mode of reasoning that—following Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Charles Sanders Peirce—he termed "abduction." It is according to the patterns of abductive reasoning that the measurement of SR takes place. Exploring the development of a dynamic, non-linear pattern of reasoning through expansions in Christian cosmology paves the way for the second part of the paper, where I demonstrate how Hardy envisaged the simultaneous rethinking of the doctrines of creation, sin, salvation, and eschatology in terms of an ecclesiology centered on divine and human sociality. Tracing Hardy's fundamental notion of the mutual implication of all parts of creation and their non-linear measurement in the first two sections of the paper enables me, in the third, to give an account of sociopoiesis as a "transcendental" in terms of which SR's practice is measured abductively, and of which SR is itself a measure.

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[1] Daniel W. Hardy with Deborah Hardy Ford, Peter Ochs and David F. Ford, *Wording a Radiance: Parting Conversations on God and the Church* (London: SCM Press, 2010), 60.

[2] See Daniel W. Hardy, "The Promise of Scriptural Reasoning," *Modern Theology* 22, no. 3 (2006): 546.

[3] See Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 48–54.

The hope is that a brief tour of Hardy's theological imagination will provide a Christian theological lexicon for measuring the relations between Scriptural Reasoners. If that is the case, then Hardy's work on sociality enables us (1) to *describe* more adequately the patterns of regenerative sociality involved in SR, and (2) to *encourage* others, especially Jews and Muslims, to reflect further on the measurement of SR and the concept of socialization in terms that do justice to the particularities of the distinct scriptural traditions.

Hardy's Intellectual Imagination, Abductive Reasoning, and the Concept of Measurement

Like Coleridge (one of Hardy's chief interlocutors), Hardy resisted the hermetic compartmentalization of academic disciplines: his imagination was alive to the mutually informing structures of all intellectual fields, and it thrived on conversations between theology, philosophy, literature, mathematics, cosmology, music, art, social anthropology, quantum physics, and many other subjects.[4] Engagements with science proved particularly fruitful for Hardy's theological understanding of cosmology.[5]

Firstly, Hardy borrowed from science in order to re-think the *substance* of Christian cosmology. He was astonished by the scientific discovery that the universe was formed with the eruption of a single quantum containing all the energy that would ever exist in the entire course of time, such that the "resultant universe (a) was uniform and homogeneous in all directions, but with local irregularities, and (b) expanded at the critical rate which allowed it to maintain its inner relations without recollapsing."[6] We move from and towards dynamic, relational order and unity, and not in a simply deterministic manner. In fact,

> the "coding" of the universe seems to have been achieved by dynamic means….Its self-shaping occurred through a series of transfigurations whereby energetic stabilities happen in such ways as to enable further expansion and stabilization….And this structure of interactions, itself as delicately balanced as the original matrix of conditions, formed the constraints within which the integrity of the universe and all its future coherence has operated thereafter.[7]

Contemporary cosmology thereby lays waste to the preeminent concept of classical physics—that of linear relations, "which sought to explain the order of nature in terms of a cause-and-effect scheme which could be applied throughout the cosmos"—and the concomitant idea that "instances of complexity would eventually yield to that kind of explanation."[8]

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[4] See Daniel W. Hardy, "Harmony and Mutual Implication in the *Opus Maximum*," in *Coleridge's Assertion of Religion: Essays on the* Opus Maximum, ed. Jeffrey W. Barbeau (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 33–52.

[5] See his chapter on "Theology, Cosmology and Change" in Daniel W. Hardy, *God's Ways with the World*: *Thinking and Practising Christian Faith* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996), 132–150.

[6] Hardy, *God's Ways with the World*, 146.

[7] Hardy, *God's Ways with the World*, 142. Likewise, in evolutionary biology the morphogenetic processes of a particular species (including human beings) are dependent upon "initial conditions" that regularize their interaction with their natural and social environments, forming the constraints within which certain changes may occur; but they "achieve their order and regularity through transformation." (Hardy, *God's Ways with the World*, 143). Species' dynamic participation within a system therefore regularizes and orders that system (in relation to the original matrix of conditions), allowing them to express their natures which must thereby be viewed as intrinsically holistic and dynamic.

[8] Hardy, *God's Ways with the World*, 138.

Dynamic, non-linear patterns inherent in cosmology present the cosmos as a generous gift, an "environment of abundance…giving reason for praise in all situations."[9] There is the stability and order of a unified whole, perfectly tempered for long-term sustainability, and, inherent in the patterns of the universe's origins, there is also space for local self-shaping in diverse manners. The significance of contemporary cosmology for theology is to see the entire cosmos as unfolding from a single moment of superabundant order, in a time-bound manner, with increasingly complex relations that can only begin to be adequately captured in probabilistic rather than deterministic terms, and in which the act of local participation in the cosmos—which is the ground for its observation—also affects the very dynamics of the cosmos.[10] In short, the cosmos is an ordered whole in which there is space for local creativity, spontaneity, and unpredictability. In such a Christian cosmology, creation cannot be seen simply as a "fabrication" of separate physical entities, but must be seen as an ordering of all things "towards God" and as the design of mutually related creatures for full and genuine participation in that by which they are ordered.[11] As we shall discover in the second part of this essay, such engagements with the *substance* of contemporary science enable a revision of the doctrines of creation and eschatology, in order to expand our comprehension of the social fabric of the universe—and, hence, to provide intellectual waypoints for the measurement of SR.

Hardy also borrows tropes from science that facilitate a revision of the *forms* of Christian thinking in dynamic, non-linear, and non-materialistic terms. If theology is to learn from contemporary science in opening up a dynamic understanding of the fabric of creation, space, and time, then—in parallel to the advances in quantum mechanics beyond the axiomatic status of Newtonian mechanics (which had even underpinned the general theory of relativity)—it must also adjust the units of measurement with which it attempts to speak of God, creation, and human being.[12] Hardy was concerned that "much theology is constricted by Aristotelian categories and their implied notions of measurement."[13] For Hardy, it was enlightening to adopt tropes from contemporary physics because the attempt to trace theological patterns of meaning "varies according to the significance of what happens, more like quantum measurement."[14] In quantum measurement, as in ethnography, there is a dynamic relationship between the observer and the observed, so that to measure is not simply to locate "what is there" in terms of materiality but to engage in a process in which knowledge is viewed probabilistically and historically.[15] Measurement is participative and creative. The use of overly rigid, fixed units of measurement in Aristotelian ontology is only suited to materiality and could therefore never attend axiologically to the nature of God, the life of the Spirit, the dynamics of salvation history, and so on—all of which defy the sufficiency of fixed units of measurement: "Beyond materiality there is the measurement of value, movement and significance: you are changing, what is being measured is changing,

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[9] Daniel W. Hardy and David F. Ford, *Jubilate: Theology in Praise* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1984), 73.

[10] See Hardy, *God's Ways with the World*, 147ff.

[11] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 46.

[12] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 60–71.

[13] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 120.

[14] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 120.

[15] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 60–61.

there are fluidities in the measuring."[16] Significantly, rather than entrenching "naturalistic human knowledge as determinative of what can be believed," which tends to restrict theological witness to God's economy,[17] changing the idea of what it means to measure from the static observation of entities to assessing the dynamic terms of participation in a living and fluid field may very well have the consequence of stretching the imagination's capacities.

When we begin to borrow analogues from quantum physics, we can develop fresh ways of theological imagining that call into question the adequacy of the over-rigid categories that have been so restrictive in much Christian thinking. For example, Hardy imagined that attaining theological understanding of God is not like acquiring fixed, cognitivist, and dogmatic propositions about God's nature, but more like an event, pilgrimage, or journey into the divine where—as in the quantum measurement of photons—the act of measurement, the tools, and manner of observation all affect that which is being measured.[18] Science validates theology to the extent that the non-propositional nature of knowledge of God is echoed in the way in which we must measure God's creation at a quantum level. Hardy asks how we might "measure God" and finds that "[f]or a life of pilgrimage, to know God is not to observe things 'about' him from some neutral standpoint but to participate in his life in the world."[19] This kind of theological knowledge is not primarily "knowledge that" but "personal relation to" and "participation in." In Christian cosmology, therefore, the units of measurement must be changed so that we are not only trying to assess "what there is" in material terms, but also to "name that which of its nature is infinite, endless and expansive, to which the only possible response is not to name it but to follow it into the depths. You can say of it only that it is what attracts."[20]

Perhaps the most helpful term in Hardy's lexicon for altering the units of measurement in a cosmologically grounded theology is "abduction."[21] Abduction is the movement of attraction, given its impetus by an ordered energy. It is the absolute core of the "energetics of attraction."[22] To trace an abduction is to map a process or pattern of reasoning or affection that signifies "a being drawn to and drawn by."[23] For Peirce (whom Hardy felt may well have drawn on Coleridge's use of the term),[24] abduction is the mode of reasoning that generates "probabilistic claims" about the world; for Coleridge, and subsequently for

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[16] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 120.

[17] See Daniel W. Hardy, "The Reception of Schleiermacher and Barth in England," in *Barth and Schleiermacher: Beyond the Impasse?,* ed. James O. Duke and Robert F. Streetman (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 147.

[18] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 60.

[19] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 60–61.

[20] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 46.

[21] There is not space here to rehearse an in depth account of abductive reasoning. Theologically minded readers seeking an initial introduction to abduction in Peirce should consult Ben Quash, *Found Theology: History, Imagination and the Holy Spirit* (London; New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 197–234. Those looking for a technical account of the role of abduction in Peirce's pragmatism should see Peter Ochs *Peirce, Pragmatism and the Logic of Scripture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). For an introduction to the role of abduction within Hardy's pneumatological philosophy and eucharistic ecclesiology, see Peter Ochs, *Another Reformation: Postliberal Christianity and the Jews* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Academic, 2011), 167–194.

[22] This is the phrase Hardy used to refer to the capacity for movement within each element of civilization to be drawn to and animated by God. See Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 47–48.

[23] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 45.

[24] See Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 49; and Hardy, "Harmony and Mutual Implication in the *Opus Maximum*," 51.

Hardy, abduction is never conceived in abstraction from relation back to God through the energetics of attraction.[25] It is "our capacity to turn away from self-engagement back to our primordial attraction to others and to God."[26] Because we live in a notional universe in which all knowledge is probabilistic and never absolute, our engagements in abduction often occurmost overtly when we "are aware of something incompletely explained or not explained at all."[27] To characterize abduction in Johannine terms, one could say that it is the event of being *led into* all truth (Jn. 16: 13)—rather than attempting to fix or acquire the truth as an entity supposed to yield to linear, finite explanations. Since, for Hardy, all truth—and, therefore, all reason—emanates from the divine light as an ultimate and infinitely intensifying source, abduction simultaneously entails (i) the personal and communal transformation of identities (a being abducted into the life of God); and (ii) the concomitant logical process of inquiry that describes such transformations in terms of the concepts, categories, shapes, and patterns at play as a community of inquirers is drawn into the truth of God's ways and therefore into the fullness of being (cognitive and affective) through participation in the light. In Pauline terms, abduction names a being drawn into the "fullness of him who fills all in all" (Eph. 1: 23).

It is worth pausing to consider this double aspect of abduction—what we might call its soteriological and logical dimensions—because they cast light on Hardy's alternative account of measurement, both in terms of *how* and *what* one measures. Hardy is aware of the use of the term "abduction" in modern philosophy (primarily in pragmatism), and he shares the pragmatic sense of abduction as the mode of reasoning—distinct from, but resourcing, induction and deduction—that will allow for the generation of best possible explanations in the face of the unknown.[28] When a situation does not yield to explanations drawn necessarily from rational inference (deduction) or available via direct perception (induction), one is forced to speculate about what might be the explanatory ground for the case at hand. In Hardy's pneumatological philosophy, abductions are "probable, nonnecessary, but testable observations…about the characteristics of Spirit as ground and presupposition of our actions."[29] An example of such an abductive inference is when a Christian Scriptural Reasoner *takes* the presence of the Spirit to be the best possible explanation for the regeneration of relations that occurs through acts of hospitality around sacred texts. Since one cannot directly "see" the Spirit, one must infer its presence indirectly as the ground of "our observable behaviors" and then test this hypothesis by assessing the extent to which it continues to be fruitful to explain certain phenomena.[30] As such, abductions are never infallible or incorrigible, though they may offer sufficient justificatory confidence that the reasoner would be willing to bet their lives on it.[31]

Soteriologically, abduction names the loss of self-attraction of a community and its members through patterns of Spirit-led redemption (affective and cognitive). One reason many scholars have identified the patterns of reasoning displayed in SR as "abductive" is because SR has the quality of dramatic episodes of deep reasoning in the face of the

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[25] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 49.

[26] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 50.

[27] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 50.

[28] See Hardy, "Harmony and Mutual Implication in the *Opus Maximum*," 51.

[29] Ochs, *Another Reformation*, 176.

[30] Ochs, *Another Reformation*, 176.

[31] See Ochs, *Another Reformation*, 177.

unknown: members of different Abrahamic faiths are led deeper into their own faiths and communities through engagement with the texts of others, occasioning personal, communal, and social repair at potential sites of conflict.[32] The processes of reasoning involved here are abductive because it is not primarily that some new piece of dogmatic information is being identified; more often than not, there is no inductive or deductive movement towards the propositional "knowledge that." What is disclosed is a movement of unification (the "energetics of attraction," as Hardy would term it) rather than a state of affairs. The reasoning involved in SR establishes a deeper integrity of personal and intra-communal identity, and deeper acquaintance with the identities of other individuals and communities, such that an event of deep reasoning around sacred texts forms relations precisely where the discontinuity of relations was taken to be a barrier to the reasoning itself. As such, the abductive reasoning of SR leads us "beyond the proximate, transforming what appears to be fixed and bounded into something much more fluid."[33] It challenges participants to hear the voices of those taken to be radically other because, for Hardy, abduction is characterized by a process of losing self-attraction (cognitive and affective, communal and individual) in favor of being attracted by and towards the other, whether God or neighbor: "To the degree that we allow self-displacement, abduction opens us indefinitely into ever-new relations with the other."[34]

But Hardy is also concerned with the "mutual implication" (a Coleridgean term) of the logical and soteriological aspects of abduction as they are grounded in the relationality of God's own triune life. Neither the actualization of redemptive sociality through loss of self-attraction, nor the inferential processes involved in discerning the ground of such episodes, are possible outside the life of the Spirit itself. For some this will be problematic, because it appears to suggest that abductive justifications for beliefs about God presuppose the presence and activity of the God they seek to name as a condition of reason's operation. But Hardy sees it as a symptom of the irrationality of many modern habits of reasoning that claim to measure objectively and from a neutral standpoint, obscuring the relational character between knower and known.[35] He is insistent that since God alone is God's measure, governing the event of revelation, reasoning about God can only take place descriptively in God through what Hardy, like Coleridge, calls the "Logos Spirit" —the event of triune relationality that renders intelligible the cosmos and everything in it (including reasoning itself, which is consequently considered to be "divinely infused"):

> [T]he stirring of wisdom to be in being present with us is the conditionality within which we find ourselves existing; and that conditionality enfolds us in the self-constitutive activity of God. Properly speaking this is a Trinitarian movement by which the Spirit is the stirring of the wisdom which is God to be fully Himself (the Fatherhood of God) by being fully present with us (in the Son).[36]

If Christian Scriptural Reasoners are to use the logic of abduction to facilitate an alternative method for measuring the practice of SR, then the key is to estimate the contours of SR in terms of a dynamic event, a going deeper, and an attraction grounded in the economy of grace. Frustrated by attempts to measure which purportedly infer fixed states of affairs

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[32] See Hardy, "The Promise of Scriptural Reasoning," 545.

[33] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 51.

[34] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 51.

[35] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 66.

[36] Daniel W. Hardy, "Spirit of Unity—Reconcile Your People!" cited by Ochs, *Another Reformation*, 175.

distinct from the act of measurement itself, and which defer to the self-referential rational capacities of the individual to dictate the limits of intelligibility, the Scriptural Reasoner may be guided by an alternative logic. The logic of abduction suggests that SR *displays* the mutual implication of that which is measured (divine-human sociality) and the mode of measurement (abductive discernment) as disclosed by the self-measure of God in the Holy Spirit through a single act of rational and reparative attraction.

Hardy's Theological Imagination and the Measurement of Human Sociality

Hardy's ability to think across multiple disciplines means that it was also essential to him to draw together the various strands of Christian doctrine, treating them not in the relative isolation they enjoy in many theologians' work, but as mutually informing parts of a unified theological system. After all, a proper theological method ought to echo our cosmological insight into the "dynamic relationality of all that exists."[37] The primacy of the imagery of ropes and knots in the poetry of Micheal O'Siadhail, another of Hardy's chief interlocutors, is a fitting motif for his practice. According to Hardy's holistic theological imagination, if we are to measure adequately the contours of human participation in the divine order, we must articulate a notion of human sociality that transcends the boundaries of any one doctrinal *locus*. All doctrine ought to be conceived in terms of a superabundant divine harmony, by and for which all things are created and in light of which we understand disruptions to the created order through sin and evil, as well as the moments of divine grace in which such distortions are healed.

If we inhabit Hardy's scientific imagination and adopt a wide-angle overview of the approximately 14 billion years of the universe's observable history and possible 100 billion years of its future, we may resist the anthropocentrism and Christomonism that have been part and parcel of the compartmentalization of creation, anthropology, soteriology, and eschatology in much Christian doctrine. Hardy was fascinated by the interplay between eschatology and creation, since "viewed ontologically, eschatology is the *unfolding* of what is *enfolded* in protology."[38] We can only understand the future of human life in light of the primordial origin in which all things were created for harmony. Hardy encapsulates his vision for the doctrines of creation, sin, and redemption in *Wording a Radiance*:

> Creatures are created to move toward God. When creatures somehow lose that towardness—becoming obsessive at some point, separating from the whole of things and serving only themselves—then creation loses its order….Things need redemption when, twisted into themselves, they have lost their towardness. Attraction is redemptive because it restores the directionality of things and, thereby, restores the integrity of creation.[39]

What is the place of the Church in the energetics of attraction? Certainly it is not the task of the Church to attempt to attain and celebrate salvation for its own sake; salvation is neither something primarily concerning individuals or individual sects, nor something that can be achieved by certain individuals at the expense of others. For Hardy, salvation can be described in Synoptic terms as the coming of the Kingdom of God, in Pauline terms as entering into the fullness of being, and in Johannine terms as being led into truth, light, and

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[37] Hardy, *God's Ways with the World*, 139.

[38] Hardy, *God's Ways with the World*, 158.

[39] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 47.

life. In any of these biblical portrayals of redemption, there is a concern to rediscover a primordial harmony in which all of God's creatures are enfolded. Consequently, the Church's mission consists in witness to the fulfillment of human sociality through prophecy and priesthood.[40] In his ecclesiology,

> Each creature, and each community of creatures, recovers its primordial attraction to each other and to God. As the body of Christ, the Church is at once the measure and the place and the time of this recovery, and each empirical church embodies the measurement in its historical time and place.[41]

How does the Church undertake its measurement of human sociality through the recovery of attraction and the integrity of identity? As we have seen, according to the patterns of abduction, to measure is not to ascertain the shape of a fixed, static entity and to define neatly its boundaries: "God's measures are events rather than fixed quantities."[42] To measure human sociality is to estimate the contours of patterns of relation as they exist in a particular time and place by participating in them in a manner that both embodies and locates moments of rational, affective, and physical healing. The Church is called to witness to the energetics of divine attraction by calling upon individuals and communities to participate in patterns of healing and to administer that healing itself.

Two primary prototypes Hardy uses for the Church's task of measuring, and by which the Church is therefore itself measured, are the performance of the Eucharist and the Gospel narrative of Jesus' walking. God gains a measure of his people, and his people gain a measure of each other and of God, by establishing the integrity of identity in reciprocal relations. The Eucharist is a *performative* measure of each member of the Church's pilgrimage to God within a local community witnessing to the dynamics of divine attraction. It measures the abductive "capacity to turn away from self-engagement back to our primordial attraction to others and to God."[43] The narrative of Jesus' walking is *the* measure of all measures, since Jesus did not measure the land of Israel or his people as fixed entities about whom final judgments can be made. His measurement consisted in the events of face to face encounter through which human sociality was embodied. The Church is therefore measured by its ability to walk, encounter, and heal, in imitation of Christ and therefore in witness to the energetics of divine attraction that reaches to the depths of creation.[44] Finally, for Hardy, these two measures of Eucharist and Jesus' walking-healing are not two but one: they are part of a single relational abduction in which the individual and the Church is measured by God in the performance of Christ-like encounter with others in expression of the fundamental measure of human sociality: being drawn by and to God and neighbor.[45]

Hardy's Ecclesiological Imagination and the Measurement of Scriptural Reasoning

Hardy's understanding of the inherent relationships between doctrinal *loci*, theology, and the other disciplines both informs and emanates from his vision for the relations between

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[40] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 51.

[41] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 83.

[42] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 62.

[43] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 82.

[44] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 83–4.

[45] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 85.

people: God created us and everything in harmony, and, in spite of certain chaotic disruptions in the created order at the cosmological and human levels, we are moving towards harmony. God will be all in all. As such, only when we start to see all aspects of reality in relation to their primordial unity can we understand what God wants for people: for all people in all times to be in good relationships to each other and to God. And this is the crux of Hardy's theological vision: the interrelationships between science, philosophy, theology, creation, eschatology, ecclesiology, and so on are meaningful only to the extent that they grasp some aspect of God's creative purpose. So too, then, SR is meaningful only instrumentally and to the extent that it is a practice rooted in, and indicative of, God's final purpose for human and divine-human sociality.[46] The measure of SR is its function as a mode of healing that opens up when participants pursue joint engagement with Scriptures, which are the "*public form* of *primary discourse of God.*"[47]

How does Hardy discern a pattern of eschatological socialization occurring in SR's tents of meeting? In *On Being the Church,* he conceived of a "transcendental social" against which all particular instances of human and human-divine sociality are tested and in light of which "the manifest failure…of human thought and life to appropriate [such] a transcendental" can be diagnosed and repaired.[48] There are two major accounts of the transcendentals: the first is the view of transcendentals as the "necessary notes of being;" the second is the view of transcendentals as the "presupposed basis for the establishment of knowledge through argument and agreement."[49] In other words, for Hardy, there is both an ontic and a noetic aspect to the transcendental. In either case, a transcendental social would be the view that the conditions for being and thought are human and divine-human sociality. We cannot conceive of our being, or of our conceptuality itself, in non-social terms (as, for Hardy, the idealists and liberals did in their emphasis on the individuality of the subject).[50]

The most developed account of this transcendental sociality was delivered in *Wording a Radiance,* where Hardy describes the process of "sociopoiesis." Sociopoiesis names a sociality that runs deeper than friendship or trust: it is primordial, redemptive, and infinitely intense, and it therefore holds open a web of indefinitely complex relational forms.[51] Sociopoiesis is the "energetics of attraction" by which God draws all beings into relationship with the divine and each other. Sociopoiesis names both a universal transcendental (as a condition for thinking what it means to be a human) and the practical processes of social

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[46] On the relativity of all social structures to God, see Daniel W. Hardy, "God and the Form of Society," in *The Weight of Glory: A Vision and Practice for Christian Faith: The Future of Liberal Theology,* ed. D.W. Hardy and P.H. Sedgwick (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 131–144.

[47] Hardy, "The Promise of Scriptural Reasoning," 529.

[48] Daniel W. Hardy, "Created and Redeemed Sociality," in *On Being the Church: Essays on the Christian Community,* ed. Colin E. Gunton and Daniel W. Hardy (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989), 35.

[49] Hardy, "Created and Redeemed Sociality," 27.

[50] Hardy, "Created and Redeemed Sociality," 23.

[51] In Hardy's work, "intensity" is a technical theological term, though the play on the phenomenological experience of divine overwhelming is deliberate. He deploys it in a number of senses, but its use is always governed by the question, "Which conditions obtain for unity or towardness?" Likewise, his varied and occasionally enigmatic use of the correlative term "extensity" is governed by the question, "Which conditions obtain for distinction or spread-out-ness?" It is worth noting that one cannot simply label the former "positive" and the latter "negative," because extensity is part of the conditionality of being, given the ontic distinction from God's own reality in which we enjoy the freedom of creatures. It also marks the ecclesial freedom of being sent into the world to serve the redemptive energetics of attraction. As Ochs observes, "To live is thus to live in extensity and intensity, but to live only in extensity is to live outside of God's unity. Any redemptive movement from disunity to unity is a movement from extensity to intensity" (Ochs, *Another Reformation*, 179).

formation (the pragmatic conditions for expressing one's humanity). As such, one may test both the adequacy of one's conception of sociopoiesis as a transcendental universal by examining its expression on an empirically real plane, and the practical adequacy of social institutions (whether legal, economic, religious, civic, or otherwise) by examining them in the light of the concrete situations in which they express the transcendental sociality.[52] In other words, when abductions take place through which social institutions and practices are imagined, affirmed, critiqued, and reconceived, one is simultaneously revising one's hypotheses about the universal transcendental social in light of the particular and concrete, and also revising one's behaviors, patterns of thinking, and engagements with the concrete and particular in light of the universal transcendental. This might be described as a dialectic of measurement: sociopoiesis as a transcendental constitutes the conceptual framework in light of which abductions measure sociality on an empirical plane, and particular instances of sociopoiesis are the pragmatic measure of the very concept of sociality. This dialectical vision of measurement is one that might be assumed by theorists of SR and by its practitioners if they are to expand their conceptions of the sociality engendered by its abductions.

First, how will we measure the concrete practices of SR in light of the transcendental social? Just as the Church measures the energetics of attraction by undertaking prophetic and priestly performances that generate and witness to patterns of socialization (for example, the Eucharist, walking with others, healing, praying, reading Scripture, and so on), so too measuring SR means participating in the processes of abduction—rather than stating what SR "is" as such. As a form of walking-healing, the sociality involved in SR equates to what Hardy calls "granulation" (a term borrowed from medicine); this is the capacity of societies and persons to be regenerated from deep within themselves.[53] According to Hardy's ecclesiological imagination, therefore, the signs for recognizing that healing is taking place in SR may well be akin to those found in Christian pilgrims who have moved beyond cognitive theological inquiry, have lost their "commitment to detachment, which now appears increasingly as having been a commitment to reason's self-attraction," and have begun to be abducted into reparative modes of sociality proper to an ecclesiological vocation.[54] These signs are as follows: (i) members of one's faith community and other practitioners of SR may observe and comment on the patterns of healing and walking displayed in a particular Scriptural Reasoner; (ii) the SR practitioner may discover a sense of inner integrity and joy by being taken deeper into their own tradition and deeper into relations with the other; (iii) the SR practitioner may begin to see the light in others: the energetics of divine attraction shining through another.[55] That is to say, if SR is functioning as a practice of reading the sacred texts which embody the public form of the divine word, then it is impossible that its participants will not find themselves drawn away from the "presocial,"[56] in which they are

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[52] Hardy borrowed another trope from science to conceive of the relation between the transcendental social as a theory of maximal human sociality and pragmatic sociality as an expression of it, comparing their relation to that between "a generic semi-interpreted theory" (such as general classical field theory, quantum field theory, game theory) and "a generic interpreted theory" (such as classical mechanics, general relativity, or the synthetic theory of evolution). The former can only be considered at a conceptual level and has no factual content assigned to it; the latter can only be tested as a practical interpretation of the former (Hardy, "Created and Redeemed Sociality," 29–31).

[53] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 64.

[54] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 83–84.

[55] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 85.

[56] See Hardy's diagram of the "Energetics of Attraction" in Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 48.

fundamentally attracted to self, religion, or sect (and hence towards the atrophy of evil), and towards the other. Scriptural Reasoners will measure their participation in its sessions by the extent to which they discern abductive healings that draw them beyond themselves into patterns of healing and wisdom that regenerate "whatever levels of relation are challenged by uncertainty or the unknown."[57] The signs or fruits of SR that occasion such modes of abductive discernment may include friendship, trust, and love; the depth of reading, conversation, and comprehension that this love supports; and the vibrancy of the divine word made visible through this depth of comprehension and dialogue.[58]

Since SR—like the Church—is liable to self-attraction, it cannot suffice for Scriptural Reasoners merely to form inward facing friendships between Christians, Muslims, and Jews.[59] Another potential measure of its capacity for sociopoiesis is to assess whether it generates (i) relations with non-Abrahamic religious communities whose own texts provide resources for relational abductions and (ii) patterns of healing whose effects extend beyond its own Abrahamic network to other communities (cultural, political, and religious). Exactly what the future of SR might be in terms of its membership is up for debate, but Hardy is clear that SR must remain attentive to the risks of self-attraction. When its practices form patterns of reasoning that are exclusivistic or hegemonic, the energetics of attraction have been interrupted. Happily, SR has already taken place around Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian, Daoist, and other texts, in locations all over the world, and there is no reason why SR cannot be undertaken with a whole range of religious voices—and for the benefit of a multitude of global communities.

It is worth noting, at this point, an incompleteness in Hardy's account of measurement.[60] So far, we have borrowed from his ecclesiology to characterize the measurement of the energetics of attraction on the empirical plane in *theological* and *metaphorical* terms alone. Yet, if participation in such intra- and inter-communal practices of repair are a measure of the energetics of attraction, then we must also develop the *theoretical* and *methodological* tools by which such measures are themselves measured or mapped in practical terms. Hardy, however, did not establish how such signs of abduction in SR are to be measured qualitatively, quantitatively, and formally. One reason for this might be his caution that God cannot be pre-measured. Another is that he sadly died before he was able to bring his account of the energetics of attraction to maturity. While theorists of SR ought to remain cognizant of Hardy's insistence that the abductive measurement of sociopoiesis occurs only through the dynamics of the Spirit, this does not mean that the signs by which Scriptural Reasoners measure the loss of self-attraction cannot be formalized in a manner isomorphic with Hardy's account. Indeed, it undoubtedly belongs to the future work of theorists of SR to develop the anthropological, hermeneutical, and logical tools by which Scriptural Reasoners may accomplish their measure of the energetics of attraction. A number of questions come to mind in imagining what it might mean to develop Hardy's theory of measurement in practical terms. We might ask whether it would be possible to trace qualitatively the degrees of "intensity" in an SR session. Are there anthropological mechanisms for observing the redemptive fruits of SR (or "loss of self-attraction," as Hardy would call it), as in ethnographic studies of communities? Could the sheer number and

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[57] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 50.

[58] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 93.

[59] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 91.

[60] I am indebted to Peter Ochs for drawing my attention to the following limitations in Hardy's thought.

diversity of activities, texts, individuals, and communities involved in SR inform a quantitative measure of its results? Is the longevity of inter-faith relations formed within a group also a quantitative indicator of its fulfilment as a mode of repair? Can the logic of relation characteristic of SR be mapped formally, in ways that indicate the operation of alternative modes of reasoning to "common sense" or binary logics which struggle to capture the depth, complexity or quality of the reasoning involved in SR? And what are the hermeneutical bases unique to SR's "guest-host" model of engagement with sacred texts? Such questions suggest the need to learn from Hardy's willingness to engage with philosophy, the natural and social sciences, literature, and other disciplines.

If Hardy has enabled us to *describe* the measure of SR in terms of a deep sociality, then it is also true that he *encourages* us to harness SR as a measure of the transcendental social itself. That is, the concrete practice of SR tests the sufficiency of sociopoiesis as a Christian, ecclesiologically conceived transcendental. If we take seriously the idea that SR's abductions lead its participants into ever-deepening engagements with their own Scriptures' witness to the divine presence and action, then it is necessary for Christians, Muslims, and Jews to continue to find resources within their texts, communities, and traditions for articulating the dynamics of God's ways with the world. In other words, Hardy's model of abductive reasoning about sociopoiesis itself calls for the ongoing critique of that model. Scriptural Reasoning is dynamic and cannot, therefore, accept a final or static model of socialization. As its participants and meetings across the world embody particular measures of the social order of all things, in particular times and places, so too will the ever-deepening dynamics of abduction call for revised understandings of what it means to participate in God's creation in Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and other traditions' terms. The abductions of SR themselves should occasion the critique and revision of Hardy's transcendental social.

Moreover, advances across a range of intellectual disciplines should have an impact on the model of the transcendental social conceived *qua* measure. For instance, ongoing expansions in the cosmological imagination will challenge the theological imagination, and Scriptural Reasoners are called to be alive to what Hardy calls "encyclopaedic abduction": the activity of seeing patterns in worldly multiplicity.[61] Christians, Muslims, and Jews are required to re-conceive their own theology in light of their understanding of the world, and thereby to generate new models of conceiving the divine order by which SR and all human endeavors are relativized.[62]

Conclusion

Since the ultimate measure of all human activity is God, we recognize that we have been measured by God to the extent that we participate in God's ways—as signaled by changes in our action. If my actions signal that I am attracted to some other—whether Christian, Muslim, or Jew—it is a sign that I am losing attraction to any self-measure.[63] One

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[61] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 69.

[62] The ground-breaking work of Alexander Wendt on the intersection of quantum theory, the philosophy of mind, epistemology, and the social sciences is a good example of the sorts of work Hardy might have endorsed as indicative of the way in which theologians ought to pursue cross-disciplinary research and partnerships in order to reconceive the transcendental conditions for divine-human sociality. See Alexander Wendt, *Quantum Mind and Social Science: Unifying Physical and Social Ontology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[63] Hardy, *Wording a Radiance*, 61.

sign of the regenerative sociality that can take place in SR would be the relinquishment by religious sects and individuals of any claim to possess the whole meaning of sacred texts, knowledge of God, or definitive foreknowledge of God's eschatological judgments. Regenerative abduction involves the ever-deepening realization that, within the infinite order of meaning and being, we only ever possess one perspective and cannot, therefore, justify patterns of ideological or physical violence. Such signs suggest that we measure SR in terms of an attraction that *involves* friendship and trust, but is actually something far deeper: the attractions generated by the abductions of SR are measured in terms of divine sociality (grounded in the Triune God) and therefore indicate a "granulation" or healing that is taking place at the very heart of God.

If we are measuring SR as a mechanism for participating in the healing identity of God, then we must expect that the changes in our behavior, which signal our being measured by God, will extend beyond the cognitive or discursive. The purpose of reading Scripture together is not simply to acquire more dogmatic information about God. It is to deepen human and divine-human sociality in ways that extend beyond the boundaries of ordinary academic discourse. As such, the "signs" by which we measure SR cannot be disclosed in advance of the abductions in which they emerge: SR is alive to the energetics of divine attraction and therefore relies on the living Word in Spirit for its direction. But there seem to be strong indications that SR is in fact generating the patterns of action and sociality that signal something is happening at the heart of God, and which therefore resist assimilation into ordinary modes of academic description and discourse. After all, SR has been the inspiration for one of its participants in the University of Cambridge to perform its logic through the medium of juggling; for others to dance together; for the creation of an International Summer School of emerging religious community leaders; for its founding participants to attempt to change the geo-political climate through a concrete reduction in religion-related violence by exploring a Global Covenant of Religions; and more generally for Scriptural Reasoners to share meals all around the world, to enjoy walks alongside one another, to pray together wherever they meet, and to pray for each other whenever they are apart. Participants must remain alive to similar signs of attraction if they are to "estimate the contours" of SR.