Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change
Series IIID, Southeast Asia, Volume 6
General Editor
George F. McLean

Relations between Religions and Cultures in Southeast Asia

Indonesian Philosophical Studies, I

Edited by
Gadis Arivia
Donny Gahral Adian

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

Box 261
Cardinal Station
Washington, D.C. 20064

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication

Relations between religions and cultures in southeast Asia / edited by Donny Gahral Adian, Gadis Arivia.
p. cm. -- (Cultural heritage and contemporary change. Series IIID, South East Asia ; v. 6)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
1. Religion and culture--Southeast Asia. I. Adian, Donny Gahral, 1974- II. Arivia, Gadis. III. Title. IV. Series.

BL65.C8R39 2008 2008021991
201'.70959--dc22 CIP

ISBN 978-1-56518-250-9 (pbk.)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part III. Religion, Cultures and Intercultural Cooperation

PREFACE

This study originated at the Department of Philosophy, University of Indonesia, Jakarta. It was convened by The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy and was attended by scholars from Southeast Asia. At the time religious extremism had begun to contribute to Indonesian conflicts, most notably the Bali bombings in 2002 and 2005.

The scholars felt the need both to reevaluate the dominant religions such as Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, and Christianity which came from elsewhere, and to explore the rich traditions of the native cultures. Wary of essentialist definitions of culture they were conscious that religious and cultural identities, if not treated as relational processes, can discriminate against minorities, especially women.

There is anxiety in facing the dominant global culture identified as Western and considered a threat to local cultures, whose protection is a priority. Post-colonial complexities have led to nationalist and patriotic movements. In recent years, religious nationalism has emerged and conflicting claims need to be addressed in the realm of public rationality and with openness.

Scholars formulated the problem and sought to formulate a cultural practice that assures policies that protect human rights. These issues drew much attention and were of interest to students as well.

Sharing the ideas of all Southeast Asian countries was indeed a valuable experience to the group. With the help of a broad range of disciplines, including history, literature and philosophy, as well as the personal experiences of the authors, this book, *Relations between Religions and Cultures*, is an attempt to understand and engage "other" cultures in an ongoing discussion on how peacefully to share the planet in which we now live.

Gadis Arivia

INTRODUCTION

With the end of the bi-polar Cold War and the intensification of global sensitivities the role of civilizations has come more strongly into view. For religion and culture this has had both good and bad effects. As Huntington points out, civilizations are the "largest we's" and each has as its foundation a major religion. As these now enter more centrally into human awareness, new issues emerge.

First, whereas religions are more universal and foundational, the cultures whereby people order and exercise lives must be specific to place and even to time. Hence an issue emerges in the relation of religion to culture. On the one hand, the broader religious pattern can tend to homogenize cultural specificities; on the other hand, it can tend to reinforce human freedom and hence evoke cultural creativity and differentiation. We must be conscious of these diverse dynamics and find a way to manage them harmoniously.

Secondly, cultures, for their part, are more local and reflective of the specific way of life of a people. Thus the cultural patterning of human relations can contribute to mediating the more transcendent and universal concerns of religion to the life of the people, and thereby to humanize the religions. This may be especially true of the cultural patterns of life in Southeast Asia which tend to be more soft and harmonious.

Finally, perhaps the major concern of peoples with the process of globalization is that it constitutes economically an imposition of the free market in which competition and profit are the prime considerations, and of a political matrix in which individualism reigns in the exercise of power. Both of these reflect a Western liberal ideology which can erode values in the name of individualism. Democratic society needs to be based also upon such values as tolerance, dignity and compassion for which religion provides an ontological basis for building such a value-based democratic society .

In these troubled times the world looks to Southeast Asia. When differences within and between cultures and civilizations tend to sharpen and descend toward not only competition, but conflict there is need for an approach developed by a people more characterized by patience and tolerance, by the ability to live and to let live, and by a search for harmounious relationships. It is especially for this that many now look to the peoples of Southeast Asia.

These characteristics, as with all values, are not an unmixed blessing. In a study published in this series, and entitled *Values in Philippine Culture and Education*, Emerita Quito writes on how due to this very ambivalence values such as patient resignation (*Bahala na*) and inclusion (*Sakop*) can lead not only to care for others, but also to passivity

and parasitism. Hence it becomes a present task to promote these values as strengths while working ever more actively for the welfare of all.

This is the goal of the studies in the present work. Part I looks to the general principles of cooperation between peoples and to their deep religious foundations in Southeast Asian cultures. Part II examines the specific character of these principles at work in the various countries and cultures of the region. Part III looks more directly at the challenges of peace between peoples for what can be learned from the cumulative life experiences of the peoples of Southeast Asia and the ways in which they have come to constitute their civilization as their way of living. Must these be submerged after the manner of a liberal political neutrality? Or can they contribute desperately needed understanding of how different peoples, by mining their deepest commitments, can find ways to live together in our newly global age.

Part I "Principles of Cooperation between Cultures" initiates the search for the principles of cooperation among different cultures.

Chapter I, by Ahmad Kazemi Moussavi, "The Reception of Modern Hermeneutics in Southeast Asia," studies the ideas of Zaid, Arkoun, and Soroush, three Islamic scholars who have applied Western hermeneutical approaches to Islam, and have had influence in Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia. Zaid stresses the role of context and readership in the interpretation of the Holy Koran; Arkoun 'deconstructs' Islamic orthodoxy by arguing that an orthodoxy is the result of a social group's perception and production of its own history. Sourosh argues that not all good and humanistic values come through religion *per se.*

Chapter II, by Corazon T. Toralba, "Religiosity: A Sure Foundation," argues that liberal market philosophy, like Marxism in its own way, is a secular religion in which Christianity's eschatological hopes are given an "Enlightenment twist." While marginalizing traditional religions, the liberal market philosophy exalts finances, consumerism, and cut-throat competition. By maintaining and transforming their traditional religiosity, Southeast Asian countries will be able to access the gains of globalization while avoiding its adverse effects.

Chapter III, by Bambang Sugiharto, "Religion, Culture and Identity Revisited," argues that religious identity can make for much trouble in the world (persecution, wars, etc.) when its definition is 'substantive' ['essentialist' in nature]. Sugiharto maintains, along with much contemporary Continental tradition, that 'identity' eludes the law of non-contradiction. Identity is a relational process, involving the overlapping of different elements of reality. Furthermore, interpretation plays the most important role in this process, and interpretation is constructed, nomadic, and always changing (even when the change is subtle and imperceptible). Sughiharto presents many concrete cases in point.

Chapter IV, by Joseph I. Fernando, "Towards Understanding Religions and Cultures in South East Asia," points out that the dominant religions in the Southeast Asian region, viz., Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Sikhism, all came there from elsewhere. Have these imported religions become truly inculturated? Religion can be either an opium and/or an aid of a people; it can be exploitative or beneficial. It is time to ask: Are there truly Southeast Asian Christains; has this enriched or hampered (or both) their native cultures?

Chapter V, by Mudji Sutrisno, "Life Wisdom of *Sasongko Jati*," presents the "teaching of the perfect life" in the *Sasongko Jati*, the scripture of the religion called the *Pangestu*, or "association of life through communion." This religion is based on revelations dating from 1932-33, and was formally established in 1949 in Surakarta, where it became representative of the palace culture. The *Sasongko Jati* speaks of One God with three manifestations; union with God is taken as the goal of human life.

Chapter VI, by Tran Van Doan, "Reflections on the Future of Asian Philosophy," argues that Asian philosophy must return to and further develop its own rich traditions, freeing itself both from imitation of Western philosophy, on the one hand, and a jingoistic and blind imitation of its own past, on the other. Far Eastern philosophy developed in terms of concrete social needs, and is eminently pragmatic in that it seeks to describe how individuals and communities can be happy in this world. When Asian philosophy has subjected itself to ideology (whether religionism or statism), it has lost its way. Thus careful critique of its own past should be one of the prime concerns of philosophy in Asia (as elsewhere).

Part II "Religion in the National Cultures of Southeast Asia" examines these principles in greater detail with regard to the specific cultural situation and religious roots of the many Southeast Asian countries.

Chapter VII, by Sok Keang, "Religious Practices and Political Life in Cambodia Today," explains the influence of Theravada Buddhism (representing 95 percent of the Cambodian people) on Cambodian society since 1993, when the new constitutional monarchy came into effect. Cambodian Buddhism bears many Brahmanist and animist traces which influence points-of-view towards issues such as property-distribution and freedom/equality. Buddhism, doctrinally, can support socialism, communism, liberalism, or democracy. In communism, the people are equal in material services and benefits, but may be vulnerable to authoritarianism. In [bourgeois] democracy, people have freedom in their choices, but cannot be equal in material possessions and benefits. Cambodians in general approve of a shaped structural society (to avoid anarchism) and affirm moderation for both governmental figures and the people.

Chapter IX, by Warayuth Sriwarakuel, "Christianity and Thai Culture," seeks to account for the relatively low percentage (less than 2 percent) of Christians in Thailand even after four and one-half centuries of

contact. The author argues that Catholic Christianity has failed to inculturate, since from the beginning it "did not welcome the cultural contexts of the Thai people," who are "lovers of independence and flexibility." Catholic missionary teaching from the beginning emphasized, among Thais, a system of "do's and don'ts" instead of love. On the other hand, Buddhism, also an imported religion, knew to find places for Brahmanism and animism within its doctrinal structure. In the matter of inculturation, the author urges greater attention to the documents of Vatican Council II, which call precisely for missionary adaptation and flexibility.

Chapter X, by Rolando M. Gripaldo, "Roman Catholicism and Filipino Culture," examines the effects of Roman Catholicism on The Philippines. He characterizes the resultant form of Roman Catholicism as "folk Catholicism," which, at its best, is an inculturation of Catholicism and indigenous culture and at its worst (from an orthodox Catholic perspective) a syncretism. The domains of Western and indigenous cultural interchange include politics, ethics, language, education, economics, literature, and art.

Chapter XI, by Mulyadhi Kartanegara, "Reading Rumi within the Indonesian Context," explains why the great Muslim mysical poet, Rumi, though long disregarded and even impugned by Muslim authorities in Indonesia, offers an understanding of Islam that is extraordinarily helpful to Indonesian Islam today. Thus Kartanegara has been taking as his mission (1) the rehabilitation of Rumi's image, which in the past has been so negatively conceptualized as "*bid'ah* (heresy), escapism, and too self-centred a search for salvation"; (2) the reformulation of the concept of *taqdir* according to Rumi's reading, so that *taqdir* is not understood as "predestination"; and (3) the propagation of the transcendent unity of religions, which Rumi argues is an Islamic idea.

Chapter XII, by Yasraf Amir Piliang, "Religion and Popular Imagination: Islam in Contemporary Indonesian Culture," describes the social effect of globalism, the Information Age, and virtual reality, on traditional Islam in an Indonesian setting. Using such thinkers as Adorno, Sontag, and Bourdieu, Piliang demonstrates a new cultural intertextuality which dismembers Islamic holism, either to isolate and fetishize some of its elements or to re-constitute them in heterodox combinations. "Fetishist imagination" isolates an Islamic sign and invests it with magical properties. "Deconstructive imagination" inserts Islamic signs into a non-religious chain of signifiers. "Popular imagination" inserts Islamic practice into a heterodox lifestyle.

Chapter XIII, by Siti Musdah Mulia, "Women and Islamic Culture in Indonesia," studies the patriarchal nature of Indonesian Islam, and the consequent negative influence on gender equality. The author supplies recent sociological statistics demonstrating that women are a majority of the work force but are restricted to lower-paying jobs. The Constitution promises equality but in practice the Marriage Law and much legislation ensure subordination. The Koran affirms that men and women are

fundamentally equal, and that both genders should have equal access to leadership, but patriarchy has circumvented these scriptural provisions.

Part III, "Religion, Cultures and Intercultural Cooperation" turns to the distinctive issue which now emerges in this global context, namely, is it possible for culturally different peoples to live together in harmony. To this there are different approaches. With John Rawls Western liberalism has suggested putting religions and indeed all wholistic visions behind a veil of ignorance. Does Southeast Asia have a more positive approach bringing the basic commitments of the many peoples into modes of convergence and cooperation?

Chapter XIV, by Roy Voragen, "Political Liberalism: A Defense of State Neutrality and Civil Tolerance," defends "political liberalism" against the criticisms of communitarians and others. Voragen distinguishes political liberalism from "comprehensive liberalism," which so pushes the rights of the individual that it falls back into metaphysics. And metaphysics, is—ironically--the precise undoing of communitarianism, argues Voragen, since there exist a plurality of norms regarding "truth." This very pluralism renders "truth" an impractical ground for a political state. Liberal democracy, instead, rests on the more achievable ground of majority-rule and, when possible, consensus.

Chapter XV, by Haryatmoko, "Plurality of Religions in Terms of Levinas' Notion of Responsibility: Reflections on the Conflictual Relationship of Religions in Indonesia," explains that there are five religions in Indonesia, and the Constitution provides for freedom of religion. Haryatmoko argues that this freedom of religion guaranteed by the Indonesian Constitution does not manage to create peace among the religions. There are political parties based on religious confession, and there have been violent religious conflicts in Ambon, Poso, Lombok, and elsewhere. To encourage a solution, the author turns to Levinas' notion of the "appearance [epiphany] of the face." Invoking Paul Knitter's formulation, the author argues that there is a defining link between authentic global "responsibility" and acknowledgment of the "other" as utterly "other" (accompanied by the understanding that one should not try to change the "other").

Chapter XVI, by Li Thi Lan, "The Vietnamese Reconciliation of Cultures and Religions," explains and exemplifies the "life-principle" of "reconciling" or "reconciliation" which has been the mainstay of Vietnamese culture (and survival) for almost two thousand years. This principle rests on three key ideas: (1) Harmonizing with (rather than opposing) Nature, though one can adjust or perfect Nature; (2) Arranging "formal dependence but true independence" (the millennium-long relationship with the powerful empire of China is presented as a case in point); (3) "Non-refusal of difference, [the coupling of different influences, i.e., "both-and" thinking]. Examples are Cham music with Chinese drama,

Buddhism with native belief. The author supplies intriguing and informative examples of how the "life-principle" of reconciliation is rooted in Vietnam's geographical location and history.

Chapter X, by Manuel B. Dy, Jr., "Towards Solidarity and Peace between Filipino Christians and Muslims: A Philosophical Framework," uses the norms of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue and those of the secular social pragmatics of Habermas and others to discuss potentials for solidarity between Christian and Muslim Filipinos. The author cites the long history of the concerned parties and their longstanding conflict, especially in Mindanao but nowadays throughout much of The Philippines because of internal migration, etc. The latest sequence in this conflict began in the 1950s, when Catholic Filipinos treated Mindanao as the "Promised Land," often duping the less sophisticated native Muslims out of land and resources. The Muslim resistance took the form of guerilla movements, etc. The solidarity and co-responsibility preached by the Catholic Church in and after Vatican Council II have mended many of the old wounds. Dialogue takes place on the levels of Life, Action, Theological Exchange, and Religious Experience. Acts and movements of solidarity between Muslims and Catholics, often led on the Catholic side by Catholic clergy and religious, conclude this paper on a note of optimism.

Chapter XVIII, by Siswono Yudohusodo, "The Peaceful Tradition: Transformation in Southeast Asia," traces the history of harmonious relations in Southeast Asia, arguing that geography and philosophy of life have from time immemorial conditioned the inhabitants so that they mix and adapt easily. The Indonesian islands, for example, have passed over the centuries from Buddhism to Hinduism to Islam, a process which took place without significant conflict. The author contends that only in recent times, due to the disorientation caused by global politics and economy, have wars and skirmishes—as in the South Philippines, South Thailand, Poso, and Ambon—broken out.

In sum, the studies in this work make a number of special contributions to the effort to adjust to the newly global meetings between even the most diverse cultures and civilizations. Of these meetings some are due to commercial and political interaction between nations; others come through immigration which changes one's city or neighborhood; constantly, they take place through the television set in one's living- or even bedroom. Can this enable humankind to deepen its self-understanding and enrich its life together?

In attempting to respond to this phenomenon modern rationalism works in terms of essences which are clear only to the degree that they are distinct and contrasting. Hence the liberal school would remove all integrating cultures or modes of life behind a "veil of ignorance" (John Rawls) reducing public discourse to the spare diet of points of overlapping consensus or a mere (if golden) thread of values common to all.

In contrast the long search for harmony which has ever characterized the cultures of Asia suggests rather a hermeneutic that begins not in an abstract and exclusionary principle, but in the long experience of living together and the future promise of its multiple traditions. Thereby peoples, each in their own way, seek to respond creatively and in harmony to the existential challenges of their life. This points beyond essences, which distinguish and divide, to existence, and thence to an originating source and ultimate goal which is imaged through human unity and solidarity, truth and justice, goodness and love.

It is no accident then that each culture is founded in a great religion. Global times call for a deeper understanding of how each of these in being lived fully impels its culture to reach beyond itself and to deepen human comity. In this the special genius of South East Asia for harmonious living has much to contribute to each of its multiple religious traditions and thereby to all who share or are inspired by their example across the globe.

George F. McLean and *Robert Magliola*

PART I

PRINCIPLES OF COOPERATION BETWEEN CULTURES

CHAPTER I

THE RECEPTION OF MODERN HERMENEUTICS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

AHMAD KAZEMI MOUSSAVI

The acquaintance of Muslims with modern hermeneutics started in Egypt, Algeria and Iran in the 1980s, and arrived at Southeast Asia a decade later. The outstanding figures in this regard are Abu Zaid, Arkoun and Soroush whose writings influenced the Malay and especially Indonesian intellectual milieu, and are presently being debated in their academic writings. In this paper, I first briefly survey the history of Muslims' new approaches to the Shari'ah, then I examine the hermeneutical readings of the Islamic texts by Abu Zayd, Arkoun and Soroush, and finally look at the influence of their epistemological methodology in the Muslim intellectual milieu of Southeast Asia.

APPROACHES TO THE SHARI'AH

As a combination of Islamic law, rituals and ethics, Shari'ah was elaborated by Muslim scholars in several stages. New approaches to the Shari'ah entered a new phase with Muslims' acquaintance with modern scholarship. This scholarship recognized a critical role for human rationality in legal corroboration unparalleled in Muslim traditional thought. Muslim scholarship had already experienced new approaches to the Shari'ah by assigning a considerable weight to the role of reason in elaboration of the revelation. As we will see below, these experiences begin manifestly with the Mu'tazilite mould of thought and continue to the modern era.

From the time of the second/eighth century, there emerged some Mu'tazilite scholars who approached the divine guidance as a corroboration of human reason and rationales. In a bold undertaking, Qadi 'Abd al-Jabbar attempted to build on human reasoning the principle of centrality of the texts of Shari'ah and their literal interpretation. He dedicated several headings to set conditions for the divine address (*khitab*) according to what the human mind considers as proper.[1] In his account, the divine "commands and prohibitions" appear as indicators of innate good and evil, so they relate to the nature of things.[2] He discovers the notion of

---

[1] Ibid., 17/39-70.

[2] Ibid.,17/107-152. Chapters *"Fi 'l-awamir wa ma yattisil bidhalik"* and *"Fi 'l-nahy wa Kayfiyyah dilalatihi 'ala 'l-qubh al-munha"*.

"justice" behind the *usuli* maxims of "generals and particulars" (*'amm: khass*).[3] Also he adds to legal methodology topics such as permissible actions (*ibahah*); it is an act to be regarded permissible on principle unless it is specifically forbidden. This indicates a highly developed Mu'tazilite position in which human reasoning has an innate quality of appraising things before the arrival of the revelation.

The so-called orthodox Ash'arite reaction to the above Mu'tazilite rationalization did not by itself introduce a new approach to the Shari'ah other than a return to the original and often strict interpretation of the divine guidance. Nevertheless, exceptionally talented characters, such as Ghazali, attempted new approaches under the umbrella of the same Ash'arite orthodoxy. Besides his innovative insight, a key to Ghazali's success seems to be his incorporation of Aristotelian logic that contributed to both his language and to his method of organizing topics of his works, specifically in his usul writings. Before Ghazali, Ibn Hazm, Imam al-Haramayn Juwayni and to a lesser extent Abu Bakr Baqilani had made use of Aristotelian logic in *usul al-fiqh*; nevertheless, it was Ghazali who set an example for the succeeding jurists as to how to juxtapose logic with legal methodology. (See above chapter five.) In fact, each historical approach to the Shari'ah involved introducing new elements into or juxtaposing new components with the Shari'ah.

The next important approach to the Shari'ah can be seen in the work of Abu Ishaq Shatibi (d. 790/1388) who delicately combined an exterior factor, that is to say the public welfare (*maslahah-al-'ammah*), to the interior consideration of the law, i.e., its aims and objectives (*maqasid al-shari'ah*). In his *al-Muwafaqat*, he elaborated on methods and theories of harmonizing the legal norms (*ahkam*) with the philosophy of the law which he identified with the notion of *maslahah*. This way of approaching the law led him to either propose or maintain several additional postulates as the key methodological premises for understanding the law according to its objective. These postulates particularly propounded throughout theoretical premises which Shatibi laid down as introduction to his work.[4] Furthermore, Shatibi treated the category of permissible acts *(mubahat)* and common practices *(al-tasarrafat al-'adiyah)* in a wider scope and in the light of their main socio-philosophical end goals for human good. Shatibi's theory of public welfare provides a wider scope of *usul al-fiqh* which was never employed (even noticed) by the traditional jurists until the contemporary era.[5]

During the Islamic pre-modern period, the significant approach to the Shari'ah belongs to the Indian thinker Shah Waliyullah of Delhi (d.

---

[3]Ibid., 30-38.

[4] Abu Ishaq Ibrahim al-Shatibi, *al-Muwafaqat fi Usul al-Ahkam*, 4 vols. in 2 books.(Cairo: Dar al-Fikr, n.d.), vols. 1 &2.

[5]Ibid., 1/68-85.

1176/1762). In his *magnum opus* entitled *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah*, Shah Waliyullah deliberated on the history of the rise and development of a number of socio-juridical notions and their social objectives. He offered a chapter on human development (*irtifaq*) according to the divine inspiration. Language, management of the household, art of economic transactions, and the necessity of assigning a leader to govern are among the *irtifaqat*.[6] His conception of human development, therefore, turns into the evolution of human society. The scope and function of this *irtifaq*, however, remain incomparable with the modern proposals of the sorts. Shah Waliyullah extends the scope of *ijtihad* to allow a *mujtahid* to adopt a new esoteric spiritual approach to the Shari'ah. He considers ijtihad as the only instrument left with us for solving the problems emerging out in the swiftly changing conditions of modern times.'[7] In one of his Persian writings entitled the *Musaffa*, Shah Waliyullah unequivocally states that the *ijtihad* should be independent, like that of Shafi'i's *ijtihad*, because the existing *hadith* texts cannot adequately cover numerous newly arising cases.

Turning now to the Shi'ite school of Islam, one can see a new wave of *usuli* rationalism among the Shi'ite scholars of the nineteenth century, that eventually combined the literal discourses of *usul* with a series of rational argumentations giving a new orientation to Shi'ite law. The towering figure in this regard was Shaykh Murtada Ansari (d. 1281/1864) who matured this trend of Usulism in the shrine seminary of Najaf. Ansari's point of departure in his usul work is epistemological and begins with the question of how legal knowledge should be attained. He proposes that the position, which a *mukallaf* (capacitated person) usually takes in the understanding of the legal norms, is either: i) of certain character (*qat'*), or ii) of valid conjecture (*zann*), or iii) of doubt (*shakk*).[8] The first category applies essentially to certain knowledge of things which are subjects of the legal norms. The second category, i.e., the valid conjecture (*zann*), according to Ansari, is an avenue to reach the reality, and it includes contextual signs (al-*amarat al-ma'mulah*) which attach validity to the outward meanings of the revealed texts. These signs either

---

[6] Shah Waliyullah, *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah*, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-'Ulum, 1990), 1/119-152. Also see the translation of this book by Marcia K. Hermansen, *The Conclusive Argument from God* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 113-144.

[7] G.N.Jalbani, *Teaching of Shah Waliyullah of Delhi* (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1988), 59; quoting Shah Waliyullah' Persian work *Musaffa*, vol. 1, p. 11.

[8] See Murtada Ansari, *Fara'id al-Usul*, 2 vols, ed. 'Abdullah Nurani (Qum: Mu'assasat al-Nashr al-Islami, 1987), vol. 1, p. 2.

have rational bases or entail a rational argument.[9] The third category of the understanding of the proper legal norm is embedded with *shakk* (doubt).

Ansari's frequent use of rational principles gives the impression that he might not consider the existing sources of the law adequately elaborated to respond to newly arising questions. The negative presumption of continuity (*istishab al-'adam*), *per se,* implies the lack of any applicable rule, and a return to existing practices which are mainly based on customs. The frequent application of this kind of *istishab* seems to aim at equipping the Shari'ah with customary laws rather than at sticking to remotely applicable *ahkam* (legal norms). However, Ansari's theoretical elaboration of the rational avenues for arriving at a plausible solution impressed the Shi'ite milieu of the time, and the practical principles found a distinct place in the succeeding Shi'ite law and legal methodology.[10]

We now turn to the contemporary era, beginning with Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd.

NASR HAMID ABU ZAYD

The contemporary Egyptian author, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd (b. 1943), is among the first Islamists who approached the Shari'ah by applying hermeneutics as a method of inquiry into the interpretation of legal texts. In its modern sense, hermeneutics was formulated in nineteenth century Europe as an intellectual discipline concerned with the nature and presuppositions of the interpretation of literal texts.[11] Muslim legal discourse had already developed interpretive disciplines such as *tafsir* (exegesis), *ta'wil* (allegorical interpretation) and even *ijtihad* as an independent judgment. None of these devices, however, was used to extend the meaning of a text beyond the intention of lawgiver, nor beyond the religious context in which the text evolved, whereas modern hermeneutics argues that a literary text has its own afterlife independent of the author, and to understand it has little or no relationship to understanding the author's intent.[12]

The early works of Abu Zayd centered on evaluating Muslims' methods of semantics, implications and the interpretation of the texts preceded by a brief survey in the theories of the European founders of

---

[9]Ibid., 1/41 & .54 & 290.

[10] Muhammad Ja'far Ja'fari Langrudi maintains that since the 19th century, Shi'ite law has been overshadowed by *al-usul al'amaliyyah* which were employed by *mujtahids* in place of legal fictions (*furud-i qanuni*). See his *Maktabha-yi Huquqi dar Islam* (Tehran: Ganj-i Danish, 1991), 48-49.

[11] See Van A. Harver, "Hermeneutics" *The Encyclopedia of Religion,* 16 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 6/279-287.

[12] Ibid., 281.

hermeneutics such as Friedrich Shleiermacher (d. 1834) and Wilhelm Dilthey (d. 1911).[13] He examined the writings of Mu'tazilite and Ash'arite such scholars as al-Jahiz (d. 255/869), Qadi 'Abd al-Jabbar (d. 415/1024) and Abu Bakr al-Baqilani (d. 403/1012), in addition to the works of literary critics and grammarians like 'Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani (d. 471/1078) and 'Amr b. 'Uthman Sibawayh (180/796).[14] In the light of theories of hermeneutics, Abu Zaid attempted to present a new reading – often critical - of the writings of the above-mentioned Muslim authors.

The controversial work of Abu Zayd is Mafhum al-Nass *The Concept of Text*, a version of his discourses on the Qur'anic sciences. In this book, he launches a new way of reading the religious texts in the light of modern hermeneutics. To signify the importance of 'the text,' Abu Zayd calls the said Islamic Arabian civilization a 'Civilization of the Text' (*hadarat al-nass*) in contrast to the Greek which he dubs 'Civilization of Reason' (*hadarat al-'aql*). His emphasis, however, is laid on the understanding of texts that requires interpretative skills to discern the cultural context surrounding the presentation of a text. The Qur'an, indeed, is the prime source-text of Islam. In categorizing the Qur'anic verses, Abu Zayd prefers to characterize the verses revealed before the Hijrah as 'faith building' in contrast to the after Hijrah verses (622-632) which are more of society-building character.[15] Nevertheless, the textual output of the Qur'an was, in Abu Zayd's view, overshadowed by the immense sanctity later attached to it as the Holy Book.[16]

In one of his later works, *Naqd al-Khitab al-Dini A Critique of Religious Discourse*, Abu Zayd notes the abuse of the Holy Book by Mu'awiyah (d. 60/680), the founder of the Umayyad Dynasty, who flagged Qur'anic papers on lances in an attempt to divert Muslims' attention from their own *ijtihad* to an expected direct judgment of the Qur'an. 'The Qur'an is just pieces of writings', Abu Zayd quotes the fourth caliph, 'Ali b. AbiTalib (d. 40/661), saying in the war of Siffin,-- 'it does not speak; only men speak for it.' Abu Zayd concludes that texts require a certain scope of rational interpretation that only the human mind can afford.[17]

Abu Zayd claims that the understanding of a text revolves around the data and perceptions of the time of the reader, and he quotes from *Literary Identity*, written by the contemporary author, Peter W. Nesselroth, that the process of understanding a text does not begin with reading the

---

[13] Ibid., 13-49.

[14] See Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid, *Ishkalat al-Qira'ah wa 'l-Aliyyat al-Ta'wil* (Cairo: al-Markaz al-Thaqafi al-'Arabi, n.d.). This book is a collection of seven articles published in the Egyptian journals between 1981-1988.

[15] Ibid., 15.

[16] Abu Zaid, *Mafhum al-Nass* (Cairo: al-Markaz al-Thaqafi al-'Arabi, 1987), 9-13.

[17] Abu Zaid, *Naqd al-Khitab al-Dini* (Cairo: Sina li'l-Nashr, 1992), 74.

text, but rather it starts prior to that with the dialogue between the culture shaping the reader's perception and the text. In the case of the Qur'an, knowledge of 'occasions of revelation' is necessary for eliciting a legal norm (*hukm*) or for inferring a meaning of it. But Muslim interpreters often separated the text from the legal norm, and some of them even claimed that the *hukm* or the command of God existed before the coming the text. [18] Abu Zayd draws out three factors that may cause this misunderstanding:

i)The literal implication (*al-dalalah al-lughawiyyah*) was confused by some of interpreters with the legal implication (*al-dalalah al-shar'iyyah*), as in the Qur'anic verse 14, chapter 87 'He will prosper,-- he who purifies himself.' 'Purification' in this Meccan verse does not imply *zakah* (legal alms) which, according to the famous Qur'anologue al-Suyuti, was historically established after Hijrah.

ii) Some interpretations were attributed to the Companions of the Prophet whose explanations are associated with the Madinan period, whereas the content of the verse belonged to the Meccan era. To solve the problem, the later *ulama* had to assume that the *hukm* existed before the text. The Qur'anic verse 33 of Meccan chapter 41 reads: 'Who is better in speech than who calls [people] to Allah, performs righteous deed and says "I am of those who bow in Islam." ' It was quoted from 'A'ishah (the renowned wife of the Prophet d. 58/678) that the verse was revealed for *muezzin* (announcer of the hour of prayer); whereas history tells us *adhan* (the call for prayer) was established in the early Madinan period.[19]

iii) Confusing the sequence of verses with the occasion of revelation resulted in different readings of a verse, and in unfounded assumptions: firstly, that the text was revealed before the occasion arose, and secondly, the text preceded its suitability and necessity as a legal norm. An example is the verse 45, chapter 54: "Soon will their multitude be put to flight, and they will show their backs." As Suyuti quoted the second caliph, 'Umar, he had heard the Prophet reciting this verse during the Battle of Badr when the army of Quraysh was defeated. Yet the sequence of verses suggests a similarity between the ancient Egyptian Pharaohs and Meccan pagans. Another 'between the lines' meaning can be understood in conformity with the future tense used in the verse in that it applies to the Resurrection Day. Abu Zayd concludes that different readings of a text result from the expansion of the reader's standpoint, and that the evolution of one's knowledge opens the way for a new understanding of the text.[20]

In the quest for finding a new meaning or function for legal principles, Abu Zayd, in *Mafhum al-Nass* draws on a number of

---

[18] Abu Zaid, *Mafhum al-Nass.*, 89.
[19] Ibid., 93-94.
[20] Ibid., 89-95.

methodological topics from *usul al-fiqh,* such as 'general and its particularization', 'occasions of revelation', 'abrogation', 'implication and divergent meaning' and 'absolute and qualified'. For instance, he evaluates abrogation as the main proof for a dialectical relationship existing between the revelation and external realities, and says that its function is to adapt changes and to advance lawgiving.[21] He considers both the generalization and particularization of the Qur'anic verses as a means to maintain the unity of the law; and, to fully understand them both, the literal expressions and the occasions in which the law was given should be taken into consideration. [22] The relationship of "real to metaphor", too, is a relationship of change and transformation with which Abu Zayd finally concludes his arguments in *Mafhum al-Nass* with a Sufi type explanation.[23]

To pave the way for exploring alternative concepts for the religious texts, Abu Zayd tries to refute some Islamic legal maxims such as "there is no room for *ijtihad* wherever a text is available." He claims that the statement (*mantuq*) of the Qur'an is fixed and permanent, but its conception (*mafhum*) is changeable and open to variable approaches. To establish this claim, Abu Zayd refers to the history of Muslim rational approaches (especially the Mu'tazilite approach) in addition to practical principles of legal methodology such as the priority of consideration of public interest (*maslahah*) over the text; preservation of objectives (*maqasid*) of the law and suitability (*munasabah*) of *ratio leges* in analogous applications. These principles were mainly proposed by the 8th and 14th century jurist al-Shatibi and endorsed partly by Ibn Taymiyyah and others (see chapter five above). Pursuing different objectives or grounding themselves on variable information, Muslim jurists historically presented varying conceptions out of certain texts.[24]

A legal case in point is a daughter's share of inheritance which principally should screen (*hajaba*) the right of all second degree relatives in the absence of other first degree heirs such as brothers. According to most Sunni schools of law, a daughter is not entitled to inherit more than her determined share (*fard*), which is half, from her parents' bequest. The rest should be returned to either *'asabah* (paternal male residuary) or to the public treasury (*bayt al-mal*) in the absence of other first degree heirs. Only the Shi'ite school of law (especially the Ja'farite school) clearly gives the right to the daughter to appropriate the second half of the bequest by returning (*radd*) it to her, regardless of the presence of the *'asabah*. The above problem was strongly debated in the Egyptian media in the 1980s. Abu Zayd supported those writers who had advised the government to

---

[21] Ibid., 117, 120.
[22] Ibid., 195.
[23] Ibid., 245-297.
[24] Abu Zaid, *Naqd al-Khita al-Dini*, 82-86, also see p. 59.

enhance women's rights by adopting the Shi'ite position in the law of inheritance. He argues that the different understanding of the same Qur'anic verses by Shi'is (and some Hanafis) point to the fact that there is room for *ijtihad* and new understanding of the Qur'anic verses. He delineates two spheres for understanding the verses: i) to find out the meaning (*ma'na*), and ii) to delineate the end goal (*maghza*) of the law. It was the focus of the first/seventh century Muslims, Abu Zayd opines, to adjust the meaning of the verses according to the existing Arab customs. They sometimes sacrificed the spirit and overall objectives of the Qur'an for its literal consistency; but, this was not the case for some Sufi-like authors, as it is not the case for to-day's understanding of the text.[25]

Abu Zayd claims that to-day's Muslim juridical understanding of the religious discourse (*al-khitab al-dini*) is often stricter than that of their predecessors. He quotes Suyuti's account on literal categorization of the Qur'anic verses as an example of the historical approach to the text of the Qur'an. In his al-Itqan, Suyuti plainly claims that all general-legal verses of the Qur'an are particularized except verse 23 of chapter 4: "Forbidden to you [for marriage] are your mothers". According to Abu Zayd, Syuti divides levels of clarity of the Qur'anic verses as follows: i) a clear verse is the one which does not bear two meanings, and this is a *nass* (or the text), ii) the verse bears two meanings but one of them is preferable, and that is *zahir* (apparent), iii) should both meanings bear equal weight then the verse is *mujmal* (generalized), iv) if both meanings are not equal, but the stronger (*aqwa*) does not fit into the overall apparent meaning closely, rather a remote meaning is preferable; and that is called *mu'awwal* (allegorically interpreted).[26] Abu Zayd concludes that the concept of *nass* according to Suyuti and most traditional authors meant nothing but 'clear verse', whereas *nass* appears often as a 'fixed and sacred verse' in the writings of the later, and especially present, juridical authors. And this leaves practically no room for a rational reflection of the human mind.[27]

As such, we see that Abu Zayd's employment of hermeneutics in reading Islamic texts, has produced a plausible criticism of some Muslim traditional methods in approaching the Shari'ah. This criticism proposes a drastic change in both the application and functions of traditional methods so as to be able to keep up with timely considerations of his era. In comparison with rational approaches of the past such as the maqasid theory of al-Shatibi, it does not, however, provide enough religious basis to legitimize or compromise the application of the new approach within the well-founded structure of the Shari'ah. Abu Zayd's writings, nevertheless, influenced some Muslim milieus in North Africa and Indonesia. One may

---

[25] Ibid., 85-86, 105 and 219-20.

[26] Al-Suyuti, *al-Itqan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an* (Cairo: Mustafa Albani al-Halibi, 1951 2/16, in Abu Zaid, *Naqd al-Khitab al-Dini*, 92.

[27] Abu Zaid, *Naqd al-Khitab al-Dini*, 91-94.

draw parallels between his writings and some new legal proposals for reform in the civil law of the Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia). This proposal reads: '.. the idea of an immutable and sacred "Muslim law" is the fruit of a doctrinal development, and a dominant version of history that presents it as a compact and definitive whole'.[28]

Abu Zayd is probably the most well-known modern author in the Indonesian intellectual milieu. Numerous translations and commentaries are written on his approach to the Shari'ah and his method of contextual interpretation of the Qur'anic texts. For instance, Mohd. Nur Ichwam has written a book on Abu Zayd' theories of hermeneutics published in Jakarta, 2003. Dr. Mohamad Nur Khalis wrote a commentary on Abu Zaud's Ishakalat al- Qira'ah by Muhammad Mansur and Khoian Muhdiyin, published in Jakarta 2004. Mr. Adian Husaini and Herni Salahudin wrote an article on the influence of Mu'tazilite thought on Abu Zayd published in the journal *Islamia* in 2004. Dr. Anis Malik Thoha wrote a commentary on Abu Zayd's *Naqd al-Khitab al-Dini* in *Islamia* published in the June-August issue of 2004.

Abu Zayd was invited to visit Indonesia on several occasions, the last one of which was in Autumn 2004. His lectures and interviews were, however, confined to the academic class of Indonesians. They hardly can affect the public or common classes who still hold to their traditional sources of religious knowledge.

MOHAMMED ARKOUN

As a precursor in the application of critical analysis in the religious sciences, Mohammed Arkoun (b. 1928) influenced the contemporary Muslim thought in rethinking Islamic values. He brought to fore the idea of historicity and deconstruction of the Shari'ah. He believes that the development of Islamic law was influenced by Greek philosophy. That is to say that Aristotle's concept of substance as the primary essence of a thing introduced to Muslims the notion of originality in the sense that concepts have their origins in outside reality. This notion not only became a point of departure in Islamic legal methodology; rather, the very Arabic term of asl derives its methodological meaning from this origin.[29] This

---

[28] Collectif 95 Maghreb Egalite, *Dalil pour l'egalite dans la famille au Maghreb*, Edition, 2003, 14.

[29] See Mohammed Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam: Common Questions, Uncommon Answers*, Trans by Robert D. Lee (Colorado: Westview Press, 1994), 18-23. Also see M. Abdullah, *Falasafah Kalam: Di Era Postmidernisme (The Philosophy of Islamic Theology in Post-modernism Era)*, Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1997), 19-20; in Malki Ahmad Nasir, "Indonesians' Scholars' Reception of Arkoun's Thought" *Khazanah: Journal Ilmu Agam Islam*,

assertion should be examined in a more scholarly way, since we know that the idea of correspondence (*sidq*) reached Muslim *usul al-fiqh* in the fifth/eleventh century, and it cannot be detected in the *usul* works of early Shafi'is, Hanafis and Mu'tazilis.

The Indonesian author Amin Abdullah, claims: 'It is Arkoun who is responsible for starting a research in epistemology of Islamic thought.' Arkoun applies the principle of "deconstruction" to Islamic orthodoxy. He defines it 'as system of beliefs and methodological representations through which, and with which, a given social group perceives and produces its own history.' Or it is also defined as the system of values which functions primarily to guarantee the protection and security of a certain group.'[30] What Arkoun has achieved by this deconstruction, according to Yusuf Rahman, is to demonstrate and easily appreciate the reason why the orthodox view has prevailed and other conceptions have been forgotten.[31] Islamic orthodoxy, in Arkoun's view, suffers from the lack of a system of linguistics and semantics. And that is why it is practically reduced to a religious pluralism.

In response to the vacuity created by his sharp criticism of orthodoxy, Arkoun proposes Applied Islamology as a phenomenological understanding of Islam. Applied Islamology seeks Islam in the society, not in the ideology and myth which, in Arkoun's view, are produced by the elite who claim to represent the religion. In Arkoun's writings, Applied Islamology appears conductive to a situation prone to adopt progressive Islam.[32]

Arkoun's thought was translated into the Indonesian language and debated on the academic level by a number of local intellectuals such as Ruslani who translated Arkoun's work on *People of the Book* into the Indonesian language in 2000. In this book Arkoun tries to redefine *ahl al-kitab* as people who submit to one God. Suardi Sa'ad, an Indonesian scholar, wrote about Arkoun's view of Islam and modernism. Another Indonesian intellectual, Amin Abdullah, discusses Islamic theology as an ongoing process in connection with Arkoun's thought.

ABDOLKARIM SOROUSH

An epistemological approach to the Shari'ah is proposed by the

---

Bandung (Indonesia) Program Pascasarjana, Vol 1, No 6 (July-December 2004), 1197.

[30] Mohammed Arkoun, "*The Notion of Revelation" Die Welt Islami* XXVIII, 1988, 63; in ibid., 1191.

[31] Yusup Rahman, "The Hermeneutical Theory of Nasr Hamid abu Zaid" (Montreal McGill University unpublished dissertation, 2001), 175-176.

[32] Mohammed Arkoun, *Tarikhiyyat al-Fikr al-'Arabiyyah al-Islamiyyah* (Beirut: Markaz al-Qawmiyyah, 1994) in Malki Ahmad , cf., 1193.

contemporary Iranian professor of philosophy, Abdolkarim Soroush. Born in Tehran in 1945 and trained in a religious school, Suroush graduated from the faculty of pharmacology at Tehran University, but continued his studies in philosophy of science in the University of London from 1974 on. He retuned to Iran after the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and took office as a member of the Council on the Cultural Revolution to purge and reopen Iranian universities. Four years later, he broke with revolutionary ideas, and began to develop his epistemological approach towards man, nature and religion. His first, and probably the most controversial proposal was the doctrine of theoretical contraction and expansion of the Shari'ah which was primarily published in the form of a series of articles in 1987, and later as a book under such a heading.

Soroush's point of departure in this book is scientific in the sense of how knowledge derived from sciences reshapes our views of the world and affects our understanding of the religion. He gives an example of how the discovery of the theory of the earth's orbit around the sun has shaken the existing worldviews not only from the cosmological standpoint but also from philosophical and epistemological ones. Another example is how Emanuel Kant reformed his epistemological philosophy according to Newtonian physics.[33] Muslim jurisprudence, Soroush concludes, was impressed by circumambient knowledge in the past, and should be more contingent on knowledge of the time today. He quotes an old Sufi expression that 'there are ways to approach God at the number of whole people.' Later on, he relates 'Ali b. AbiTalib's famous saying that 'The Qur'an does not talk to you, I tell you what knowledge there is in it concerning the past and future and the remedy of your pains, and to put in order your affairs.'[34] We have seen above that the Egyptian author, Abu Zayd, too, made use of a similar saying of Imam, 'Ali in the war of Siffin.[35] It seems that the figure of Imam 'Ali as the speaker of the Qur'an served legitimation for not only Shi'ite and Isma'ilite interpretations of the Qur'an, but also for today's hermeneutical readings.

Soroush's major contribution lies in his multiplied elaboration of the cohabitation of reason and revelation, as he finds the former's fervor to unravel the latter's mystery to be an equally beautiful sight.[36] Like Mu'atazilite thinkers, Soroush acknowledges God's *dicta* through human reason. He says; 'It is up to God to reveal a religion, but up to us to

---

[33] Abdolkarim Soroush, *Qabd va Bast-e Theoric-e Shari'at* (Tehran: Serat, 1992), 83-88.

[34] Ibid., 178.

[35] See above p.115. Abu Zaid bases his quotation on al-Tabari's report whereas Soroush's source of reference is *Nahj al-balaghah* edited by Fayz al-Islam.

[36] Ibid., 36.

understand and realize it.' [37] This realization may have variable presentations of the same revelation. To realize the revelation, we can get help from friends and foes alike. For the sake of purity of religion we should not reject modern sciences.[38] It is evident that by expansion of the role of human conception, Soroush aims at juxtaposing reason with revelation within a new scope much broader than historical Mu'tazilites. Unlike Abu Zayd, Soroush does not reduce religion to "spiritual experience"; neither does he indicate what is left from "the prophecy" out of human conception. The way he admires the beauty of spirituality discloses the mysterious effects of religious rituals and experiences on his mind; and this is combined with allegorical expressions from Persian mystical literature. In no way, however, does he consider that the temporal culture can be a substitute for religion.[39]

In his recent writings, Soroush puts emphasis on extra-religious values which, in his view, are independent of religion without being incompatible with it. He blames Muslims' epistemological inflexibility on the prevalence of Ash'arite theological tradition. 'One of the main principles of Ash'arite Islam is that there are no objective, external values; all values must come through religion.' [40] In contrast, the defeated Mu'tazilite school of thought attempted to show that rationality *per se* was acceptable in Islam, even when not based on religion. Soroush admires reformist thinkers of Sunni Islam who strove to revive Mu'tazilite thought. He, too, is planning to publish a book entitled *Reinventing the Mu'tazilite Experiment.*[41] By emphasizing extra-religious values and appropriating them in religious contexts, Soroush signals the non-applicability of dichotomous distinction of all values between secular and religious ones. In fact he speaks about obviating such distinction in political rule.[42]

Unlike Abu Zayd, however, Soroush does not present a specific interpretation of the Qur'anic text, but he strongly prescribes a "dynamic jurisprudence" to take the place of the presently inflexible dormant one. The scope of this reform which is proposed under the rubric of "the Contraction and Expansion of the Shari'ah" can be summarized in his following proclamation:

---

[37] Ibid., 31.

[38] Ibid., 35.

[39] Ibid., 36. Also see his *Razdani va Rowshanfekri va Dindari*(Tehran: Serat, 1992), 63-103.

[40] "Reason and Freedom in Islamic Thought" a lecture delivered by 'Abulkarim Soroush in CSID Second Annual Conference, *Islam Democrat*, Vol. 4, No 1 (January 2002), 2-3.

[41] Ibid., 3.

[42] Ibid.

> Reconciling eternity and temporality, the sacred and the profane, separating constant and variant, form and substance, reviving innovative adjudication in religion; finding courageous jurisconsults; reinvigorating religious jurisprudence, changing the appearance while preserving the spirit of religion; acquainting Islam with the contemporary age; establishing the new Islamic theology.[43]

The above outline points to an ambitious reform that counts no less than revivalist attempts of Ghazali and Shah Waliullah to whose works Soroush frequently refers. He characterizes his theory of contraction and expansion of religious understanding as primarily a theological theory[44]; thus he does not feel much need for its juridical elaboration save for some sporadic critical observations, as we will see below. He criticizes the present *usul* methodology with an epistemological point of view. He quotes Ayatollah Khomeini's saying that: "*Ijtihad* as understood and practiced by *hawzah* (the Islamic seminaries) is insufficient." Soroush concludes: 'This pronouncement revealed that *ijtihad* itself is in need of another *ijtihad*. And if *ijtihad* continues to be what it heretofore has been, not much hope could be pinned on it.'[45] Soroush aspires for a courageous *faqih* to pronounce reason-based religious *fatwas*, but he does not define the method whereby reason should religiously expand or contract revealed ordinances.

Given the above, like other hermeneutical reader of the Shari'ah, Soroush turns to *ijtihad* and its scope in order to reconcile today's requirements with the Shari'ah. We have seen above that the main argument raised by Abu Zayd was his claim to the scope of *ijtihad* to the extent to re-examine the applicability of the established texts (*ijtihad fi mawrid al-nass*). As such, Abu Zayd and Soroush open the door for legal reforms by legitimizing the use of Muslim rational facility without drawing a legitimate parallel in the Shari'ah.

Soroush is known among Malay-Indonesian intellectuals only. Because of the language barriers, his works are not yet accessible to the Malay-Indonesian milieu, and his first trip to Indonesia is due in Summer 2005.

The ongoing debates on the hermeneutical reading of the religious texts have reached the Indonesian government, as the Ministry of Religious Affairs has recently taken into consideration some reforms of the

---

[43] Abdolkarim Soroush, *Reason, Freedom and Democracy in Islam*, translated by Mahmoud Sadri and Ahmad Sadri (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 30.

[44] Ibid., 38.

[45] Ibid., 29.

laws of inheritance and polygamy according to the new reading of the juridical texts.

The International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC)
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

CHAPTER II

RELIGIOSITY: A SURE FOUNDATION

CORAZON T. TORALBA

Michael Casey's prize-winning essay, "How to Think about Globalization," [1] quoting John Gray, found that "the market liberal philosophy that underpins globalization resembles Marxism. Both are essentially secular religions, in which the eschatological hopes and fantasies of Christianity are given an Enlightenment twist. In both, history is understood as the progress of the species, powered by growing knowledge and wealth, and culminating in a universal civilization. Human beings are viewed primarily in economic terms, as producers or consumers, with - at bottom – the same values and needs. Religion of the old-fashioned sort is seen as peripheral, destined soon to disappear, or to shrink into the private sphere where it could no longer convulse politics or inflame war."[2]

This essay will expound the link between liberalism and secularity. It will defend the proposition that a strong religiosity will enable Southeast Asians to enjoy the gains of globalization without falling prey to its adverse effects. However, my position will be based on my religious-cultural baggage, Christianity, specifically Catholicity.

LIBERALISM

Secularism

Liberalism as a political theory is founded on the natural goodness of human beings and the autonomy of the individual. It favors civil and political liberties, government by law with the consent of the governed, and protection from arbitrary authority. It assumes that people, having a rational intellect, have the ability to recognize problems and solve them and thus can achieve systematic improvement in the human condition. It seeks what it considers to be improvement or progress, necessarily desires to change the existing order. However, liberalism as a cultural phenomenon could be

[1] Michael Casey," How to Think about Globalization," The Acton Institute.

[2] John Gray, "The Era of Globalisation Is Over," *New Statesman* 24 September 2001.

defined as "that general movement in Western civilization, which has sought freedom from the restraints imposed by Christian teaching."[3]

Liberalism as it developed in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, emphasized freedom as an ultimate goal and the individual as the ultimate entity in the society. Freedom is understood more as freedom from rather than freedom for, that is, political rather than ontological. The notion of political freedom is allied with psychological freedom as that it views freedom as the multiplication of options. Unfortunately, the idea of moral freedom is reduced to not hurting the sensibilities of other people rather than self-direction to an objective good that will bring about everlasting happiness. In the liberalist tradition, happiness is what is expedient in the here and now for the individual. All the instrumentalities, which oversee a peaceful co-existence of the members of the community, exist for the rightful possession of what the individual desires. Thus, the protection of individual freedom by the government and human rights through legal means gain the upper hand.

Liberalism, both as a theory and cultural phenomenon, is based on the notion of the human being as an autonomous being that is accountable to no one above him. It heralds the existence of government for the people and by the people and its laws as provider for rights. Its view of life is flat with only the horizontal plane, living peacefully with everyone in the community. It lacks the vertical dimension that opens to a transcendent being. Unfortunately, a society or a community with members that do not recognize a Creator, who is the source of man's being and lifes' purpose, ends up living that Hobbesian dictum of *homo homini lupus*. Having lost a north star, the God-given natural laws - which are immutable, permanent and universal - the "law of might" prevails.

Liberalism paved the way for an anthropocentric world where God barely has a place. Religiosity may exist in the private sphere but it is marginalized as a force that shapes culture, which provides an ideal and a sense of rootedness in a sphere greater than the self. Religion then loses its universal appeal. As such, whatever teachings a particular religion has on concrete social realities are easily denounced as an inconvenience because they restrict freedom. Hence, in the economic and political arenas where individuals are protagonists, whatever provides the greater happiness for the individual prevails. Thomas Storck's *Liberalism's Three Assaults* exposes how this phenomenon attacked Catholic culture, first on the level of economic morality, second on the level of the political rights of God, and lastly on the level of the human person itself.[4]

Applied to the economic sphere, liberalism supports *laissez faire* in the domestic front to reduce the role of the state in economic affairs,

---

[3] Thomas Storck, "Liberalism's Three Assaults," *Homiletic & Pastoral Review* (January 2000): 8-16.

[4] Ibid.

thereby enlarging the role of the individual. It also promotes free trade abroad as a means of linking all nations peacefully and democratically. Globalization has remade the entire world into a universal free market where greater return of investment rules; thus, trumpeting profitability as the end for which businesses are set up.

While globalization claims that free market economy helps all the social players involved, some observers say that the experience of globalization in the last decade has shown that the gains trumpeted by the globophiles leave much to be desired. The Westerners, (some claimed that these Westerners were the same ones who laid the rules of the game), gained the upper hand as exemplified by the "McDonaldization" of the world. It is undeniable that the goods once enjoyed only by a few members of humanity are now made available to practically everyone at an affordable price. Technology's amazing feats have made people aware of what's going on at the other side of the globe, as it happens. The same means have promoted new cultural icons, in addition to the dominant Western models and images. Unfortunately, local producers whose goods cannot compete in the global market have either folded up or reinvented themselves. Some blame this loss on the unfair trade practices of the first world. However, the last few years saw the ascendancy of Asians. Take the case of India's "Bollywood," the proliferation of call centers in the Philippines, and the strength of the Chinese economy. While ideas are generated in the West, jobs are being transferred to the East. In the end, the winners are the "profit-rakers," while the losers are the paid workers.

The political assault came through the social contract theorists, the same ones who supported liberalism and taught that society is brought about by a political pact or bargain. Society's end is to provide material comfort. Thus, these theorists decree that being part of a society is not natural for man and that society is not a place where man could develop his potentials to the full.

"Liberalism is confident that reason and rational science, without appeal to revelation, faith, custom or intuition can comprehend the world and solve its problems."[5] In contrast, Catholic social doctrine teaches that: Man's natural instinct moves him to live in civil society, for he cannot, if dwelling apart, provide himself with the necessary requirements for life, nor procure the means of developing his mental and moral faculties. Hence it is divinely ordained that he should lead his life – be it family, social or civil – with his fellow men, among whom alone his several wants can be adequately supplied. But as no society can hold together unless someone presides over all, directing all to strive earnestly for the common good: every civilized community must have a ruling authority, and this authority,

[5] James Burnham, *Suicide of the West An Essay on the Meaning and Destiny of Liberalism* (Chicago: Regnery Books 1985), p. 53.

no less than society itself, has its source in nature, and has consequently, God for its author.[6]

The assault on the human person came under the guise of "promoting human dignity." With its focus on individual welfare, whatever laws or social customs that impede "my idea of self-fulfillment" is an affront against dignity. Having divorced themselves from any authority higher than the self as a regulating mechanism, the so-called "liberals" are accountable to no one but themselves. Community living becomes a matter of consensus among its members on how to manage their lives. Thus, inadvertently or perhaps with a little complicity, those who speak loudest get heard or the views of the strong prevail over the weak.

As stated earlier, man becomes a prey to other human beings whose existence and so-called self-fulfillment is threatened by another's presence. Divorce, abortion and euthanasia create a wedge in inter-personal relationships. Husband and wife who are no longer living up to personal expectations are discarded through divorce. An unwelcome child is rid through abortion. The old and the sick that are burdensome are "put to sleep" before their earthly life ends.

Community Spirit

The liberalist having declared his independence from God turns against man and society. Social institutions become extensions of his desire to gain the upper hand over the rest. As stated previously, the rule that others are more human than others, that is, those who are more clever lord it over the rest. What was once a "means" to improve one's lot, economic activities, become the "ends." Man is pitted against man--one race over another--and supremacy of one group over another becomes the law of life. In this scenario, man becomes prey to man. Working together for a common goal is an illusion.

The basis of community spirit is the ideal of justice – giving to each community member what is his due based on what each has contributed to the common good. The common good is the end of any organized society. It could be defined as that legal, social, political and economic order that enables each member of the community to develop integrally as human beings. The creation of said order is a task of all with the governing bodies coordinating the competencies of the members,--that each member will do what is expected and that he will receive his fair share is a function of mutual trust.

If a liberalist attitude prevails, the community spirit will weaken. The common good will be the order dictated by those who think that they should lord over the rest. Such breeds discontentment that could have fatal consequences.

---

[6] Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei*, 1-XI-1885.

RELIGION AND VALUE-BASED SOCIETY

Religion, both in its objective and subjective dimensions, is one of the major forces that could diffuse an explosive situation. In its objective aspect, revelation makes man understand what, why and who he is. It also teaches man how to live according to the revealed truth. In its subjective aspect, that is, man's relationship with God based on revealed truth, religion is a guide of one's conduct in his personal and community life.

Religion is both personal and communal. It is a way to come into communion with God Himself. It is reaching up to a God that we hold to be true, because we all do perceive an entity from which we came, even though our perception may be clouded or obscure. It is trying to reach the God that we know is true but in a way that is shown or taught by the group to which one belongs. The other members of the community, through example and exhortation, show what and who God is. The same immediate community, starting from the family, teaches and models the way to deal with this living God, with other human beings and with nature.

Religion is both a virtue and a component of culture. As a virtue, it is the personal relation that man maintains with his God. God is understood in this context as a personal God who could establish communion with His creatures. God is not a product of consciousness. God exists not because man thinks of Him; rather, He exists as one who made him exist. God is not an anthromorphic being, whose attributes are those that man gives; rather, man made in the image and likeness of his Creator could predicate what he sees as his perfections as God's perfection that He shares with him. God, as creator is also provider, that is, He lays down rules for man to live by. Among these rules are those related to how man should deal with his fellowmen, with nature and with God. How the believers practice the laws of God create the culture that can provide ontological bases for building a value-based-democratic society marked by dignity, tolerance and compassion.

Christianity's symbol is the cross, two beams – one vertical and another horizontal. The vertical beam represents the transcendent dimension of faith -attachment to God- while the horizontal stands for one's relation with fellow human beings. The vertical sustains the horizontal. In vain do societies that have done away with the vertical enact laws that will respect human dignity.

Human dignity is not conferred on human beings by a statute that proclaims respect for human dignity, as in the case of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Rather, the Declaration is an acknowledgment of that innate dignity that man possesses by virtue of being human. Human dignity refers to that human quality that makes the person precious, deserving of something, worthy of respect. Human dignity is manifested on the ability of human beings to charter the course of their lives because they are capable of determining what they want and pursuing

what they desire. Human dignity is not based on human excellence, capacities or achievements. Its ontological basis is God's creative act; thus, human beings are born possessing this gift. The acknowledgment of that dignity is the basis of what people claim as inalienable human rights, which other human beings have the duty to respect.

Tolerance and compassion, two other pillars of community life, are based on the recognition of this God-given human dignity, the human nature present in all human beings, which is compatible with the existential differences found among human beings. Tolerance makes human beings accept the differences in grasping concepts and ways of life of other human beings. The same social virtue makes way for respecting the individual differences, which are natural and enriching for community life.

Compassion etymologically means to feel with or to have the same sentiments as the other. Thus, to be compassionate is to be caring and mindful of the plight of the other community members. In a Christian world, justice – the virtue that governs relationship among fellow citizens – is tempered with charity. Otherwise, justice for justice's sake could turn the laws, which are aimed at protecting the administration of justice, against man. Laws, as Aristotle said, have the end of making man good and his actions good.[7]

Religiosity is a consequence of man's nature. Man is both an individual and a social being: individual because he is undivided and himself and divided from everything else; thus his actions and decisions are personal, done by him and not by another. At the same time, he is a social creature. He cannot live a dignified life without the help of other human beings that contribute to his "hominization," that is, to his becoming human; and humanization, that is to becoming humane. Thus, religiosity has personal and social dimensions. The personal is the cultivation of a loving relationship with God, and the social is the creation of culture that is permeated with theist spirit shown in public worship and in the kind of community he sets up with fellow human beings.

GLOBALIZATION AND RELIGIOSITY

Globalization fueled by liberalism is secular, that is, it marginalizes the influence of religious tenets in social, economic and political life. As explained above, liberalism could go against man and organized society because it caters to individual's interest more that to the attainment of the common good of society. Such common good is not dictated by a group of individuals but is rooted in man's nature, which he does not give unto himself but by his creator. Having left out God, the creator, the proclaimed benefits of globalization will redound only to a few.

[7] See *Nicomachean Ethics*, V 2 1130b 25-30.

Moreover, globalization has threatened existing cultures and traditions. It has tried to unify the world under one ideal, forgetting the legitimate existential differences present among peoples and cultures. It has corroded values that sustain the community and its identity because selfish interests could prevail rather than altruism, a virtue necessary for making a community work.

Globalization's stress on gains and wealth acquisition could make one forget that the end of wealth is for self-preservation and provision of the needs of the family and the community.[8] In addition, wealth acquisition is limited by temperance and liberality.[9] Temperance is the virtue that regulates the appetite such that man "craves for the things he ought, as he ought and when he ought."[10] Liberality deals with giving wealth such that a liberal man will "give to the right people, the right amounts and at the right time, with all the other qualifications that accompany right giving."[11] While this is a demand of an upright social life that could be easily discovered by men of good will; nevertheless, it has to be taught.

In a community of believers, it is taught that social relationship must be permeated with the spirit of the Gospel. Hence, it would teach that: "the development of economic activity and growth in production are meant to provide for the needs of human beings. Economic life is not meant solely to multiply goods produced and increase profit or power; it is ordered, first of all, to the service of persons, of the whole man, and of the entire human community."[12] At the same time, those who live according to the faith they profess would make use of their talents to contribute to the abundance that will benefit all, and to harvest the just fruits of his labor.[13] The economic activity carried out is not simply ruled by the laws of the market but is observant of the institutional, juridical and political entities that oversee this activity.

Ultimately, the importance of religion zeroes in on the role it plays on man. Religion with its teachings and tenets provides a light to the intellect. It gives guideposts, criterion for good and worthwhile action both in the personal and community realms. The virtue of religiosity that rests in the heart but is founded on the understanding of what one believes to be true, good and beautiful pushes the individual to do what is prudent. Man who lives his life imbued with the ideals of the religion he professes will make good use of any worthwhile advances that his fellow human beings have attained. It is he who will direct then to the end for which they are intended, while trying to minimize the negative effects of such

---

[8] See *Politics*, I 9 1256b 30.
[9] See *Ibid*., II 6 1265a 30.
[10] *Nicomachean Ethics*, III 12, 1119b 15-20.
[11] *Ibid*., IV 1 1120a 25-27.
[12] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2426.
[13] *Ibid*., 2429.

developments. It is also he who will mitigate the unintended ill consequences of intended actions.

Finally, how will strong religiosity enable Southeast Asians to enjoy the gains of globalization without falling prey to its adverse effects? The answer is by strengthening the teaching of religion and fostering religiosity. Southeast Asians are extremely religious. It is Asia's wonder that with the exception of the fundamentalists, Southeast Asian countries tolerate different religions within its borders. While each country proclaims having a majority of its citizens belonging to a particular creed, there is religious tolerance among its citizens. It may be that some are more religious than others yet religion is a power that shapes national cultures. This is a legacy that Southeast Asians must foster by strengthening the base where religiosity is first taught and practiced: the family.

In summary, liberalist attitude fuelled globalization. The secularist bent of liberalism has ill effects on man and his relationship with other men, nature and God. The boons of globalization are clouded by the degradation in human dignity. Religion teaches the correct relationship among human beings, human beings relationship with social and political institutions and the means of preserving and sustaining life. A society devoid of religion could be an easy prey to the ill effects of globalization.

Religiosity manifested in a culture of sharing and understanding for each member of the community will then be the shield that will guard the Southeast Asians from being victims of the individualistic liberalist phenomenon.

Philosophy Department
The University of Asia and the Pacific
Pasig City, Philippines

REFERENCES

Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* W. D. Ross (trans.) (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1952).

Reimon Bachika (ed.), *Traditional Religion and Culture in a New Era*, (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers 2002).

Colin Bird, *The Myth of Liberal Individualism* (UK: Cambridge 1999).

James Burnham, *Suicide of the Wes:t An essay on the Meaning and Destiny of Liberalism* (Chicago: Regnery Books 1985).

Michael Casey," How to Think About Globalization," The Acton Institute.

John Gray, "The Era of Globalisation is Over," *New Statesman* 24 September 2001.

Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei*, 1-XI-1885.

Theodore Lowi, *The End of Liberalism* (New York: Norton and Co. 1969).

Thomas Neill, *The Rise and Decline of Liberalism* (Milwaukee: Bruce 1953).

Douglas B. Rasmussen and Douglas J. Den Uyl, *Liberalism Defended the Challenge of Post-Modernity* (UK: Edward Elgar 1997).

Michael J. Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1982).

Thomas Storck, "Liberalism's Three Assaults," *Homiletic & Pastoral Review* (January 2000): 8-16.

John Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press1999).

Immanuel Wallerstein, *After Liberalism* (New York: The New Press 1995).

CHAPTER III

RELIGION, CULTURE AND IDENTITY REVISITED

BAMBANG SUGIHARTO

In spite of centuries of attack from the modern paradigm of thinking, today religion seems to be retrieving its honour and identity. Many people believe that the third millennium is characterized by the revival of religion. Yet this is not always a blessing. Indeed, more often it is the contrary. Given the fact that global interdependence has also brought with it identity conflicts, religion as a basis of identity can also become a serious threat to the global dynamics of interaction, especially when it is considered the ultimate, definite and absolute category. The absolute overtone of religious identity springs from the fact that, unlike other kinds of identity, religious identity covers both extremes of life: the innermost private life (our deepest secret of who we are) and the outermost dimension of universe (the metaphysical God beyond and who we are in the universe). And it is precisely this absolute overtone which makes religion susceptible to totalitarianism and conflict.

What is dangerous and crucial concerning religious identity, however, is the basic concept of "identity" itself as definite distinctiveness, following the principle of non-contradiction from the classical logic: that which "is" cannot at the same time be "is not"; if something is white, it cannot at the same time be not white (say, yellow or black). This type of logic has certainly been very useful to achieve conceptual coherence and very effective for manipulating reality (through science and technology). On the other hand, however, it is such a principle of non-contradiction that has generated so many contradictions and has sharpened various kinds of differences, and hence, various conflicts and separations in the human world. Besides, while such a principle of non-contradiction may entertain the human mind with logical coherence, reality is never that systematically coherent; it is always full of paradoxes with its elements overlapping one-another. Therefore "identity" can be viewed in a different way, incorporating the overlapping parts and seeing it more as a relational process instead of a fixed and separate substance.

This paper will reexamine the interconnection between religion, culture and identity in the perspective of relationality. The basic problem with seeing identity in terms of religion and culture seems to lie in what we take as the basic constituent of identity as well, as what we mean by culture in general or religious culture in particular.

RELIGIOUS CULTURE

When what is considered central in a culture is the meaning dimension of social action, it does not necessarily mean that culture is primarily located in the intellectual or spiritual achievements of a community (its great works of art, philosophy, or literature) as is usually referred to when one talks about "high" culture. Instead, culture refers to the whole social practice of meaning-transactions which accompanies all social action, and which makes it socially meaningful and not a mere biologically based reflex or personal idiosyncrasy. The meaning dimension is a matter of everyday practices, and comes up more explicitly when one is coping with difficult situations like injustice, suffering, anomaly, or dilemma. To take some cases from religious culture for example: does it make sense for religious people to kill others in defense of their religion? Are God's gracious love and forgiveness compatible with condemnation of homosexuals? And so on.

The social meaning dimension is also a matter of meaning production. In everyday practices the meaning of formal, abstract and conceptual worldview is never really understood in detail and in definite form. One might heartily affirm the values of liberty and justice for all without understanding precisely what those values mean. The cultural dimension of social practice is often so undefined that it leaves space for quite a number of possible interpretations. People might affirm the same creed without having the same interpretation of what it really means. Academic investigation and approach tend to project the object studied (in this case: religious culture) as what its own procedure of investigation requires: a coherent whole. But in reality the meaning of religious beliefs or values is much more ambiguous than their systematic and neat academic formulations. The meanings become apparent with reference to different beliefs and values, and to what the people do with the notions. The meanings are contextual in nature. And there is no automatic agreement or clarity among the believers of what something means in practice. For example, if one believes that women are equal in the economic and political spheres, does it also mean that they are equal in religion? The answers to such a question may vary.

Religious culture is no doubt constituted, to some degree, of general agreement. Without agreement no pattern of social practices could exist. In the social processes, however, patterns of action are not fixed but are themselves susceptible to change in the course of further actions. What is considered as "graft" or "bribery", for example, may change along with the changes of its forms in practice and its growing complexity, and thereby its meaning also changes. New practice brings with it addition, alterations, and unexpected twists to preestablished meanings. No given context can control the meaning of a particular belief or value. The context of use that establishes meaning is itself ultimately unanchored, in the sense that the

regular patterns of use that give a belief or value meaning are not themselves ruled by anything. New uses are not the simple expression of any transcendent standard of correctness; they are instead produced through a kind of experimental, inherently controversial work.

Thus, not knowing immediately what to do with a new phenomenon is not a failure of competence or the outcome of improper socialization. Instead, not knowing immediately is a part of the hard process by which that competence is formed and tested in community. For example, not knowing about whether or not a woman or a non-celibate gay should be allowed to become a priest/minister in the church, or whether we can still take spiritual direction from a minister of whose behaviour we disapprove. Such concrete cases will gradually produce and form the competence.

The everyday practice is the primary locus of meaning circulation. In everyday life religion is not so much a matter of general principles as a matter of tact and good timing. We figure out, for example, when talk of God's love is better than talk of God's wrath. Religious identity therefore cannot refer to mere formal principles. In the world of praxis there is always uncertainty about "the right thing to do". And this is so especially in the face of internal disagreement and in the shift of social constellation.

IDENTITY

Identity and Social Grouping

Identity is usually viewed in reference to social grouping and cultural boundaries. We shall see, however, that such ways of looking are not of much help to understand identity better and in a more realistic manner.

When religious community is viewed as an alternative social group which is qualitatively different from others, then this is an unrealistic point of view. Most religious believers do mostly what everyone else in society does, whether in educational, economic, familial or political functions. A religious group mostly functions more as an association than as a separate society. And religious groups mostly incorporate many elements borrowed from others in the wider society and shape them to their own needs. Besides, social groups are generally not demarcated by a natural break in social interaction simply in virtue of the fact that they have to interact with one another. In this connection identity is but a matter of allegiance to certain standards or value orientations, a matter of self-definition, and not isolation.[1] Members of one group might interact on a daily basis as much with members of other groups than with their own. Seeing identity in terms

[1] Cfr Frederick Barth's Introduction in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969), 9-38.

of social grouping like that brings with it the bias of thinking in terms of physical objects: two different objects cannot be made up of the same parts in the same space. But two social groups in fact can.[2] People waiting to buy movie tickets make up only one line, but they may constitute, and be actively participating in, any number of different social groups.

Religious identity, therefore, need not exclude overlapping activities and memberships. Like other "deterritorializing" social movements, religion has no particular place or specific geographical location –it is nomadic in nature.[3] Besides, no social group has a monopoly on the various elements that make up its way of life; those elements cross social boundaries, being taken up in one way by a particular social group, in another way by some other. Thus the ethos of hard work,, for example, might be characteristic of certain religious group, but this does not mean that working hard is a simple reflection of their religious existence. Everything depends on how the resonance and associations of hard-working are developed and made to fit with religious preoccupations in a particular context.

Identity and Cultural Boundaries

It is usually believed that texts, rituals, peculiar symbolic forms and patterns of behaviour are said to generate, like all cultures do, their own world of meaning, a web of significance that is all their own. They, therefore, are to be understood in their own terms without reference to anything outside themselves. The basic assumptions behind this are firstly, the criteria for determining the meaning and plausibility of religious practices are those internal to the practices themselves. Secondly, becoming religious is something akin to primary socialization. Learning to be religious is like learning a second language. One learns a second language in the same way one learned the first one, by an intensive immersion in a close-knit group of people who already speak it.[4] And religions, like languages, can be understood only in their own terms, not by translating them into alien speech.[5] To know what Christians mean by "God", for example, looking at the use of the terms outside Christianity is of no help. The way the term figures in the stories, beliefs, rituals, and behaviour of Christians is all that matters.

---

[2] See David-Hillel Ruben, "Social Wholes and Parts*", Mind* 92 (1983), 219-38.

[3] See John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 208, 392, 416.

[4] Cfr McIntyre's elaboration of "a second first language" in Alasdair McIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality*? (Notre Dame : University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 370-88.

[5] See George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine (*Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984) 129.

This notion of a self-contained and self-originating religious identity implies that what is on the other side of the boundary is irrelevant for establishing Christian identity. The problem, however, is that if boundary is necessary, then the other side is also necessary as the constituent of the oppositional relation. And in reality, it is not always clear whether practices that are considered the mark of the boundary of a certain religion are by nature religious. For example, Greek literature and the educational practices that surround it, are they religious? and therefore to be excluded from Christian institutions? Is the caste system merely a social practice or a part of the Hindu religion?[6] The way Christian institutions are organized in the West, is it a religious matter or a consequence of following the social imperatives of the wider society? Moreover, there are cases when social practices that are excluded at one time are included at others.

Boundaries seem too fluid to establish the identity of certain religious practices. Since the decisions to designate boundaries are often situationally determined, a practice's importance as a boundary marker does not necessarily reflect its importance for a religious way of life. Depending on the circumstances, almost anything can serve as a boundary marker. When Christians live in a predominantly Hindu society, the fact that they eat beef while their neighbors do not becomes a pertinent boundary marker.

The fact is that most cultures share a great deal; differences in cultural identity are maintained in more subtle ways.[7] Imported cultural forms, for instance, need not threaten a culture's identity; a difference can be maintained by interpreting those forms differently. The new social and rhetorical contexts will establish a cultural difference. Thus early Christians incorporated the shame/honour code of Greco-Roman morals. Rather than establishing religious identity by its exclusion, a cultural difference was maintained by changing the goal of such a moral code, by substituting different warrants for the practice and by making odd content substitutions.[8]

Identity is basically relational since opposition is essentially relational. An effective opposition depends on what stands out about one's opponent's position. Boundaries are determined by how a religious way of life is situated within a whole field of alternatives. And the boundaries can also shift with shifts in the practices of the other ways of life making up the field. The old boundary markers for Christian identity, for example, became problematic with the conversion of large numbers of Greco-Romans (martyrdom, for example, was no longer a main peculiar marker).

---

[6] Cfr David Mosse, "The Politics of Religious Syncretism : Roman Catholicism and Hindu Village Society in Tamil Nadu, India", in *Syncretism/Anti-Syncretism*, 85-107

[7] See A.P.Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (London and New York : Tavistock Publications, 1985)

[8] See Wayne Meeks, *The Origin of Christian Morality* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

Differences between ways of life are therefore established by differences of use. It is more a matter of how than of what. It is not so much what cultural materials we use as what we do with them that establishes identity. We use whatever language-games are available. "Physis" or "hypostasis", for example, are common Greek words; but in the early Christian creeds their use is unusual.

One does not first determine a distinctively religious message or lens and then bring it into relation with other cultural practices for apologetic purposes. Other cultural practices are there from the beginning as the materials out of which the religious message/lens is constructed. The apologetics with other cultures is internal to the very construction of religious sense. The transformation of the use of shared items from one religion to another is a piecemeal process. Surprisingly one finds oneself in a new culture without having had any conscious intention of leaving one's own. Actually, in everyday life other cultures are never viewed with "They are all one way and we are all another" mentality. Cultures are different in certain respects and not in others, depending on the particulars, depending also on the aspects chosen for comparison. And relations with wider culture are never simply ones of either accommodation, opposition or radical revision. More often they are mixtures.

Identity and the Continuity of Agreement

Identity is usually conceived of also in terms of common beliefs and values, maintained and transmitted in the form of tradition, embodied in practice by way of rules. There are also some problems with this notion. Believers of a certain religion may well agree in the use of a claim to symbolize opposition to the wider culture. But this does not necessarily mean that they agree about it among themselves. The understanding of what the claim means can be different one from another.

Formal agreement may indeed create a sort of solidarity among the believers, but it does not mean that they also agree about what it implies. And solidarity can be achieved without the depth of the agreement. Agreement as the basis of solidarity is largely presumed and unexplicated. In order for religion to include all people everywhere and at all times, due to its universality, it seems that such a formal, vague and weak consensus is a prerequisite. What counts for such solidarity is the common concern. Just in so far as the symbolic forms and acts remain ambiguous are they able to unify a diverse membership.[9] What really unites the possible internal differences is perhaps the allegiance to matters of form (particular claims and particular forms of action).

[9] Cfr James Fernandez, "Symbolic Consensus in a Fang reformative Cult", *American Anthropologist* 67, no 4 (1965), 902-29.

In such context, where culture is always characterized by internal differences, the cultural continuity and the preservation of its shape are not something automatic and natural. It is instead something constructed, and thereby it presupposes certain frameworks which basically are contestable. The framework implies specific ways of coping with the diversities that have emerged in the course of history. Tradition is therefore something invented, not merely found, discovered or received; it is a product of human decision in a significant sense.[10] The materials that are passed down and over to one time and place from some other time and place are always much more numerous than those labeled "tradition". Tradition is always a selection from the wide array of materials; always a matter of human attribution. Even ongoing customary forms of action and belief do not constitute a tradition until they are marked as such and assigned a normative status. Which materials are designated "tradition" is a matter for human judgement, which is based on a contestable claim for their centrality or importance to certain group. Thus for example, in the Christian world, whether women's ordination sustains or breaks the identity of Christian tradition depends on how the materials of tradition are arranged. The fact is that transmitted materials have to be actively articulated into strong arguments to be designated "tradition", especially when facing new possibilities and new circumstances. In this sense tradition is always highly "political", something to be fought and sustained through struggle.

Identity as an Open Task or Concern

Communities are neither self-contained nor self-sufficient. Claims and values that are outside are brought inside, and the other way around, in processes of transformation. Religious identity is therefore established through unusual uses of materials from elsewhere. In the final analysis, what should unite a religious group is perhaps the same concern; the concern for true discipleship and true orientation of life. What religious groups should try to be faithful to or to protect is not some elements within or some character of religious practices themselves, which in the course of history are matters for ongoing assessment and reassessment.[11] What unites religious group's practices is not so much agreement about the beliefs and actions as a shared sense of the importance of figuring it out. The fact is that reflection on God's will/words in human speeches and actions cannot be restricted to scriptures, creeds, or some specific religious practices, and never simply an automatic repetition. One, indeed, does something with

[10] See Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge : Cambridge University press, 1983)

[11] Kathryn Tanner has elaborated very skillfully this view of "concern" as identity, see Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture, New Agenda for theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997). This paper is very much inspired by this book.

them in order to lead one's life in their light. And differences in doing that are common since the materials that those believers refer back to are basically too vague, too many, and too loosely organized. Due to their lack of precise definition, claims and ritual actions around which the religious life revolves amount to a set of question to be answered, rather than a set of statements giving exact direction. And the unity among the believers is sustained by a continuity of fellowship, by a willingness to admonish, learn from, and be corrected by all persons similarly concerned about the true meaning of religious life. If we see identity as concern, at least there will be more openness toward the inexhaustibility of God as mystery, as well as awareness of the limit of our own human articulation.

Faculty of Philosophy
Parahyangan Catholic University
Bandung, Indonesia

CHAPTER IV

TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING RELIGIONS AND CULTURES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

JOSEPH I. FERNANDO

The Significance of Religion

"Religion is the opium of the people", wrote Karl Marx. Is religion really the opium of the people? The answer is both yes and no. There is a distinction between religion in principle and religion in practice. Religion in practice can be exploitative. In fact, exploitation by religion has been prevalent all over the world. I am reminded of the exploitative religious practices in ancient India and Europe.

The common man was weighed down by the burden of rituals in India in the 6th century B.C. Orthodox Hinduism was excessively ritualistic. Many could not afford the cost of the rituals. Without the rituals it was almost impossible to establish contact with the deity. Religion was in the hands of the priests. Priesthood had become priestcraft, perhaps slightly better than witchcraft. Gautama Buddha was aware of this. He searched for a way that would free people from the clutches of ritualism. His departure from orthodox Hinduism was a protest against all that was not humane. He was silent on God but emphatic on the practice of morality. It is not necessary to be vociferous about God but obligatory to be good and to do good. "Not everyone who says to me: Lord! Lord! will enter the kingdom of Heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father in Heaven."[1] The will of the Father in Heaven is to be good and to do good.

For Marx, religion is part of the superstructure resting on the base of economics. In the feudalistic Europe, the serfs would listen to the sermons by priests who exhorted them to obey their feudal masters. Their suffering on earth was negligible compared to the eternal happiness they would have in heaven after death. They were told, "You will get a pie in the sky after you die." But the serfs wanted the pie 'here and now'. No wonder religion is the opium of the people. Nietzsche was disgusted with the Christianity of his times and declared 'God is dead.'

Man is capable of misusing everything, including religion. Because religion has been abused by some of the so-called religious people and others, religion is not always the opium of the people. Religion has been a panacea for the ills of the soul. In a country like India, from time

[1] The Bible. Matthew 7:21.

immemorial there has been a longing to become one with the Divine. Earthly life has been understood as a prelude to eternity. This longing expressed itself in simplicity, austerity, learning, meditation and contemplation. This longing expressed itself in philosophy, literature, music, painting, sculpture, dance, architecture and so on which are unparalleled in human history. Although secular themes also found their expression in human creation, the predominant theme was, of course, religious.

With the advent of Christianity in Europe, the barbaric tribes of Europe found themselves civilized and tamed. Many were called to a life of holiness. The founding of monastic orders, the Gothic cathedrals, the cathedral schools which eventually evolved into great universities, the works of Michael Angelo, Leonardo da Vinci and others, literary creations, immortal musical compositions and so on flowed from religious inspiration. In the Islamic and Buddhist worlds also we find wonderful creations evolving from deep religiosity.

Religion has been the bedrock of millions of people down through the centuries. Religion has given them a sense of purpose and fulfillment in their lives. Religion has given them a reason to live and a reason to die. Religion has enabled them to live, to give, to forgive, to serve, to suffer for worthy causes and to work for peace and unity. Without religion, the world would be engulfed in spiritual darkness. For millions of people human life would be unthinkable without religion as they are guided by the precepts of their religions. The fact that people take their religion seriously indicates that man is not only a rational, social and political animal but also a religious animal. Scores of people have laid down their lives and are ready to do so even today in defense of the values upheld by their religions. Religion has a tremendous hold on man. Asia is the cradle of religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and so on. It is worth investigating into the relation between religions and cultures in the religion.

The Southeast Asia Context

A.L. Basham writes in his *The Wonder That Was India*:" The whole of Southeast Asia received most of its culture from India … Other cultural influences, from China and the Islamic world, were felt in South-East Asia, but the primary impetus to civilization came from India."[2] Traditionally, mainland Southeast Asia,-- Burma, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam have been Buddhist nations. Malaysia and Indonesia are predominantly Islamic nations. The Philippines is the only Christian nation in Asia. Singapore is truly a cosmopolitan city-state. In Southeast Asia religion and ethnicity go hand in hand. To be a Thai,

[2] Basham, A.L. *The Wonder That Was India.* Rupa & Co, New Delhi, 2001, p. 485.

Burmese or Cambodian is to be a Buddhist. To be a Malay or Indonesian is to be a Muslim. To be a Filipino is to be a Christian. Dialogue between religions and cultures in Southeast Asia should recognize the need to perceive religions beyond ethnicity. To be a Thai is more than being a Buddhist. To be a Thai is also to be a Christian, Muslim, and so on. To be a Filipino is also to be a Muslim. To be an Indonesian is also to be a Christian, Hindu and so on. To be a Malaysian is also to be a Buddhist, Hindu and so on. Dialogue requires an openness to plurality-- diversity and recognition of the other. To be a Southeast Asian is to be a Buddhist, Muslim, Christian, Hindu and so on. One's identity as belonging to a particular religious community cannot be a threat to another's identity as belonging to another religious community. To be a Muslim in Indonesia or Malaysia is not to be like a Muslim in Arabia. A Muslim in Arabia is a creature of Arabic culture. A Muslim in Indonesia or Malaysia is a creature of Indonesian or Malaysian culture. Indonesian and Malaysian cultures have existed long before the advent of Islam in these countries.

The Mutual Impact of Religion and Cultures

The religions of Southeast Asia today are Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Sikhism. None of these religions was native to Southeast Asia. Buddhism and Hinduism were introduced into Southeast Asia by Indian Buddhist missionaries, Hindu priests, merchants and settlers from India. Islam was introduced by the Sufi merchants and masters from India, Persia and Arabia. The Filipinos became Catholics due to the colonization of the Philippines by the Spaniards in the 16th century, and some of them became Baptists due to the American presence in the country. Although these religions have contributed much to the cultures of Southeast Asia, the natives of these lands had their own cultures prior to the advent of these religions. What are the values and practice of these cultures? Were their cultures enriched or hampered by the advent of the new religion? Is there a conflict between the native cultures and the adopted religions? How much of the native culture is preserved? Has there been an inculturation of these religions in Southeast Asia? If so, to what extent? If some of these native cultural practices were abandoned in the wake of embracing a new religion, can we rediscover their values and preserve them for posterity? This is an urgent task today, especially in the context of globalization which threatens to some extent the existence and continuity of our cultures.

The Filipinos converted by the Spaniards were more like Spanish *Christians* just as those converted by the Portuguese in Goa, India were like Portuguese *Christians*. Are there Asian *Christians*? We are reminded of Matteo Ricci in China and Robert de Nobili in India in the 16th and 17th centuries who were pioneers of inculturation of Christianity. For the first time the Catholic Church officially spoke about the need of inculturation

and the interrelationship between the Gospel and culture in the Vatican II Documents.[3]

What is the impact of Christianity and Islam on Southeast Asian cultures? Have they contributed to the enriching of these cultures? For example, Christianity had its impact on Indian culture. The abolition of Sati (burning the widow in her husband's pyres), of child marriage, and of the *devadasi* system (temple prostitution), and letting the schools open for all children (earlier some sections of society were not allowed to go to school) were due to the Christian presence in India. Gandhi in his advocacy of nonviolence was profoundly influenced by the Sermon on the Mount. Have the Southeast Asians been significantly influenced by religions? If so, in what ways? How have the Southeast Asian cultures in turn shaped the religions? These are questions worth probing into. It may be said that religion is the core of culture. Just as culture preserves religion within itself, religion too has to affirm the values of culture in which it is embedded.

To conclude, we need to foster dialogue between religions and cultures, on the one hand; and between religions themselves, on the other. It is in ongoing dialogue between religions and cultures, that their relations are best brought out, appreciated and affirmed. People of all religions have to come together in fellowship, seeking to understand each other and to work together for the good of communities.

School of Philosophy and Religious Studies
Assumption University of Thailand
Bangkok, Thailand

[3] Vatican II Documents, "Gaudium et Spes" 53 – 62.

CHAPTER V

LIFE WISDOM OF 'SASONGKO JATI'

MUDJI SUTRISNO

First, we would like to analyze the Pangestu School of perfection as the most representative of the palace cultures in Surakarta.[1]

We choose the Pangestu as a school of perfection with the teaching of Sasongko Jati because the author indicates it as the Javanese cultural palace background of his book. Moreover, in it we might see more clearly the way taken by the Javanese people to actualize their goal of the perfect life. This Pangestu proposes further realization of the Javanese perfect life, based on the teaching of *Sasongko Jati* (True Light), Pangestu's holy book, which one should exercise throughout one's life.

Pangestu is the abbreviation of Paguyuban Ngesthi Tunggal. Paguyuban means "association of life through communion"; Ngesti signifies "to pray for" and Tunggal means "union". The Pangestu is the communion of life for union. This union has two aims: union with man and with God.[2] As an organization and association of life through communion, Pangestu was founded on May 20, 1949 in Surakarta, Central Java.[3] Soon it spread all over Java. Among the members, communion with each other is achieved and deepened by the monthly magazine, *Djiwa Wara* – "Message of the Master," which contains the directives of Pangestu.[4] Each community practices faithfully a spiritual meeting to perform the exercise of spiritual consciousness and to actualize the direction of life as written in the book of fundamental directives, *Sasongko Jati*.

The Pangestu is based on the *Sasongko Jati,* a collection of revelations received by R. Soenarto Mertowerdoyo, one of the founders of Pangestu in 1932 and 1933.[5] Our analysis will attend more to the teaching of perfect life in *The Sasongko Jati*, since this book is the holy book for Pangestu. We shall describe the main thoughts or teaching of *Sasongko Jati*. We would like to proceed as follows:

A. The context

---

[1] Mangunwijaya, YB. *Burung-Burung Manyar* Djambatan, Jakarta, 1981, pp. 40-47.

[2] Rahardjo R *Riwayat Hidup Paranpara Pangestu R.Soenarto Mertowerdoyo* Pangestu, Jakarta, 1974, p. 119.

[3] Rahardjo R, *Ibid.*, p. 111.

[4] de Jong S. *Salah Satu Sikap Hidup Orang Jawa* Kanisius, Yogyakarta, 1976, p. 16

[5] See: Rahardjo R *Riwayat Hidup Paranpara Pangestu R.Soenarto Mertowerdoyo* Pangestu, Jakarta, 1974, p. 11.

B. Image of God and Man:
   1. image of God
   2. image of man
C. The salvation of man:
   1. man's actual situation in the cosmos
   2. man's return to his origin: a concept of 'Sangkan Paran'
   3. liberation of self
D. The way of salvation
E. Ascetical exercise
F. A summary of the whole

Basically, *Sasongko Jati* is understood by the Pangestu members as an invitation offered to man in search of salvation. To one who wants to achieve happiness in this life, the *Sasongko Jati* provides a path. This book teaches the pattern of the perfect man and how to attain perfection. On the road to perfection, some directions are offered in order to exercise the heart and mind, others to order the spirit, as well as ascetical practices and spiritual exercise.

To arrive at a stage of union with God, man must know beforehand who God is and who he is in relation to God. Knowing his true self and the true essence of God, man will be able to live in accord with his true nature as created by God. Therefore, we shall see first the image of God as described in *Sasongko Jati* and then the image of man.

IMAGE OF GOD AND IMAGE OF MAN

Image of God

The teaching of *Sasongko Jati* states that God's essence is one. It is proper to give Him homage. No other god can be adored beside this One God.

> Naturally, there is only One God whom man adores. There is no god who should be worshipped except Allah and only to Allah is given true adoration.[6]

The One God is called 'Tri Purusa', meaning one God with three manifestations. These three manifestations are called:

- Suksma Kawekas: the True Lord of Life
- Suksma Sejati: the true Director of Life
- Roh Suci: the true Soul of man[7]

---

[6] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R. *Serat Sasongko Jati* Surakarta, cet.ke-3, 1964, p. 108.

Suksma Kawekas. He term *suksma* means the giver of life. *Suksma Kawekas* is believed by the members of Pangestu to be the first manifestation of the One God as the true Lord of life. Moreover, it means also the Source of Life, the Giver of Life to man so that he could live. The *Suksma Kawekas*, the Lord of Life, is viewed as the noblest manifestation of Tri Purusa. He is the Lord of Life; he gives life, makes life and rules life.[8]

The *Suksma Kawekas*, the Lord of Life, is described as the Absolute who governs all knowledge. His condition is unimaginable and unable to be analyzed. He is omnipotent and free from all bonds. Nevertheless, his omnipotence can be seen by man through nature and creatures. *Suksma Kawekas* is viewed by the Pangestu as parallel to Allah Ta'Alla in Islamic teaching and equal to the Father in Christianity. He is everlasting, never damaged. He exists as Lord before everything is created. He is the source of all living creatures, the quiet, unmoveable source of all unlimited, living consciousness. Within it is contained the continuing or unlimited dynamic of life. To explain this dynamic reality of God in three manifestations, Pangestu uses the symbol of an ocean. The quiet ocean is the symbol of the Suksma Kawekas. He is like the quiet ocean without waves. When waves begin on the ocean, we can see the real, powerful dynamic of life. That is the nature of Suksma Kawekas.[9]

Suksma Sejati. Suksma Sejati means the true Giver of Life to the true soul of man. In the teaching of *Sasongko Jati*, the true soul of man is called Roh Suci, the third manifestation of God himself. Thus the origin of man is this Roh Suci. Man in his true soul is united with God.[10]

Suksma Sejati as the second manifestation of God himself. Thus the origin of man is this Roh Suci. Man in his true soul is united with God.[11]

Suksma Sejati as the second manifestation of the One God is the dynamic conscience of life who holds the reins and plans the will of Suksma Kawekas. He is the eternal messenger of Suksma Kawekas. He plays the role of the true teacher of man in living in the world. He is the true Director of Life.[12] The *Sasongko Jati* illustrates the attribute of Suksma Sejati as eternal, amorphous. Although He has not a human morph [form] he becomes the director of man to achieve eternal perfection. He is the Guide for man to walk on the true path of God.[13] Suksma Sejati is believed

---

[7] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R. *Ibid*., p. 13.

[8] *Ibid*. p. 43 .

[9] *Ibid*., pp. 43, 125 and 168. See also: Sumantri Hardjoprakoso *Arsip Sarjana Budi Santosa* Pangestu Pusat, Jakarta, 1976, pp. 5-7.

[10] *Ibid*., p. 43.

[11] *Ibid*., p. 43.

[12] *Ibid*., pp. 43-44.

[13] *Ibid*., p. 134.

by the Pangestu to be the helper of man who holds man's hands to attain happiness in life. He exists and rules in the true life in the human heart, i.e., man's soul. It is only through a union with Suksma Sejati that man can return to God, his 'true home' and his central happiness.[14]

To explain the dynamic reality of God in three manifestations, the Pangestu uses the symbol of an ocean. The moving ocean with its great dynamic of life is the symbol of Suksma Sejati, whereas the quiet ocean symbolizes Suksma Kawekas. They are both water. Their reality remains one, the difference is only in the manifestation. Thus, the reality of God is always one.[15]

Roh Suci. The third manifestation of the One dynamic reality of God is called Roh Suci. The Roh Suci is the soul of God. It is specific to the teaching of *Sasongko Jati* that Roh Suci, who is the soul of God, is at the same time the true soul of man. In *Sasongko Jati*, it is described as follows:

> I only want to demonstrate to you, man, that your true soul is Roh Suci who is the third manifestation of the One dynamic reality of God. One with Suksma Sejati and Suksma Kawekas (the second and the first manifestation of God.[16]

The essence of Roh Suci is described as being truly a light of God with which the true soul of man is fused.[17] The Pangestu likes to continue to use the ocean symbolism to illustrate the one reality of God: if Suksma Kawekas is symbolized as a quiet ocean, Suksma Sejati as a moving ocean, then Roh Suci is symbolized as drops of water which sprinkle from the ocean. Roh Suci is more limited and smaller than the Suksma Kawekas and Suksma Sejati. But the three manifestations are holy and always one. From this limit as God's 'sprinkling' arises human individuality, which is conscious of having returned into a fusion with Suksma Sejati by way of diminishing its individuality.[18]

---

[14] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R. *Ibid*., pp. 13-23; see also: Sumantri Hardjoprakoso *Arsip Sarjana Budi Santosa* Jakarta, 1976, p. 6; also: Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R. *Sabda Chusus* Solo, 1967, pp. 65-67, 75-76.

[15] See: *Mawas Diri* the monthly of Javanese mysticism, anno I no.10; also: Seno Sastroamidjojo *Nonton Wayang Kulit* Yogyakarta, 1950, p. 28.

[16] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R. *Serat Sasongko Jati* Surakarta, 1964, cet.ke-3, p.15: *Wruhanira Manawa sajatinira yaiku Roh Suci iku siji lawan Suksma Sejati lan Suksma Kawekas.*

[17] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R. Ibid, p.16: *Satemene sajatinira iku soroting Pangeran lan Pangeran iku tunggal kahanan lawan sajatinira.*

[18] Sumantri Hardjoprakoso *Arsip Sarjana Budi Santosa* Pangestu Pusat, Jakarta, 1976, p. 7.

Therefore, the *Sasongko Jati* believes in One God called Tri Purusa. The One God in Tri Purusa means that the One God manifests Himself as the Lord of Life, the Director of life and the Principle of Life. This Tri Purusa is the dynamic manifestation of God in relation to man's life. Hence, the truest life – *urip sejati*, is a life lived out by man in consciousness of the dynamic presence of God in Tri Purusa.[19]

Image of Man

When we dealt with the description of God in *Sasongko Jati*, we saw that man's true soul is Roh Suci, God Himself, the principle of life. Thus, the true origin of man, according to *Sasongko Jati,* is God. In *Sasongko Jati*, the creation of man is described as occurring by a fused light of the Tri Purusa.[20]

When did the creation happen? It was done by God after He created macro-cosmos, the universe. At that time, God created man. Nevertheless, this does not mean that God's will to create man existed properly after he created the cosmos. Actually, God had the will to create a long before He created the cosmos. Only, at that time His will was halted for there was no place yet to put the Roh Suci, the principle of life. Therefore, He created first the cosmos as a place of the principle of life. The process of creating man is illustrated like this.

As soon as the Roh Suci comprehended and promised to obey all rules and plans for Him, God then created man by means of a union between man and woman. The Roh Suci who was now incarnated in man as His place, the micro cosmos, was clothed by four elements of the earth, macro cosmos. Those elements are: land, fire, water and air. These four elements within man became coarse and soft materials. The body is given five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. The physical human body is then completed by four passions called lauwamah, amarah, sufiah and mutmainah. In addition, man was further completed by three more passions: pangaribawa in thought, prabawa in mind, kamayan in understanding, all united as one with imagination. Their role is to control the aforementioned passions. Whereas by giving man seven passions, God wants to complement man's soul, that is Roh Suci, with equipment. It means that the seven passions are tools that could bring punishment or grace depending on how they are used. Judgement will be based on how the passions as equipment were used according to the rules of salvation.[21]

---

[19] Sumantri Hardjoprakoso, *Ibid*., p.8 .

[20] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R. *Serat Sasongko Jati* Surakarta, cer.ke-3, 1964, p. 50: *Mungguh dumadining manungsa iku saka sorot manunggaling Tri Purusa yaiku Suksma Kawekas, Suksma Sejati lan Roh Suci.* Translation: That the creation of man is made by a unified fusion of light comes from Tri Purusa.

[21] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R. *Serat Sasongko Jati* Surakarta, cet.ke-3, 1964, pp. 192-193.

Passions are created by the entrance of the Roh Suci into the womb of woman. The passion has an activity linked to other passions. The three passions pangaribawa, prabawa, kamayan were made of God's shadow. Each one has its own character but together they cooperate to animate the four other passions. They unite together in man's true soul to regulate the passions of lauwamah, amarah, sufiah, mutmainah to obey God's will.[22]

Further, the *Sasongko Jati* describes seven passions embodied in man's physical body as the place or clothing of his true soul that comes from God himself. The first passion is that of lauwamah. It is a passion formed of earth. In the structure of the human body, its seat is the flesh. Its characteristics are selfishness, greed, dishonesty and indifference to goodness. When this passion is regulated, it can be the basis of firmness.[23]

Second, is amarah. It is constituted of fire. In the human body, it is found in blood flowing throughout the body. Its special characteristic is that it is full of longing, anger and cruelty. The anger passion has a mediating role. It makes the other passions, either good or bad, perform their functions. It is the channel by which the other passions gain their aims. It is a motor which moves human passions.[24]

Third passion, sufiah, consist of water. Physically, it is located in the backbone of man. Spiritually, it becomes the fundamental source of desire, will, love and lust.[25] Fourth, mutmainah. Mutmainah is a passion made of air. In the structure of man, it lies in the breath. Its characteristic are bright, holy, serviceable compassionate.[26]

Among those four passions, there is an open battle. Passion or lauwamah is only good when it meets with the strength of anger. Similarly, anger or amarah will only function in its relation to the passion of sufiah. The sufiah passion has the role of governing the passions of amarah and lauwamah, whereas mutmainah has the task of being a light for the other passions. But without sufiah passion, it could not function well in its role as light for the others. On the other hand, the passion of sufiah without the help of mutmainah will become a slave of lauwamah and anger with the serious effect of an inclination to evil.[27]

Hence, according to the teaching of *Sasongko Jati*, man is given by God the other three passions to help him to regulate the aforementioned four passions. They are: pangaribawa in human thought, prabawa in mind and kamayan in understanding. All three are united in what is called *angan-angan* – imagination.[28] According to *Sasongko Jati*, this imagination is

---

[22] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R., *Ibid*., p. 61.
[23] *Ibid*., p. 60.
[24] *Ibid*., p. 60.
[25] *Ibid*., p. 60.
[26] *Ibid*., p. 60.
[27] *Ibid*., p. 62.
[28] *Ibid*., p. 62; see also: Sumantri Hardjoprakoso *Arsip Sarjana Budi Santosa* Jakarta, 1976, p. 11.

simply a shadow of the One God, Tri Purusa. It is an intellectual capacity of man. Prabawa is no other than a shadow of Roh Suci as principle of life with the role of composing all kinds of images. Whereas kamayan is the shadow of Suksma Kawekas as the Lord of life with the role of grasping the whole understanding.[29]

SALVATION OF MAN

The core teaching of *Sasongko Jati* is an offering of salvation to mankind. A call of salvation for mankind in *Sasongko Jati* contains some direction to attain a perfect life. Those directions for achieving a perfect life are moral attitudes which man must have in order to attain his final and true destiny, i.e., happiness. In other words, the teaching of *Sasongko Jati* gives to mankind the directions of the main moral attitudes man must have in order to reach perfection. The *Sasongko Jati* teaches that man should live in accord with an ideal model of perfection, and the true source of that perfection is God. He is the true origin and aim of man's life. It is difficult for man to attain perfection if he does not know who he is, from where he comes (his origin), his real situation now, and where the direction of his life is pointing.

First man has to know his origin, his actual situation and where he is going. This question is answered by *Sasongko Jati* in the teaching of *sangkan paraning dumadi* – the concept of the origin and destination of man's life that also embraces a teaching about man's actual situation.

Man's Actual Situation in the Cosmos: Man in Confusion

The members of Pangestu believe that the cosmos, with all events in it, confuses man's consciousness of his true nature, that is, the Roh Suci, his true soul.[30] This confusion occurs because man with his passions has always an inclination or tendency towards the cosmos. Man's passions, by a strong pull from the cosmos, make him always in a situation of being unable to regulate those passions. Man's passions, in relation to the cosmos, are viewed in themselves as evil by *Sasongko Jati*, easily affecting man to satisfy his passions rather than control them. As a consequence, man lives in a disordered state.

Man's confusion in living begins when he loses control of his passions. By following his passions, for example, anger, man is immediately burnt. Since he desires to follow his passions, the will is confused by passion. This confusion between good will and evil passion causes him to live in disorder. This mixture becomes serious when it

---

[29] Sumantri Hardjoprakoso, *Ibid*., p. 11.

[30] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R. *Serat Sasongko Jati* Surakarta, cet.ke-3, 1964, pp. 133-134.

manifests itself in actions. In the case of the passion of anger again, when someone is burning with it and causes others to be hurt, then great confusion can occur. The effect is that others will be hurt. When control is truly lost, a state of disorder inevitably occurs among people.

Thus, when a man cannot regulate his passions, a life of disorder is the result. By following his passions man cannot be conscious of his true soul, the Roh Suci. In a state of disorder, it is no longer a man's true soul regulating his everyday life, but rather his evil passions which come to dominate his life. In *Sasongki Jati*, disorder is described as the actual situation of man in the cosmos.[31] For this reason, it is necessary for man to return to an awareness of his true soul by returning to his true origin, God. Thus, in this cosmos man can liberate himself from disorder by regulating his passions through realizing the origin and purpose of his life (the concept of *sangkan paraning dumadi*), that is, a return to God Himself by making a union with Him.

Man Returns to His Origin: The Concept of 'Sangkan Paran'

Man's true essence is the Roh Suci, teaches the *Sasongko Jati*. It is in his true soul that man has his true origin from God Himself. Man's happiness lies in his return to God, in his union with God as man's true origin and purpose of life. This return is called the teaching of *sangkan paran*. However, it is not easy for man, continues the Sasongko Jati, to attain happiness of life. The reason is that man is conditioned by his actual situation in the cosmos: a situation of confusion, a state in which reality is blurred. It is a state in which man forgets to recognize his true soul, the Roh Suci. Man's true soul is clouded by following his passions:

> Though the Lord of life and the Director of life are already in union with your true soul, nevertheless when you are still covered by the darkness of the cosmos, you cannot receive the current of the holy dynamic presence of God, for you are still always covered by your passions for the wordly cosmos.[32]

The great difficulty of man in finding a way to return to God is his inability to regulate his passions.

Hence, in the state of disorder God sends His messenger, Suksma Sejati, as a helper for mankind. This messenger will guide, give light and

---

[31] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R., *Ibid*., p. 133.

[32] *Ibid*., pp. 133-134: *Sanadyan Pangeran lan Ingsun uga wus nunggal kahanan aneng sira, nanging yen sira isih kalimput ing pepetenging donya, sira ora bisa nampa ilining daya kekuwataning suci kang saka Pangeran mau, amarga tansah kalimput dening angen-angenira kang tumuju marang kadonyan bae.*

help the man who believes one can return to the origin and aim of his life, God Himself. *Sasongko Jati* suggests the way of return to God:

> If you want to live safely on the way of salvation until you arrive at your true origin and purpose, then, while you are living in the cosmos, be obedient in fulfilling your duty in this life, as written in the directions of the way of salvation. This way will help you to carry out the eight principles, the Hasta Sila. Hence, keep far away from evil acts as written in the rules of Paliwara so that you can be directed by Suksma Sejati. He is the Director of life who guides you to return to God's lap, that is your true nature.[33]

According to *Sasongko jati*, the true salvation of man is a return of man to God, a union with Him, as man's true origin.[34]

In this real life man tries always to attain this salvation. How is it done? What is the way? Man must liberate himself from all inordinate passions. The process of liberation by regulation of passions is based on a concept that man's true soul is soiled by passions. When man has reached a stage of liberation from passions, he will directly be conscious of his true nature, the Roh Suci, man's true principle of life. Through liberation of one's true soul from passions man can be united with the manifestation of God that is his true soul.[35]

A union of man with the manifestation of God means a union with Suksma Sejati, and it will be followed also by a union with Suksma Kawekas. This level of union is the deepest on the journey of man's return to God. It is the peak of man's salvation. At this deepest level, the *Sasongko Jati* even dares to describe it as a union of man with God, with no more

---

[33] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R., *Ibid*., pp. 164-165: *Menawa sira nedya slamet urip tumekaning dalan sangkan-paranira, ing sajrone sira isih urip ana donya dipada mituhu marang kuwajiban kang wus pada sira sanggemi, kang kaya wus tinutur ana ing wewarahe dalan rahayu limang prakara yaiku dedalan kang arep nekakane sira bisane netepi marang surasane pituduh rahayu 8 prakara, kang wus tinutur ana ing layang pengetan Hasta Sila, apa dene angedohna pepacuh kaya kang wus kapratelakake ana pengetan Paliwara, supaya sira katuntun Suksma sajatinira bali marang Pangeran alamira jati.*

[34] *Ibid*., p. 168: *Dene sira bakal bali marang Pangeran, awit sira tinurunake saka kadhatoning Pangeran, lan sira uga bakal dadi Pangeran awit sira wus jumeneng ana ing sajroning kadhatoning Pangeran.*

[35] *Ibid*., p. 148: *dadi yen wong wus bisa nglindihake hawa nepsune lan wus bisa ngumpulake angen-angene tetelu nyawiji ing dalem kahanan hening heneng kaya kang wus Ingsun terangake aneng dawuh Ingsun ing pinengetan ing buku Gumelaring Dumadi ing kono manungsa banjur anunggali sipat-sipate Pangeran kang amribadi ing telenging uripe.*

difference between them than there is between pupil and Guru. At this point, man will be called a little God.[36]

In this part we could underline the teaching of the *Sasongko Jati,* that the material world or cosmos is not eternal. It is neither true reality nor the true place of mankind. Man is just passing through this transitory cosmos, and he must return to his eternal, true origin. This is accomplished by liberating oneself from inordinate passions. In this way, the way of salvation is found and lived out. It is recognized as the way to happiness: God. The *Sasongko Jati* expresses it variously: 'true truth' – *kasunyatan sejati*[37]; 'true nature' – *alam sejati*[38]; 'a true life' – *urip sanyata*[39]; 'a union between servant and lord' – *pamoring kawula Gusti*[40].

Liberation of Self

In this description, we have touched on the need for man to liberate himself from his passions in order to attain perfection. Now we shall present the description of *Sasongko Jati* concerning the significance of liberation on the way of salvation.

First of all, in the view of the *Sasongko Jati*, man should begin to live on the basis of his spiritual dimension, found and centered on his true soul. It is called an act of adoration. Adoration is an act of strengthening the consciousness of the presence of God and realizing obedience to Him. It is active consciousness to be always sensible and obedient to God in this life.[41]

In order to be able to adore God properly, one must know what true adoration is. For the *Sasongko Jati*, proper adoration is due only to the One God, who dwells in the heart, the true soul of man. The first condition, therefore, is a pure heart. The whole man, body and soul, must adore God, so that in everything he does he can act peacefully[42] and without self interest.[43] Adoration, says Sasongko Jati, is interior and spiritual.[44] It should

---

[36] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R., *Ibid*.,, pp.148-149, 263

[37] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R., *Ibid*., p. 79.

[38] *Ibid*., p. 83.

[39] *Ibid*., p. 87.

[40] *Ibid*., p. 85.

[41] Soewondo *Ulasan Kang Kelana* Proyek Penerbitan dan Perpuatakaan Pangestu Pusat, Jakarta, 1974, p. 162.

[42] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R. *Bawa Raos ing Salebeting Raos* Jakarta, 1975, cet.ke-7, p. 4.

[43] Soewondo *Ulasan Kang Kelana* Proyek Penerbitan dan Perpustakaan Pangestu Pusat, Jakarta, 1974, p. 163.

[44] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R. *Serat Sasongko Jati* Surakarta, cet.ke-3, 1964, p. 13.

be an interior attitude of the whole concrete life.[45] Adoration is the way to be holy by cultivating the desire of union with God and doing His commandments.[46] This adoration exists and grows when a person in union with God obeys His rules in his life. Hence, adoration is a life in constant consciousness of the dynamic presence of God in Tri Purusa.[47]

There are three aspects of adoration as a dynamic consciousness of the God: first, adoration done by man as the servant of Roh Suci. Secondly, adoration of the true soul to the Director of life. And thirdly, the adoration of the true soul under the guidance of the Director of life to the Lord of Life.[48] Thus we can see that in the structure of *Sasongko Jati*, adoration is one reality with three dimensions in accord with the three manifestation of the One God (Tri Purusa): The Lord of life, the Director of life, and the Principle of life.

The triple dimension of one adoration reveals also three relationships. The first is that the whole man should manifest the deepest truth of reality, a life participating in the divine life by always being conscious of one's true soul. The second is that it should be lived out according to the direction of God Himself. And finally, the third is that life should be a constant act of adoration to the only One God, the Lord of life. Thus a true life is one based on an act of adoration in the depth of the heart as a dynamic encounter with God.

However, as we have seen, man's situation in which he hopes to live out a life of adoration is a state of disorder. Man has been soiled by his passions. By his bodily passions man becomes distant from God dwelling in his heart. His body, the seat of his true soul, actually impedes his participating in divine life. By following his passions, he cannot control himself. His heart is not pure. In other words, his true soul is still covered by passions. His deepest heart, although it is a residence for God, is still clothed in the body with its inordinate passions. Therefore, a way of return to the perfect life must be, on the one hand, the path of continuous regulation of passions, and on the one other, concentrating one's life on God, his true soul.

When a man begins to follow the desire for union with God, he must take off his worldly clothing, his passions, since they are obstacles for him to gain perfect life. Here the *Sasongko Jati* indicates that the act of liberating oneself from passions in order to have a pure heart as a condition of right adoration is nothing other than the act of regulating one's passions. Thus we arrive at the two points which show mankind the path to perfection.

---

[45] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R. *Bawa Raos ing Salebeting Raos* Jakarta, 1975, cet.ke-7, p. 29.

[46] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R., *Ibid*., Jakarta, 1975, cet.ke-7, p. 105.

[47] Soemantri Hardjoprakoso *Arsip Sarjana Budi Santosa* Jakarta, 1976, p. 8.

[48] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R. *Serat Sasongko Jati* cet.ke-3, Surakarta, 1964, p. 13.

The first is the question of how to regulate passions. The second is that of how to realize an act of adoration in everyday life. These points are understandable since the *Sasongko Jati* has already presented its concept of man. Since man with his body participates in or is linked to cosmic elements which are transitory and uneternal, then it is reasonable that his bodily passions become obstacles rather than aids on the road to salvation.

Hence, the question arises of how to order bodily passions. Moreover, since man's road to perfection should be followed on the basis of his true soul, while it is still clothed in its bodily structure, the question exists of how to live in concentration on one's true soul. To answer these questions, let us examine the directions given by *Sasongko Jati* for following the path of perfection.

THE WAY OF SALVATION: THE EIGHT PRINCIPLES – HASTA SILA

Living on the way of salvation is not easy. It is difficult since the actual situation of man is disordered by his passions. Therefore, man needs a guide, a teacher who will show him the way of salvation, a return to God. For man it is impossible to return alone to God.[49] According to *Sasongko Jati*, it is Suksma Sejati who will direct man on the way of salvation. He has two roles. Firstly, He reveals the true essence of man, that is, his true soul. Secondly, He guides man to achieve salvation. Salvation in terms of a union with God realized by adoration is only possible if it goes along with the liberation of passions or the conquest of egoism.

The *Sasongko Jati* proposes the *Hasta Sila*, the eight principles to answer the aforementioned question of how one is to live according to one's true nature and how to concentrate one's life on that true nature.

Hasta Sila: The Eight Principles to Attain the Perfect Life Based on Man's True Nature

No one can adore God, says the *Sasongko Jati*, without the direction of Sang Guru Sejati – the true Director of life.[50] Therefore, man should obey the advice or guidance of the Director of life by putting into practice the great duty of Tri Sila, the three principles, and by practicing the five principles, the Panca Sila, for they will conduct man to adore God.[51]

The Hasta Sila is divided into two parts, the first being the three basic principles and the second the five principles. The three basic principles called Tri Sila are eling, pracaya and mituhu, that is, being

[49] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R., *Ibid*., p. 14.
[50] *Ibid*., p. 13.
[51] *Ibid*., pp. 13-14.

conscious, having faith and being obedient.[52] The five principles are rila, narima, temen, sabar and budi luhur – indifference acceptance, faithfulness, patience and elevated virtue.[53]

Tri Sila: The Three Basic Principle

- *Being Conscious*. In the *Sasongko Jati*, the first basic principle is called eling, being conscious. Eling means to adore God with all the heart to be pure and holy.[54] "Being conscious" should be lived out everyday that it becomes a habit rooted in man as the principle of his life.[55] It is described elsewhere as meaning to love God and to have peace and love for man.[56]

Since the relationship to God and man is an active state[57], being conscious signifies that a person has a duty to actualize adoring love by realizing the peace, goodness and love of God in his relations with other people. Thus, being conscious is a spiritual consciousness which embraces the consciousness of life as an act of adoration and as love in the way God Himself expresses His goodness, peace and love for man.

There are three steps for cultivating spiritual consciousness of God. The first step is taught to young people. For them it is exercised in a consciousness of true soul. This level is done as a formation to start to learn to live in a concentration on God dwelling in the pure heart. This is the first step to live on the basis of being conscious of God. The second step is adoration of man's true soul, directed to Suksma Sejati, the Director of of life. The third level is the deepest. It is the adoration of man's true soul towards the Lord of Life, Suksma Kawekas.

Those three steps as a dynamic process practiced in living out consciousness have an underlying point to be noted. At the beginning, man should regulate his orientation of life. This is done by his being conscious of his true soul. Secondly, life is directed towards the light of God dwelling in his soul. Finally, by basing life on the adoration of God, man embodies in his life a principle of action. This spiritual consciousness gives to man a capacity to discern between good and evil, superficial and profound, eternal and transitory, or real and unreal.[58] All of that is included in the first basic

---

[52] *Ibid*., p. 13.

[53] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R., *Ibid*., p. 17.

[54] *Ibid*., p. 13.

[55] *Ibid*., pp. 13-14; see also: Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R. *Bawa Raos ing Salebeting Raos* Jakarta, 1975, cet.ke-7, p. 57.

[56] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R. *Bawa Raos Ing Salebeting Raos* Jakarta, 1975, cet.ke-7, 1975, p. 15.

[57] Soemantri Hardjoprakoso *Arsip Sarjana Budi Santosa* Jakarta, 1976, p. 25.

[58] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R Serat Sasongko Jati cet.ke-3, Surakarta, 1964, pp. 13-14.

principle of being conscious as a means to concentrate life on the basis of God's guidance.

- *Pracaya – Having Faith*. This principle is linked to the principle of consciousness as a way to attain union with God. In the *Sasongko Jati,* it is stressed that having faith is very important since faith is described as a strong cord binding the interior life with the One adored. Faith in God is the condition of the affective sensitivity to God's direction and help.[59]

Just as the true man – *manungsa sejati* – is one in union with the Lord of life and the Director of life, so to have faith in self signifies to have faith in man's religious or spiritual identity[60] and to surrender oneself to the guidance and help of God as the Lord of life.

- *Mituhu – Being Obedient*. Faith and consciousness of love are only realistic if man gives his life in a total surrender of obedience to God. According to the *Sasongko Jati*, being obedient means to accomplish the commandments of God and fulfill one's duty according to His guidance.[61]

Being obedient also means the readiness to carry out or fulfill God's will.[62] Its characteristic is not to obey the distant God, but to obey the guidance of the Suksma Sejati present in one's true purified soul and who conducts him to union with God.[63] Otherwise, by his bodily passions man would easily follow his own will and deviate from the way of salvation. Hence, performing the directions or commandments of God is really making an effort to see that every act and decision promotes and maintains union. On the side of man, it is important to let oneself be formed by the dynamic guiding presence of God.[64]

One who is living on the basis of obedience is one whose life is centered on the fulfillment of God's will in performing one's duty and in everything one has to do.[65] In everything, one should obey only God, the Director of life, and adore God, the Lord of life.[66] At its heart, this is a principle of life in its seriousness to one's obligation to lead one's life according to the direction of God. Being obedient, for *Sasongko Jati*, is the concrete expression of union of life with God.

In summary, the Tri Sila, being conscious, having faith, being obedient as the three principles of life, are the realization of a life based on adoration to God. In them can be seen the effort to regulate and concentrate

---

[59] *Ibid*., p. 14.

[60] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R. *Serat Sasongko Jati* cet.ke-3, Surakarta, 1964, p. 15.

[61] opcit.

[62] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R., *Ibid*., cet.ke-3, Surakarta, 1964, p. 17.

[63] NN. *Warisan Langgeng* no date, no place, p. 5.

[64] Soemantri Hardjoprakoso, *Ibid*., pp. 32-33.

[65] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R., *Ibid*.,cet.ke-3, Surakarta, 1964, p. 16.

[66] opcit.

one's life on the principle of God's will which is found in the true soul of man.

- *The Panca Sila – The Five Principles*. A life that is centered on God's direction carried out by adoration which comprises the whole man in his ordinary life, still needs a guarantee of its actual accomplishment.[67] This assurance is a continuous test of man's seriousness in living out a life of adoration, for there is always a great tendency to follow one's passions since man's situation in the cosmos is disorder. Therefore, the *Sasongko Jati* further teaches man another five principles to make progress on his way of salvation: indifference, acceptance, faithfulness, patience and the elevated virtue.[68]

According to the *Sasongko Jati*, it is impossible to attain so long as man is still confused by passions and an inordinate attachment to cosmos. To assure the disposition formed by adoration to God as the centre of life, man needs the other five principles. Otherwise, one's life could be disturbed by waves of inclinations. For example, when someone meets others who are wealthier than he, he is easily moved by jealousy. While our daily life is in contact with others, we meet many men in their own situations. Without faith and being conscious and obedient to God as the centre of life, one easily falls outside the way of salvation. In this lies the importance of the five principles to maintain a realization of adoration to God as the centre of life in everyday relation to others.

- *Rila – Detachment*. The *Sasongko Jati* describes rila as follows: it is the freedom of the heart to give up all one has, all rights and all the result of one's efforts to the Lord totally and completely because of the awareness that everything is received through the Power of God. Thus, nothing should remain inordinate in the heart.[69]

Furthermore, detachment is defined as not seeking one's own interest or reward from what one does. The indifferent man or the man who is rooted in detachment, is he who ready to sacrifice and receive sorrow willingly. He does not complain when he is slandered, humiliated or loses whatever he has.[70] Detachment or indifference will lead man to liberate himself both from all inordinate affections and passions, and from transitory things. Even so, the indifferent man must not neglect his duty to others.

---

[67] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R., *Ibid*., cet.ke-3, Surakarta, 1964, p. 13.

[68] *Ibid*., p. 17.

[69] opcit.: *Sejatine kang ingaran* rila *iku enggaring ati, tumrap anggone masrahake kabeh darbeke wewenange lan kabeh wohing panggawene marang Pangeran, kanthi legawa ekhlas amarga angelingi Manawa kabeh iku ana ing panguwasaning Pangeran, mulane kudu ora ana sawiji-wijia kang nabet ing atine.*

[70] opcit.

Rather, this principle brings man to a great readiness to help others willingly.[71]

The principle of detachment or indifference is practiced with the purpose of maintaining man's firmness to live according to God's direction. It means that he should maintain his pure true nature from ephemeral desire because only God is eternal and only in union with Him can man find his eternity. Therefore, by living with detachment, one can always liberate oneself from obstacles so that one can easily surrender oneself totally to God.[72]

Finally, the indifferent man is one who is not confused by or clinging to the transitory world, for he relies wholly on God in his life.[73]

- *Narima – Acceptance*. The *Sasongko Jati* describes acceptance as an attitude of accepting this life as it is and living in it peacefully.[74] However, the *Sasongko Jati* reminds us not to misunderstand this as a passive attitude towards life, for, the man of acceptance will perform what he has to do in the best way possible, based on what he has and his real possibilities.

It is wiser to face life in a spirit unmoved by inordinate desire to envy the good fortune of others or their riches, for all of it has no meaning if not to lead man to live for God, to obey Him.[75]

- *Temen – Faithfulness*. According to *Sasongko Jati*, faithfulness means performing the duties of life sincerely and entirely. The man with the spirit of faithfulness will not deceive God, himself or others. He will not betray the Director of life in his heart, and his decisions to act manifest his true conviction to center his life on God's will. Faithfulness results in justice. When every person is faithful to his duty according to his God-given place in life, each can respect the other and everyone will be treated justly. A faithful and sincere man will act according to his convictions; this encourages him to self sacrifice. Moreover, man attains peace of heart after having fulfilled his duty[76], and as a result, his true soul becomes the centre of his life.

- *Sabar – Patience.* Indifference, acceptance and faithfulness are completed by patience to direct the regulation of one's soul. Being patient means to face all difficulties, troubles and trials of life by always having

---

[71] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R., *Ibid*., p. 18.

[72] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R. *Bawa Raos Ing Salebeting Raos* Jakarta, cet.ke-7, 1975, p. 49.

[73] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R. *Serat Sasongko Jati* cet.ke-3, Surakarta, 1964, p. 17.

[74] *Ibid*., p. 19.

[75] *Ibid*., p. 18.

[76] opcit.

hope.[77] Patience is illustrated as an attitude of broadmindedness, symbolized by the ocean which can contain all things in peace.[78] Patience is also an attitude of self-dominion in full peace and freedom so that one is able to maintain one's true soul as central in every circumstanses.[79] It is clear that patience is practiced as an instrument to direct the peaceful interiority of man by protecting one's soul from all kinds of harm. Peaceful interiority is a vehicle to attain a union with God. Thus patience is planted and developed as an attitude for living in a correct way.

- *Budi Luhur – The Elevated Virtue*. Budi Luhur, elevated virtue, says the *Sasongko Jati,* is composed of two important words. Budi means the light of the true soul from the presence of God which can be grasped by the mind. The mind is clear and pure when it is liberated from inordinate passions and is on the way to God, obeying and accepting God's will.[80] The adjective, *luhur*, means the elevated and the nature of the divine life manifested as goodness, love, holiness, justice and the readiness to give oneself without any self interest.[81]

It is the highest of the five principles. It is not sufficient merely to liberate oneself from inordinate affections but also one should be able to regulate one's mind. The man of budi luhur is one who has arrived at the attainment of perfect virtues similar to those of God. It is the fruit of exercising the previous four attitudes as ways to regulate the soul in liberating it from passions. Its fruit appears as the light of God's presence in the true soul which guides man towards union with God Himself. Since man has arrived at union with God, he can then act as does God Himself.

In a nutshell, the man of budi luhur is one who possesses elevated virtue, God's virtue, and tries to imitate divine virtue as goodness and love. Budi Luhur is the ultimate vehicle of man's return to God, the true origin and aim of life. Return to God by being united in the elevated virtue of God bears fruit in the brilliant light of God's presence in a soul that is liberated, purified and emptied of inordinate passions.[82] Elevated virtue prepares the highest level of participation in divine life. Through this virtue man can open the gate of God's divine kingdom, the throne of real truth, the origin and goal of human life. Elevated virtue enables man to enter eternity in union with God after having been freed from all that is transitory.[83]

---

[77] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R., *Ibid*., p. 19.

[78] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R., *Ibid*., pp. 19-21.

[79] De Jong Dr. *Salah Satu Sikap Hidup Orang Jawa* Yayasan Kanisius, Yogyakarta, 1976, p. 21.

[80] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R., *Ibid*., p. 20.

[81] *Ibid*., p..21.

[82] *Ibid*., p..147.

[83] *Ibid*., p..149.

- *The Hasta Sila in Summary*. Being conscious, having faith and being obedient form the spirit of concentrating a person's life on his true origin and goal. Just as God is present, dwelling in the soul, so a person's life is directed by God's guidance in man's true soul. It is the soul of man that then becomes the centre of regulating life. The other principles, patience, indifference or detachment and acceptance, form the spirit of detachment from transitory self, the world with its events and other people.[84] The last two principles, faithfulness and elevated virtue, are the spirit of living involvement in the world to build a union with God. Thus the Hasta Sila, on the one hand, has a spirit of detachment, and on the other, involvement in facing life. Both spirits are practiced to gain union with God as the peak of man's salvation. In this real world, the Hasta Sila, as a way of salvation with eight principles, helps man to face life as a whole man, a man of detachment and involvement, living only to adore God.

LAKU TAPA - ASCETICAL PRACTICE

The true soul of man as the centre of man's living in union with God in everyday life is still clothed in the body. In the *Sasongko Jati*'s concept of man, the body is merely the exterior place of the soul. The body with its passions and affections is transitory since interiority is seen as the centre of true life. It is in man's interiority and soul that God dwells and becomes the Director of true life for man. But since the body is a transitory place for the soul and has passions, there is always the danger that one will act contrary to the soul. In other words, by its passions the body is always in danger of preventing the orientation of the soul to God. The question arises of how to regulate the body.

The *Sasongko Jati* answers by elaborating the role of ascetical exercise – *laku tapa*. Ascetical exercise or laku tapa, says the *Sasongko Jati*, plays the role of ordering the passions of the body. It is not its function to kill bodily passions or hurt the body, but to take care of it and dominate it by regulation and control.[85]

Hence, ascetical exercise is an instrument to regulate the inordinate passions of the body. It is done regularly, not by escaping from everyday life, but in order to involve that one does ascetical exercise. It is practiced on the basis of taking a moderate measure with a consciousness of fulfilling one's duty in this life and never harming other people.[86] Finally, ascetical exercise is not does a goal in itself but is merely an instrument to help one gain perfection.

---

[84] De Jong S. *Salah Satu Sikap Hidup Orang Jawa* Yayasan Kanisius, Yogyakarta, 1976, p. 117.

[85] Soenarto Mertowerdoyo R., *Ibid*., p. 141.

[86] *Ibid*., pp. 144-145.

SUMMARY: A PERFECT MAN IS AN INTERIOR MAN

Now we arrive at a point of making a conclusion of the *Sasongko Jati* teaching. We will try to make a brief summary of the whole and, at the same time, to describe the rationale of the concept.

(i). First of all, the *Sasongko Jati*, as its title "the True Light" indicates, offers a teaching on the salvation of man. It shows how man can attain his goal of life, i.e., his perfection. It proposes a way of salvation as man's return to God who is the true origin and aim of man. The perfection of man, and hence his true goal in life, lies in union with God.

(ii). In order to be able to be united with God, one needs to follow a path. According to the *Sasongko Jati*, this way is cultivating the Hasta Sila principles and ascetical exercises. The Hasta Sila, constituted by the three principles, Tri Sila, and the five principles, Panca Sila, is a way to regulate man's life on the basis of his true soul. One could say that it is a way to regulate the soul, whereas ascetical practice is a way to regulate the body. Why should one regulate oneself?

(iii). The *Sasongko Jati* answers with its teaching on man's condition in the cosmos. Man's actual situation in the cosmos is one of disorder, inordinate affections and passions as a part of a transitory cosmos. Inordinate passions are obstacles for man on the path of returning to God. They prevent man from seeing his true origin and aim of life, so that he is not able to be conscious of his true nature, the Roh Suci, who is the principle of life as God's presence in man. Therefore, in order to eliminate those obstacles, one needs to live out the Hasta Sila in adoration and ascetical exercise. By doing so, one enters little by little to the way which leads one to live only for God as man's Director.

(iv). How is the way of salvation to be lived out? To attain the goal of life, two points should be practiced. First, awareness of God's direction in man's true soul is exercised by adoration. It is a practice of concentrating life on the centre of man's interiority, his true soul. Secondly, the existential life of adoration that should go along with the conquest of egoism through ascetical exercise must be accomplished by the directions of the Hasta Sila principles: being aware, having faith, being obedient, patient, indifferent, accepting, faithful and developing an elevated virtue.

Being conscious of one's true self, having faith and being obedient to God's direction bring man's life to its true origin and aim: God in man's true soul. At the same time, it must be accompanied by a continuous detachment, or liberation from transitory passions, which is cultivated by ascetical exercise and the principles of patience, indifference and acceptance. The more one concentrates one's life on one's interiority, the more one enters into the way of union with God. The more one liberates himself from egoism and transitoriness, the more deeply one can unite his life to that of God. By living with faithfulness and elevated virtue, one comes to participate in the divine life of God. Through the exercise of

elevated virtue one becomes united in God's own goodness and love and attains one's true purpose of life.

Thus, a perfect man is an interior man. A perfect man is one who lives on the basis of the interior life:-- his true soul, his true self, and the indwelling of God as the Director of life. For him, the cosmos and the exterior life are not valuable, for they are merely transitory.

The School of Driyakara Philosophy
Jakarta, Indonesia

CHAPTER VI

A REFLECTION ON THE FUTURE OF ASIAN PHILOSOPHY

TRAN VAN DOAN

ASIAN PHILOSOPHY AT THE CROSSROADS

Asian philosophy [1] was well-recognized but is little known to almost all Western, African and, ironically, even Asian philosophers. It was a time of glory when Confucianism and Buddhism were on the lips of thinkers like Montesquieu, Voltaire, Leibniz, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche. Even the great Kant had some interest in Asian culture, out of curiosity, of course. However, with the exception of Leibniz and Schopenhauer, Asian philosophy is not taken seriously by them. In contrast, it is often downgraded or simply dismissed as a kind of sentimental religion (Hegel), a form of nihilism (Schopenhauer), and worse, "negative" pessimism (Nietzsche). In a better case, it became the favorite theme of entertainment for the high-class in the Parisian salons. It carried no weight, played no role in shaping their philosophy, and exercised a minimal impact, if there was any at all, on the West.[2] The "lux ex oriente" has been, perhaps,

[1] The term "Asian philosophy" (Oriental philosophy), just as that of "Western philosophy" (Occidental philosophy), is unfortunately too vague, and somewhat meaningless. Chinese philosophy is as complicated as Indian philosophy. Japanese philosophy, Korean philosophy, Vietnamese philosophy, partly rooted in Chinese philosophy, surely, possess special flavors and have different outlooks. Similarly, the philosophy in Southeast Asia is more diverse in many aspects. One can hardly equalize Filipino philosophy to Indonesian or Malaysian philosophy, even if there are some similarities among them. Thai philosophy, despite its heavily Buddhist roots, cannot be reduced to a kind of Indian Buddhism, and Buddhism in Sri Lanka is certainly not identified with Indian Buddhism. So, by Asian philosophy, I am not referring to a common system or common traits among them but to their general problems.

[2] Asian philosophy (i.e. Indian and Chinese) has never been taught as a fundamental course in the philosophy departments of Western universities even if Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's philosophy are widely discussed and taught. Similarly, despite Heidegger's close connection with Oriental philosophy, especially, Taoist philosophy, Taoism has not been a subject for discussion in the departments of philosophy of universities like Freiburg, Heidelberg, etc. Asian philosophy is often included in the category of religion, and discussed or taught (not systematically) in the departments of religious studies (as seen in the USA), or in the faculties of Oriental Studies and Theology (as seen in Europe, only recently).

a superficial impression of the Eastern grandeur, especially of China and India, due to the report of Marco Polo and Jesuit missionaries. This complementary expression very soon became empty words, when the West suddenly discovered the power of its gunboat policy. The arrogant presence of American gun-ships in the bay of Tokyo, then the Western occupation of China, just as the establishment of the British empire in India displayed not only the awful force of the West, but much more, showed its superiority in other fields as well. Humiliated at the hands of the Western powers, India and China were forced to acknowledge a painful reality: they are neither the super-powers nor the earth center, as they once blindly believed. The loss of faith in their own force led to a radical rejection of their own heritages and, finally, to an uncritical embracing of the West. The turn towards the West is not strategic but total: the once claimed Asian super-powers were seeking not only military technology but general knowledge as well.

Now, the newly imported Western sciences and knowledge replaced their thousand year long ideologies. Their own philosophy was thrown away as dangerous garbage, or simply ignored.[3] Except for a few "old-fashioned conservatives and reactionaries," [4] all took Western philosophy as a matter of course. As a result, Asian philosophers of this "Enlightenment" took for granted positivism as their new religion. The self-proclaimed zealots of Auguste Comte waged the "crusade" against their original sin, i.e., their "pre-scientific and superstitious" heritage. They fought as hard as the mobs in the street. And such a story still goes on today. The Cultural Revolution, maliciously abused by the high priest Mao and his acolytes, is not an accident but a logical consequence of such blind ideology.

Whether such a trend is a blessing or a curse for Asian philosophy, there is hardly any consensus. However, there is an undeniably sad fact: Asian philosophers, stripped of their self-respect, have lost confidence in their own philosophy. Being now orphans by their own choice, they have no other option but a total, unconditional surrender to Western philosophy.[5]

---

[3] In 1919, John Dewey and in 1920, Bertrand Russell were invited to visit China. They were regarded by Chinese intellectuals as the new prophets, whose philosophy, they believed, could be useful for the rebuilding of China. However, when Russell advised them to take their own heritage seriously, and to look at Western philosophy with critical attitude, his advice fell on deaf ears. See Emmanuel Hsu, *A History of Modern China* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1978), the part on the Intellectual Revolution. See also Chow Tse-tsung, *The May Fourth Movement* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960).

[4] The label given by Westernized intellectuals to Confucians like Liang Shu-ming. See Chow Tse-tsung, id. See also Emmanuel Hsu, *A Modern History of China*, part on "Chinese Intellectual Revolution," pp. 493-511.

[5] In China, Hu Shih is perhaps the first one who adopts positivism in his study of Chinese logic (1923), and in his study of the history of Chinese philosophy (*History of the Chinese Ancient Philosophy*, 2 vols., 1919). Another

They hope for a quick catch-up in philosophy, similar to the one achieved by Chinese and Indian scientists in the fields of natural sciences.[6]

Such a hope, regretfully, remains rather a fantasia. Asian philosophers, despite their radical objection to traditions and religions remain, ironically, the believers in magic force. In the magic world, there is no difference between reality and ir-reality, philosophy and science, God and man. Our Asian philosophers forget that philosophy is not, and cannot be a branch of natural sciences, just as God is not the image of man. Philosophy is the love, and not the possession, of wisdom. And wisdom is not pure knowledge. It searches for the "meta-principles" of practical life and not the exact knowledge about (regular behaviors of) a certain thing. In a word, it is concerned with the total aspect of human life. It cannot be identified with the pure knowledge of a thing. One may grasp mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology without any knowledge of their history,[7] but that is not the case of culture, and of course, philosophy. To say in the Kantian manner, thinking would be empty without any object (to be thought), and philosophical thinking would be impossible without its object, i.e. the human world, human history, etc. As such, one dares to say that Chinese, or Indian philosophy would be empty and incomprehensible without their life-world. Consequently, Asian philosophy, in order to be Asian, must first reflect on its own life-world, and then, the world in general.

Its life-world, just as any life-world, consists of the present, the past, the coming worlds and the worlds of others. So, the claim of a new philosophy, which is completely detached from history and tradition as well as from our life-worlds and surrounded worlds, sounds rhetorically attractive but empty and meaningless. Similarly, our proclamation of authentic philosophy turns to be a pernicious self-deception if our own philosophy is only a replica or a duplicate of other philosophy (Western philosophy here). This fact is fully conscious by those philosophers who want to restore the glory of Asian philosophy and, of course, of those who

---

scholar, Prof. Feng Yu-lan took Dewey's pragmatism as a guideline for writing his now popular *History of Chinese Philosophy* (trans. Derd Boddes, Columbia University Press, 1958); Lao Sz-kuang followed German idealism in reconstructing the whole history of Chinese philosophy (See Lao Sz-kuang, *Chung-kuo Che-hsuye Shi* (History of Chinese Philosophy), 6 vols. (Taipei, 1961); Lokuang did almost the same when he took the Scholastic principles to rebuild Chinese philosophy. See Stanislaus Lokuang, *Chung-kuo Che-hsuye Shi* (History of Chinese Philosophy), 8 vols. (Fujen University Press, 1967-1986).

[6] Note that, only two decades after the first introduction of natural sciences into their countries, Indian and Chinese physicists have made extremely important contributions to modern physics, and were able to win several Nobel prizes (Sandrasekkar, Yang Chen-ning, Robert Lee, etc.).

[7] Actually, mathematics, chemistry, etc. have no history of their own. There is only a history of human discovering, developing and doing mathematics, chemistry, physics, etc.

aspire for an authentic philosophy. To them the only gateway to Asian philosophy has be a radical return to their own roots by means of digging deeply into their once neglected heritages.[8] Philosophical thinking seems to be a simple work of retrieving their own sources, or worse, the work of gravediggers.

Obviously, the two very different ways of doing Asian philosophy get into a rough conflict, a kind of *querelles des anciens et des modernes*, that drags both camps into senseless debates. As a consequence, it is a deadlock with no hope in sight. On the one hand, I don't think that the *enfants prodigés* who radically refuse their own root could be good enough at building their own philosophy. How could the orphans carrying the virus of *self-alienation*,[9] ignorant of their own identity, whose "philosophy" is only a duplicate, become original philosophers per excellence, carrying the torch of future generations? However, on the other hand, I doubt the extravagant claim of the neo-conservatives. Could it be that the nostalgia for the glory of the past is sufficient to build a "new" philosophy? Or more precisely, could traditional values still be effective to deal with the newly emerging global problems? The dogmatic claim of a *philosophia perennis* and the stubborn refusal of new discovery are basically grounded on an ungrounded belief of *nihil novi sub sole*. They logically cement the dogmas of traditional values. Such a view remains, regretfully, a pure nostalgia contradicting reality.

Aware of the radical claim of both camps, this paper attempts to argue for the third way: one can (also) build a new philosophy by means of, first, a thorough investigation of the old, existing problems and of the

---

[8] Ironically, the conservatives took the ideas of Leibniz, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and, recently, Western Sinologists to support their demand for a return to the Asian roots. By taking such a "detour," they do not fare better than their Westernized rivals whom they attacked. In fact, they could not thus regain their own confidence and self-respect.

[9] Alienation seems to be too harsh an accusation. But it is nonetheless not strong enough to awake the majority of Asian philosophers from the slumber of self-forgetfulness. Many of them still cling to the false prejudice that Asian philosophy, if there is any, is not serious, and that only a kind of analytic philosophy would be worthy of its name. Such a trend is still prevalent in leading universities in Asia like the Hong Kong University, National Taiwan University, National Singapore University, and, perhaps, in National Seoul University, and the University of Tokyo, as well. In Hanoi University, up to recent days, Marxism is still taught as the "only true" philosophy, while Vietnamese philosophy does simply not exist. If there is any, then that is the thought of Ho Chi Minh. In the Philippines, the only taught philosophies are Western. Chinese, and Indian philosophies are taught as optional and, perhaps, not in the departments of philosophy. Only recently, has Filipino philosophy been explored. The same story could be seen in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and even in North Korea.

possibility of new problems and, second, their still effective solutions and new solutions (Popper's thesis).[10] Asian problems, in general, are not only technical (or techno-logical), but much more, moral, cultural, religious, political, and so on. Asian problems are also not the visible, present and concrete ones, but also invisibly deep-rooted in Asian history and nourished by the desires of Asians for the future. More importantly, Asian problems are no longer purely Asian but rather global. Therefore, in order to discover the problems as well as their solutions, one can neither afford to dismiss their roots, their causes, as well as their past solutions nor ignore their aspiration for and expectation of a better future. From this point of view, I think, Asian philosophers have a double task: the search for problems and solutions, and at the same time, the search for new methods and technique to discover new problems and more effective solutions.

THE SEARCH FOR PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS IN THE PAST OR THE SEARCH FOR TRADITIONAL VALUES

Despite my deep conviction of the need for traditional values, I still feel uneasy about the extravagant claims of the neo-conservatives. The fact that value can be valuable only due to its effect in our life gives us a clue to the close connection between life and values. Only the values that represent human life, deal with human life and problems, would survive the test of time.. The ones that no longer represent and are unable to deal with our actual living world will certainly vanish. That means, only those values still effective in solving our actual problems can contribute to our work of philosophy-building. Only the values that still generate their effects in our present world can be worthy of our search; and only those values that reflect the human most basic ways of living would survive the severe test of time.. As a consequence of such observation, we can say with confidence that traditional values cannot be taken *in toto* and for granted as true values.

Similar arguments can be applied to our understanding of authenticity. The search for authenticity is not known, and much less determined by the search for some traits, or some characters seen in the past or in the present, but by the common and basic traits of the living world. These common traits, unlike the abstract spirit of Hegel, are concretely visible in the ways of living, i.e. the ways of sensing, thinking and acting. And the ways of sensing, thinking and acting are influenced by the surrounded world, by new acquired cultures and civilizations. As such, authenticity does not mean the original, and it does not exclude anything that contributes to actual living. Authenticity expresses the true ways of

[10] I have applied Popper's thesis in my study of Asian cultures: Tran Van Doan, *Collected Essays on Asian Philosophy and Religions* (Washington. D.C.: CRVP, 2005), and Tran van Doan, *Towards a Pluralistic Culture - Pluralistic Culture versus Cultural Pluralism* (Washington, D.C: CRVP, 2005).

living, or, in a certain sense, the true characteristics, i.e. the "Asianness" of Asians.[11]

Nowadays, the authenticity of an Asian life can be no longer reduced in a single aspect, or a single trait. It reflects Asian life that is not a simple but complex web of divergent ways of living, thinking and sensing. They gradually converge and enrich the Asian's life in a long process of encountering other cultures. The reception of Western cultures just as the inter-change among Asian cultures themselves, make Asian life more encompassing, but also more complicated, and henceforth, difficult to be grasped. A modern Asian may live like a Western man, but even so, he still remains Asian.[12] So, one can say, the harmonious convergence of different traits constitutes, perhaps, the new way of living. In the sense of Heidegger's *Authentizität*, authenticity means the constant emergence of the commonality of human beings seen in their emerging life-world.

The above consideration about Asian traditional values and authenticity can be solidified by historical and actual facts. Authenticity in the sense of eternally special characteristic's is only a vague idea in the mind of philosophers. In contrast, the actual Asian philosophy is in a constant process of being enriched and encompassed. Or better say, the complexity and richness of Asian life has been reflected and condensed in all philosophical (religious) schools. The original Indian Buddhism, for example, once it came to China, had been forced to incorporate in its own body many Taoist and Confucian elements, and consequently, became Chinese Buddhism. The same trait is seen in Japanese Buddhism, Vietnamese Buddhism, Thai Buddhism and Korean Buddhism. Buddhism in these countries, took their own peculiar cultures, and transformed into a

---

[11] "Asianness" is often understood in the sense of the Hegelian spirit, and Asian authenticity in the sense of Heideggerian *Authentizitaet*. In my own view, Asianness can no longer be defined in terms of customs, values, language, and geography alone, but rather in terms of their actual life. It is doubtless that even if Singaporeans and many Indians are speaking English, adopting the Western customs, and believing in Western values and religions, they never lose their "Asianness" (See Peter C. Phan, *Christianity with an Asian Face,* Maryknokk New Yorks: Orbis Books, 2003). The same can be said with regard to most of the Filipinos and the so-called oversea-Asians who are not speaking their mother tongue and are bearing Western names, having Christian belief and adopting the Western style of living. They are still Asians.

[12] Thome Fang, a noted philosopher and professor of philosophy at National Taiwan University, once asked by an American philosopher (Lewis Hahn ?) about his identity, had remarked that he is a born Confucian, educated in Western sciences and cultures, a Buddhist by profession, but with a Taoist temperament. His Western colleague was perplexed, asking "How is it possible?". See George Sun, Epilog, in Thome Fang, *Chinese Philosophy: Its Spirit and Its Development* (Taipei: Linking, 1986).

kind of indigenous Buddhism, much different from the original Indian or Chinese (the case of Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese).

So, in order to build a new, more acceptable philosophy, Asian philosophers may have to concentrate on the double task: the first is the retrieval of the values, still effective in solving our present and future problems, and the second is the acquirement of new knowledge (sciences) useful for the search for new problems and better solutions. The first task begins with a critique of scientism, and then with the restoration of self-consciousness, and finally with a rediscovery of lasting values in our rich and long tradition.

Critique of Scientism

The first task is, doubtless, not easy. The belief in the absolute power of science, forcefully indoctrinated in Asian education in general, and taken for granted by their people as new religion,[13] as well as the visibly immense success of modern technology would discourage any believer in the values of the past.[14] Scientism (and not science) is now an official and universally accepted ideology, which Asian governments forcefully impose on their people. This immense obstacle could, of course, be gradually reduced only when scientism is unmasked as a reactionary force against science itself. Science knows its own limit but not scientism. True scientists know so well that science is not a panacea curing all illness, and that science can solve only certain problems. They know also that, blind belief in the force of science (i.e. scientism) may create more problems, more serious than any scientist could imagine. The problems of nuclear energy, for example, could not yet be settled by scientists, just as the grave consequences of highly developed industry could not be exactly calculated by them.[15] An Einstein, an Oppenheimer were certainly neither the first nor the last who openly and repeatedly warned us of the danger of scientism. So, the task of critique is more urgent than ever. It aims at giving a more truthful image of science, i.e. a balanced understanding of sciences, of its advantages as well as its disadvantage, of its contribution as well as its destructive force.

---

[13] In 2004, India alone could "produce" as many computer-engineers as the whole of Europe; and China boasts a considerable number of schools of engineering and technology that dwarf any Western country in terms of quantity.

[14] Note that the majority of Asian intellectuals wrongly take scientism for science. Scientism, the new ideology or the dogmatic belief in the absolute power of sciences, prevents them from any critical reflection of sciences, and pushes them into an artificial dilemma of either sciences or traditional values.

[15] Ilya Prygogine & E. Stenger, *Order out of Chaos* (1978). The Nobel laureate physicist, Prygogine, once remarked that scientists are very good at breaking all things apart, but forget to put them back in order.

However, awakening from the dogmatic slumber of scientism does not yet automatically generate a high estimation for traditional values. A critical study of scientism, and a more balanced view of science and its problems are the prerequisites, but not the *conditio sine qua non* to convince the next generation of the need of a search for traditional values. We know most of the problems of sciences can be solved by sciences and technology only. However, we know also that the great deal of human problems is neither scientific nor technological problems. So, the question of whether traditional values can effectively deal with human problems is our concern. The need for traditional values would be appreciated only if they can actually offer some solutions, or better solutions to our human problems. That means traditional values can well function in certain areas where science and technology have no competence. Hence, it is quite rational that one has to opt for traditional values only when our actual problems can still be solved by traditional means, and not by the mistakes of sciences. From this consideration, our main task should concentrate on the question of which problems can traditional values solve, and which they cannot.

Let me not delve into the details of the business of criticism of scientism, and go straight into the more important task of discovering the values implicit in traditions. The question of whether our traditional values can still generate their effects in solving our actual problems must be our main concern. I will argue that, even if we are able to expose the negative aspects of modern sciences, we still cannot trust traditional values if they were impotent in dealing with our present and future problems. Lack of its effectiveness, traditional values would look like soulless corpses, or historical relics displayed in the museum. They are "precious," worthy for a "glimpse" but worthless for life. Hence, the task of Asian philosophers cannot be identified with the one of archeologists: the latter search for the relics while the former for the problems and solutions of human life.

Self-Consciousness

Marx is partly right when he insists on the importance of the business of critique. He is, however, too optimistic in believing in its "magic" force.[16] Critique cannot change the world without arousing self-consciousness first, just as pure self-consciousness can do nothing without praxis, i.e. without an engagement in searching and solving the problems. The critique of scientific ideology cannot automatically free us from its magic force if we still bury our head in its world. Critique is, in fact, only the first step. It would make sense only if helps us to regain our own self-consciousness. Self-consciousness can be possible only by means of a deep and true knowledge of the self in its surrounded living world, and of the

[16] Marx once claimed (in his letter to A. Ruge) that one could change the world by means of critique.

knowledge of human force in dealing with this world. The knowledge of the self is not analytical (*a la* Cartesian solipsism), but rather synthetic, since it is a knowledge about all things which are related to oneself: his or her world, life, relations, desires, needs, interests, etc. With Hegel and Marx, one may say, self-consciousness can be possible only when one discovers the living world and all of its conditions, as well as our own active role and conditions in this world. With Rousseau and Kant, self-consciousness can be gained through the autonomy of the individual.

From this preliminary consideration, I would venture to argue for an understanding of self-consciousness in terms of self-confidence, self-determination in living, i.e. of *aude vivere*. i.e. to take our life in our own hands. "*Aude vivere*" encompasses the *aude sapere* of the Enlightenment (for this, Kant had passionately pleaded).[17] More than "aude sapere" and *aude determinare*, *aude vivere* requires us to know the objectives, the purposes, the conditions of life, and the world in which we live. That means, self-consciousness means an awareness of the richness of tradition, its force effective in dealing with actual life-problems, its role in enriching the meaning of life, and a *Gesinnung* of our own mistakes.

The Richness of Tradition

Critiques of scientism and human self-consciousness are, of course, only the prerequisites for the search for traditional values. They cannot yet convince us of the values of tradition. Traditional values are worthy only if they still generate their force in dealing with our present problems, and perhaps with our future problems as well. Like the water source, they continue to generate their values, responding to our needs and demands. In other words, only like the source of life, traditional values will not be exhausted, dried up, or dead but on the contrary, they shall be the flourishing and enriching of our life.[18]

The Still Effective Solutions. The generation of force results in a double effect: to reduce or to solve the actual problems that are hindering our life, and to furnish us the capacity to deal with new problems. Facing the present danger of violence, we can hardly escape without a rich experience of the past. We cannot find a new approach to the problems

[17] See Immanuel Kant, *What Is Enlightenment?*

[18] Recent studies of traditional values have not only given back our confidence in them, but more important, shown that, any modernization attempt would be less effective (or in many cases, dangerous) without an objective revaluation of the old values. The results (over 100 volumes so far) of the project of *Contemporary Life and Cultural Heritage* carried out by Prof. George F. McLean and his team in China, Vietnam, Taiwan, India, Philippines, Thailand (to name Asian countries only) fully supports the above view. See the works of the *Council for Research in Values and Philosophy*: www.crvp.org.

either, without knowing how and what our predecessors have done. The painful and horrible approaches to human conflicts (genocide, mass murder, war…) can no longer be taken, since they did not solve but rather created more problems. In contrast, the non-violence approach (of Buddha, Christ and Mahatta Gandhi), the communication approach, or the moral approach, i.e. the traditional approaches would be more effective to our today problems. The "tit for tat" does not reduce but aggravate the deadly tension between Israel and Arab countries, just as the "search-and-kill" response to the Al Qaida attack has certainly not given to Americans more security. It has created more problems, the reality that President Bush and his advisers have not well foreseen. This consideration clearly points out that the first "violent approach" reduces, and even, destroys our capacity to deal with present problems, while the second "traditional approach" is still effective in many respects.

The Meaning of Life. Self-consciousness is also the awareness of the meaning of life, i.e. of the reason and the purpose of our existence. And these can be known only in a certain life-world and its history. Traditional values, sprung from many continuous life-worlds, contain in themselves the reason, the purpose and the deep aspiration for life of human beings. So, one may say that our search for traditional values is almost identified with our effort to rediscover and to enhance the meaning of life

.

Gesinnung. Asian countries are proud of their thousand-year long history. However, their history is more than often a record of an inflated glory.[19] Values were transformed into a kind of weapon defending the

[19] It is perhaps a common trait among all nations and genres. Our memory is selective in the sense that we would keep only the most beautiful experiences and relegate our mistakes into the sphere of unconsciousness. Almost all monuments are erected to exalting glory, mausoleums dedicating to national heroes, and very few for reminding us of our own atrocities. If there is any monument at all, then it is surely not about their mistakes, but about the crimes of their enemies. The Vietnam War Wall in Washington D.C. is certainly built not for the purpose of reminding Americans of their cruelty in Vietnam, but to commemorate their heroic soldiers who have dedicated their life for their mother-land and for "liberty." Note that the "museum of horror" and the "international" tribunal against the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge are initiated, "pushed" and "supported" by Western countries, and not by Cambodians themselves. We know the German government has built a memorial hall commemorating 6 millions Jews murdered by the Nazis. This deserves to be praised. Nonetheless, one still doubts whether such an act is voluntary, or perhaps, under international pressure. In Vietnam, one finds plenty of museums about American atrocities, but none about Vietnamese cruelties (done towards their own people and Cambodians). China is accusing Japan for its inhuman acts against Chinese, but maliciously ignores its own crimes against its own

power of the leaders or their elite privileged class.[20] The so-called conflict of civilizations[21] is, in fact, a disguised form of a bloody struggle for power. As a consequence, national (tribal) values are boastfully trumpeted while grave mistakes are consciously downgraded, often dismissed, or simply ignored.[22] The point is, one cannot become better without a thorough recognition of one's own mistake. From this principle, I would argue, Asian philosophers should consider the work of a *Gesinnung* of the mistakes as one of their main tasks.

ASIAN PHILOSOPHY FACING NEW CHALLENGES

In the first part, I have noted that for many Asian philosophers, the work of retrieving the forgotten values is often identified with the sole objective of Asian philosophy. I do not deny such effort. However, in my view, one can hardly build a new philosophy by solely relying on the glory of the past. To link the work of recovery of the past with the search for the future is, of course, quite justified; but to take the former as the sole means seems to be a little bit too optimistic, if not naïve. We know for sure that self-awakening is important, just as rich traditions are the conditions and materials for the work of searching and building new philosophy, but they do not constitute it. Since, if our philosophical tasks are to search and to solve human problems (and not just technical problems), then new philosophy can be possible if we discover new methods to solve the existing problems, the new problems and new solutions. Similarly, if philosophers are occupied with the business of searching and realizing happiness, then

---

people, and their neighboring countries. Shuichi Kato (in his dialogue with Hans Küng) has raised his criticism against Japanese poor memory of their atrocities (See Hans Küng and Julia Ching, *Christentum und chinesische Religion*, München – Zürich: Piper, 1988, p. 305). This criticism could be applied equally to all nations, and particularly here, to Asian nations.

[20] Tran Van Doan, *The Poverty of Ideological Education* (1993) (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2001).

[21] Samuel Huntington, "The Conflict of Civilizations," in *Foreign Affairs.*

[22] The recent furor of Koreans, Chinese and other concerned countries with regard to Japan's pernicious altering of historical facts about the atrocities of the Japanese army in Asia is a case in point. However, it is quite fair to note that *not* Japanese *only* but *also* Chinese, Vietnamese, Indians, and even Koreans…would do the same. They would try to conceal or minimize their mistakes and maximize their glory. 60 years after the Second World War, our brain is already cleansed with little left. In a statistic released on the occasion of 60 years after the war, more than 41% of Austrians believe that the Nazis have done, equally, something of good and bad character. This kind of forgetfulness of the bad-done and self-inflation of the well-done should be an object of philosophical *Gesinnung*.

new philosophy must be concerned with the new, better and more efficient approaches to happiness.

We begin here first with the task of searching for human problems. Unlike technical problems, human problems are not only the existing and visible ones. More complicated than we can imagine, they are in a state of constant emergence. That means, our problems are often invisible, and unpredictable. Hence, one has to acknowledge that the problems we know, and the solutions we have found are only a part of human problems and solutions. They are by no means complete and final. To stick to the past problems and solutions is therefore insufficient, even if many problems (the so-called basic problems) of the past still remain problematic today, and perhaps, even in the long future.

In this context, the search for problems and solutions must be directed towards two opposing directions: the past and the future by starting from the present. Actual problems could be the same in the past, or the consequent products of the past, or "eternal problems." In the first case, one can still take old solutions (or means, or methods), so long as these are still effective to deal with actual problems. In the second case, one has to search for a new solution, simply because one cannot solve the problem of the past by relying on the same means (method) adopted in the past. One can certainly not solve our present technological problems with the old technique once adopted by Aristotle or Confucius. In the last case, our problems are eternal. As long as human beings are "destined to be human", one cannot escape from the problems, the so-called most basic problems of birth (marriage, sex), death and religion -- which Giambattista Vico has considered as the trinity of human sciences.[23] The solutions to these eternal problems are not definitive, and there is no sign that we may be able to discover a certain method, or a magic pill to cure them once and for all..

Since the search into human problems is so complicated and so difficult that no single science, no single man could be capable to grasp, not to say to solve this human problematic, what philosophers can do is to collaborate with specialists in all fields of sciences to search for problems and solutions. As an Asian, I wish to say more about our Asian problems, and about possible ways to search for solutions in this vast continent.

ASIAN PROBLEMS

Asian problems are of manifold aspect because Asian life is no longer purely Asian, but rather global. An Asian living in Peking, Bangkok, Seoul, Tokyo, etc. would encounter the same problems as those living in New York, Paris, Madrid or Nairobi. They have to face the same technological problems, scientific problems, and the ones sprung up from our closer and complicated relations. However, Asians have also to confront

[23] Giambattista Vico, *La Scienzia nuova*

the problems of purely Asian characteristics, which are non-existent in Africa or other continents. As I have noted earlier, Asian philosophy, just as Asian problems, are rather vague concepts. Even these Asian problems are not as uniform and simple as we could imagine. Each country (each region), each race, etc. would have the problems which others don't have. The problems of language, custom, tradition, religion, etc. are notorious examples. So, to put it in a more simple way, Asian problems may consist of the ones of universal, national and regional (particular) character. This fact demands that Asian philosophers are not permitted to take or confront a certain aspect only. By concerning themselves with their own problems, they must deal also with the problems of the world, particularly of the West. That means, they have to search for human problems (universal), national and the regional ones (particular), not to mention the individual ones.

With this consideration in mind, I try to argue that, like colleagues in other continents, Asian philosophers, besides the work of searching for their own roots, values and identity, have to go beyond their own ideology (Asia-centrism, ethno-centrism) and search, hand in hand with philosophers around the world, for human common problems, and their own problems. That means, to any Asian philosopher, he or she may have at least three different kinds of problem: the common human problems, the national (racial) problems, and the temporal and regional problems. Since this paper is restrictedly a reflection, it would be sufficient to call attention to some well-known problems, and in a general manner.

Common Problems. We know that truth has been and still is the main objective of Western philosophy. The notorious Eastern lack of a thorough investigation into the nature of truth, as well as into the methods to truth, is certainly not the fault of Eastern philosophers. In fact, Indian philosophy has been primarily concerned with truth, and its most abstract form. Chinese philosophers came to truth from a different aspect, namely, its pragmatic role. Hence, the point is, whether Asian philosophers could effectively use the Western methods to carry further their search for the pragmatic function (Chinese) and hidden form (Indian) of truth; just as in the reverse, whether we can rely on Eastern insights to deepen truth and to invent new approaches to it. With the problem of truth are the problems of technology that no one could ignore. The impact of technology on our present world has even changed our life-world and life-view. As a consequence, we have to accept the fact that our view of religion, morals, aesthetics, etc. is no longer purely Asian. Similarly, the problem of justice, freedom, equality, human rights should be the main concern of Asian philosophy. However, unlike to technological problems, human problems demand a specific understanding. Huntington might have well articulated the root of conflict of civilizations, but he did, nevertheless, touch only lightly on the side effects that may be more decisive, aggravating the conflict that is the problem of understanding.

The Problem of Understanding or the Hermeneutical Dimension in Asian Philosophy. The accusation against a certain lack of justice, freedom, equality and human rights in Asian culture is certainly unjust and disturbing. One often forgets that there is never a fixed model of human problems and solutions, and that any attempt to build a mathematical model for human life has not been successful so far. The American (for example) critique of Asian abuse of "human rights" comes certainly from America's uncritical and hasty self-proclamation of the American model of human rights as the most perfect and exact model. Such a claim is of course grounded on the idea of the mathematical fixed model developed by the Enlightenment, even if the American government could not grasp its spirit. So, instead of blaming, it would be better to search for the problems and solutions in the context of Asian life. Asian philosophers should not blindly follow or react against criticism, but better to reflect on the problems by searching for their causes and discovering solutions in the context of their own life-world.

National Problems and Regional Problems. Of course, a philosopher is not one who is concerned only with abstract ideas. Such a philosopher is definitively not an Asian philosopher in the tradition of Confucius and Buddha. Like a physician, the philosopher searches and solves the problems, which are of the nature of principle and praxis alike. The problems here are more or less with Asian life, with their feelings, their environment, their social relationships, and so on. Since the major part of their life is relating to these problems, it is the task of Asian philosophy to search for their particular solutions. To be more concrete, social problems are often reflective of the same ones in the family, and in this case, solutions to them could be similar. The moral code of fidelity and loyalty *chung* could be effective in dealing with treachery and infidelity just as the moral code of benevolence *jen* and tolerance *shu* could solve a great deal of social conflicts. Here one has to bear in mind that fidelity, loyalty, benevolence, tolerance … are not empty concepts. They can be understood and applied in a concrete society with a certain system of human relationships where the problems (infidelity, treachery, intolerance, racism…) disturb the stability of the whole system of living. Furthermore, they never claim for themselves any effect of universal and absolute character, the claim one finds in Kant's deontology, or in Christian ethics.

Asian society is often similar to a family, and a state to a community. So, Asian problems and solutions are not the same ones found in Western legal society, where each individual relates to others in terms of legal basis. In this society, treachery is not understood in terms of infidelity and disloyalty but in terms of contract-breaking, contract-dishonoring, etc. By giving a rather sketchy account of the difference between societies, I would like to emphasize the necessity for a deep investigation of national (regional) problems and its solutions. As an Asian philosopher, one cannot blindly follow the model that is alien to one's own life-world, or is

contradictory to one's own (shared) feeling. Any solution, fully alien, and contradicting the life-world and the common feeling of the people would be ineffective, and even dangerous.

CONCLUDING REMARK: CHALLENGES FOR ASIAN PHILOSOPHY

There is hardly any doubt that the future of Asian philosophy must link itself to the effective ways of unearthing Asian problems and discovering solutions. Asian philosophy would be "empty" without a concrete "content", if it is only a replica of other philosophical systems. It would be a simply meaningless game of words if it is impotent in dealing with Asian actual problems. And it would be a poison for the young generation if it is content to be subservient to ideology (the way philosophy to theology in the Medieval), or to be a mere instrument for anyone.[24] Asian philosophy is not and will not be servant to any one, any ideology or any nation. The belief in philosophy as an instrument, a kind of *ancilla theologiae* has not only deformed Confucianism and other philosophical systems, it has even prevented Asian philosophers from inventing any new philosophy in the last two thousand years.

Since Asian problems are of both Asian and global character, Asian philosophy has no reason and no right to be "provincial." It has to respond to global problems and Asian problems alike. As such, Asian philosophers have to learn from other philosophical systems, and hand in hand with non-Asian philosophers, try to discover human common problems and solutions. The double task of investigating Asian and world problems, as well as of discovering solutions to them would be the Asian philosophers' main task. And its future is judged by the yardstick of the effort done and the result earned by Asian philosophers.

Department of Philosophy
National University of Taiwan
Taipei, Taiwan

[24] The leaders of the Han dynasty had deformed Confucianism into a kind of State ideology, just as the Tang kings had used Buddhism for their own purposes. Most recently, Mao Dze-dung has done the same to Marxism-Leninism.

PART II

RELIGION IN THE NATIONAL CULTURES OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

CHAPTER VII

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AND POLITICAL LIFE IN CAMBODIA TODAY

SOK KEANG

Cambodia[1] is a Southeast Asian country that borders Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam. Her official name[2] is "Kingdom of Cambodia". The name of the country was often changed in the last three decades depending on the changes of the forms of government[3]. Cambodia was a monarchy from ancient times[4] until 1970, when she became a republic[5]. It was only in 1993 that Cambodia could reestablish the Kingdom again by following the constitutional parliamentary system[6]. Along with this, Cambodia is also known as a Buddhist country[7]. In the 1960's about 95 percent of the total population was Buddhist. The facts show that the Cambodian political culture has its roots in the combination of Buddhist culture, monarchism, and republicanism.

Regarding the topic of the Conference, which focuses on the relation between religions and cultures in Southeast Asia, I would like to share in this conference the relation between Theravada Buddhism[8] and the

---

[1] In the Khmer language "Cambodia" is pronounced as "Kampuchea". This term comes from the Sanskrit words, "Kampu" which means *gold* and "Chea" which means *birthplace*; therefore, Kampuchea means the *Land of Gold* (*Sovannaphum*).

[2] "Cambodia" is used to refer to a monarchic government but "Kampuchea" or "Khmer" is used to refer to a republican one.

[3] There is a choice between monarchy and republicanism. Whenever the form of government was changed, the Constitution and flag of Cambodia were also changed.

[4] The Kingdom of Funan (first Kingdom of Cambodia) was established in about A.D. 100.

[5] The first republic was the "Khmer Republic" (1970-75) which the United States supported. The second was the "Kampuchea Democratic" under the rule of the Khmer Rouge (1975-79) which China supported. The third was the "People Republic of Kampuchea" (1979-89) which the socialist countries, especially Vietnam and the Soviet Union, supported. And finally, the "State of Cambodia" (1989-93) which is the transition period of national integration.

[6] There are three kinds of monarchy: absolute, dualistic, and parliamentary.

[7] There are 4060 pagodas (Buddhist temples) in Cambodia.

[8] Theravada Buddhism is known as Hinayana Buddhism. This is the earliest school of Buddhism. Hinayana, like Jainism, is a religion without God. The theory of Karma and Rebirth take the role of God in Hinayana Buddhism.

political culture of Cambodia by examining how the people behave, believe, expect, and value the political system and political issues. I will also examine how the process of transformation from the authoritarian to the liberal-democratic regime influenced the Cambodian political integration in 1993.

Religious Practices in Cambodia

According to the 1993 Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia, "Buddhism shall be the State Religion" (see article 43). Due to this article, most people identify themselves with the saying: "To be a Khmer[9] is to be a Buddhist". However, in practice they believe not only in Buddhism, but also in Brahmanism (Vedas)[10] and Animism (Nakta),[11] under the name of Theravada Buddhism. This is a traditional heritage from the 13th century A.D.[12] when Theravada Buddhism was the dominant religion in Cambodia. Some people have the image of Buddha as Preah Indra (God). They expect to receive happiness, peace, prosperity, and power from Him. A contrary view of this version is the belief that Buddha is a Great Master (philosopher) and Buddhism is a philosophy of life. Therefore, Buddhism in Cambodia could appear in the forms of "Philosophy", "Religion", and "Native Belief" (animism).

As a philosophy, Buddhism plays a secular role in order to lead all humankind to live in equality, justice, peace, and freedom. According to the Buddhist tradition, the pagoda was not only the sacred place but also a school of education. In the past, most Cambodian people got their education in the Buddhist temples. The more one was educated, the more one became a Buddhist. Without knowledge, one might stay away from Buddhism.

As a religion, Buddhism plays the role of Brahmanism instead of the Buddhist philosophy. Here, people believe in the superpower of Buddha as a Creator. Even though they know that the theory of Karma and Rebirth take the role of God and the individual should try to liberate himself by

---

Hinayana emphasizes that the individual should try to liberate himself, by following the ethics of Buddha.

[9] *Khmer* is a majority of the Cambodian people (13 million).

[10] In Brahmanism the people believe that the king is the intermediary between heaven and earth. Brahmanism is deeply engrained in the life and religiosity of the present Cambodian people.

[11] Regarding Animism, the Cambodian people believe in many kinds of spirits but the most universal one is the spirit of their ancestor, called Nakta. There were many Nakta in Cambodia before Buddhism came. Nakta is a pure Khmer belief in the spirit of their ancestors. Each Nakta has his/her own territory.

[12] This is a traditional heritage from the Angkor period (802 – 1431 A.D) when King Jayavaraman VII (1181 –1220 A.D) remodeled the capital of Angkor as a Buddhist kingdom.

following the ethics of Buddha, still they pray for help from Heaven. It is really different from what Buddha taught. This is just the way of practicing Buddhism in Cambodia.

Concerning the belief in Nakta, people see the role of Nakta as an ancestral local spiritual governor (administrator) who has power to judge for social justice, to bring peace, security, prosperity, health, and happiness to society, as well as to the succeeding generations in a specific or limited territory.

As you see here, the Buddhist monks serve the society at both secular (moral conduct) [13] and spiritual (religious practice) [14] levels. However, Christianity and Islam were considered as foreign religions. Therefore, it was rather difficult for the Cambodian people to appreciate the Christian and Muslim philosophy. Nevertheless, the young people of Cambodia today are very much open to ideologies of the non-Buddhist background, especially Christian philosophy. This fact shows that the practice of Buddhism in Cambodia is going to decrease compared to Christianity and Islam. So, what is the relation between Buddhism and the political culture?

Relation between Buddhism and Political Culture in Cambodia

According to the present political perspective, the root of the Cambodian political culture today is based on the combination of Buddhism, monarchism, and republicanism [15]. It is a result of observing the long process of making peace and integrating the nation in Cambodia during the civil wars for almost three decades (1970-97). This fact shows that when the government denies any one of these three political elements of Buddhism, monarchism, and republicanism (aristocracy or democracy), the country would face a civil war and collapse. For example, the Pol Pot regime (1975-79) collapsed because it denied the role and value of the King, the elite people, and all kinds of religious practices, especially Buddhism.

However, in reality there is a group of people who support monarchism because they believe in the power of Heaven to choose the leader instead of believing in their role, duty, and freedom to choose a leader and participate in politics. As a result they became instruments of politics. This group might fight against other groups such as the aristocrats (elites) and the democrats (majority), wherein people actively participate

[13] Buddhist teachings try to promote a sense of both individual and social responsibility; the aim is to avoid causing harm or fear to others through one's conduct. In the Buddhist way of life: one should not kill any living being; one should not steal; one should not commit adultery; one should not lie.

[14] Buddhist teachings are based on a theory of reincarnation (life is a cyclical and recurrent process).

[15] Republic can be an Aristocracy (elite, rich people) or Democracy (poor people)

freely and equally in the world of politics. This is a very important part in the study of the current Cambodian political culture.

On the other side, the Khmer language[16] also causes in part the political problem. The Cambodian people believe that "the death of the language is the death of the culture and the nation." The Khmer language[17] determines the moral conduct, the social order, and the way of thinking of the people. So, protecting the language is very important to them. For example, in 1943 the French[18] tried to change the Khmer alphabet to the Roman alphabet, but this was defeated because the Cambodian people, especially the Buddhist monks, objected.

However, there is no longer a need to limit oneself to the Khmer language in view of the process of globalization and the free market economy. These new ideologies have influenced the young generation to open up, by saying: "If you know how to speak English, then you will survive wherever you are".

We can also discuss the problems facing most of Cambodian society today, such as the issues on property, the relation between freedom and equality, and the conflict between democracy and communism.

- The issue of property. According to the Buddhist teachings, the worth of a person is not based on one's economic background or social class. No matter how rich one is or how smart he or she is, if one does not know how to behave oneself in society, then he or she is nothing to the people[19] even if he or she is a powerful politician. Actually, the people expect to have a good leader who is smart and rich but not corrupt. The people believe that the rich uncorrupted person must either be reborn as rich or s/he was rich in moral values from his/her past moral life; so that if s/he

---

[16]The Khmer language has the largest alphabet in the world. There are 33 consonants and 24 vowels plus 15 independent vowels representing the Sanskrit and Pali vowel, so totally we have 72 alphabetical signs..

[17] The Khmer language contains four different registers denoting social differences in speaking or writing to or about royalty, monks, elder or respected member of society, and equals or younger people. For instance, the verb "eat": we could not use the same verb for different people from differing social status. For royalty we use /saoi/, monk – /chhann/, elders - /pisar/, ordinary people – /hop/ or /si:/, and for children – /nham/.

[18] After ruling Cambodia 80 years, the French realized that the Khmer cultural values are reflected in the Khmer language, and that the Cambodian people respect the value system offered by the monks more than that of the French because monks were not only the religious leaders but also the educators.

[19] They value people through their words as well as actions. These characteristics include generosity and selfless concern for others, warmth and a good-natured temperament, abhorrence of fighting, drinking, fornication, and other sins, devotion to family, industriousness, religious devotion, cooperation with others, and honesty.

is born poor, s/he can obtain wealth in the present life. And this type of person, which is characterized as morally good, should serve as the leader.

In relation to the land conflict, the significance of Buddhist philosophy appears in Cambodian society through the question: "Does the Earth belong to the person or does the person belong to the Earth?" Some are inclined even to ask the question: "Can a man take all his property with him when he dies?"

- Freedom and equality. Most people wish to have freedom and equality in their own society, especially in a democratic country. But somehow they cannot have both equality and freedom because either "one is free but unequal" or "equal but unfree". According to the Buddhist teaching, social equality is important[20]. For those who believe in Buddhism as a philosophy, he would agree with the theory of social equality. This type of person wishes to live in a society without discrimination, without the caste system. The Buddhists might support socialism, communism, liberalism, or democracy. For example, in true communism the people can be equal in material services and benefits, but unfree in the sense of being controlled by an authoritarian leadership. On the other hand, in true democracy the people are free in their choices but cannot be equal in material possessions and benefits.

But for those who believe in Buddhism as a religion, they would follow Brahmanism in the Buddhist sense. This type of people believe in the saying: men are unequal by birth or they believe in the caste system. They support monarchism which can be constitutional or absolute. The monarchy expects a society with a hierarchy: the king is the head and the people are the subjects. This means that the people are unequal in view of the hierarchical structure and at the same time unfree in the sense that they are subjects. However, the Cambodian Buddhists, as subjects, can be free in the sense of being not alienated from the monarchy if they acknowledge and accept the fact they are subjects within the structure of the hierarchy. Presently, Cambodia practices constitutional (parliamentary) monarchy. The Cambodians believe that without social structure or hierarchy, man would live in anarchism. In Cambodian society, the people expect to have freedom and equality with respect to social structure, position, and duty. One would have freedom if he or she could maintain the balance between title, role, duty, and responsibility.

- Democracy versus Communism. Some political leaders believe that Buddhism is the root of democracy, while others consider Buddhism as the root of communism. They explain that when democracy reaches the level of the absolute majority (the common will or 100%), democracy will be transformed into communism because democracy could exist only when

[20] Lourdunathan S. Paper on "The Philosophy of Buddhism", page 1. Discrimination of any sort is sinful and therefore anti-social and anti-spiritual. This philosophy is the non-Vedic philosophy

there are differences between the majority and the minority. Ideally, democracy and communism, are almost the same in the sense that they have similar aspirations in terms of equality, freedom, social justice, brotherhood, and the like. They differ only substantially in terms of property ownership and political leadership. The Cambodian Buddhist believes in a political culture that accepts both private and public property. We expect to have private property with regard to basic needs. But we expect to have public property with regard to the national ideology.

Conclusion

Since the role of Buddhism in Cambodia appears in the forms of philosophy, religion, and animism, the value of the political culture is also different. The majority is the group that believes in Buddhism as a religion, and the minority is the group that considers Buddhism as a philosophy. The Middle Path of Buddhism guides both politicians and the people: the politicians, to be moderate in their political life, and the people, to participate in politics through correct balance or the Middle Path. This is the philosophy of the "Head-Wing," which accepts both sides: the left and the right with the center or the Middle Path as dominant.

We might get confused in theory when we analyze the political system and political issues of the Kingdom of Cambodia. According to the classical theory, democracy was against monarchy, and in modern times the republic is also considered the antithesis of the monarchy. In the case of Cambodia, however, there is a constitutional (parliamentary) monarchy whereby democracy exists "under the roof" of the monarchy. The only way to solve the political conflict in Cambodia is to integrate all aspects of society so they become one unitary formation.

Philosophy Department
Royal University of Phnom Penh
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

CHAPTER VIII

CHRISTIANITY AND THAI CULTURE

WARAYUTH SRIWARAKUEL

Christianity has come to Thailand through missionaries since 1555 or 1556[1], but the number of Christians in Thailand (both Catholics and Protestants) is around 991,600[2] or less than 2 per cent when compared with the population of approximately 65 million. The small number implies the unsuccessfulness of evangelism in Thailand. One of the main causes is the problem of inculturation. This problem is caused by both the Thai people and the missionaries themselves.

INTRODUCTION

Some Western travelers reported the existence of a small community of Christians in Siam (the old name of Thailand), probably Armenians or Nestorians, long before the arrival of the Portuguese in 1513.[3] But the origins of this particular community are unknown. After Albuquerque, in the name of the Portuguese King, had defeated Malacca in 1511, he sent his ambassadors to King Ramathibodi II of Ayautthaya (1491-1529). It was probable that there was a priest accompanying this group of ambassadors. And if this was true, it was probable that evangelism began at this time.[4] After the Portuguese entered the country, the number of Christians increased, not only in Ayutthaya but also in Phuket, Takuathoong, Madrid and Tanaosri.[5] When the French missionaries came to Siam in 1662, in the reign of King Narai the Great (1657-1688), they discovered that there were about 2,000 Christians in Ayutthaya. Most of them were Portuguese or half-Portuguese. Some were Vietnamese and Japanese.[6]

---

[1] It may be 1567 or 1568. See Veerasak Vanarotsuvit, *A History of the Thai Catholic Church* (Sampran: Saengtham College Press, 1990), p. 9.

[2] See "A Report of Religious Statistics of Thailand, 1999" by the Office of the Commission on National Education on page 43.

[3] Luigi Bressan, *A Meeting of Worlds: The Interaction of Christian Missionaries and Thai Culture* (Bangkok: Assumption University Press, 2000), p. 1.

[4] However, there was no evidence about this. It was evidenced only when two Dominican priests came to Siam in 1555 or 1556 (possibly 1567 or 1568) in the reign of King Mahachakrapat (1548-1568). See Victor Larqué, *A History of the Catholic Church in Thailand* (Chachoengsao: Mae Phra Yook Mai Publisher, 1996), p. 1.

[5] Veerasak Vanarotsuvit, Op.cit., p. 11.

[6] Veerasak Vanarotsuvit, Ibid., p. 11.

There is no doubt that the Catholic Church in Thailand, from the very beginning, has tried her best to promote the Christian life. What I mean by "Christian life" is the life concerned with (1) God, (2) the Kingdom of God, and (3) Christian ethics or morality. As we know, since "God is Love," the Kingdom of God is, therefore, the Kingdom of Love. Similarly, Christian morality can be reduced into two main commandments: (a) "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind," and (b) "Love your neighbor as yourself." Accordingly, "Christian life" is a life concerned with love. Thus we need not ask "why" the Church promotes love. However, the question of "how" can be reasonably raised. In this paper I will inquire into "how" the Catholic missionaries promoted the Christian message of love in a Thai setting.

WHAT THE MISSIONARIES HAVE SOWN

How could the Church have promoted people to make their lives better? Or, in other words, how could the Gospel or Good News have been preached? Surely, the Gospel could have been preached in the language of the prospective audience. In the case of Siam, at the beginning the Portuguese missionaries came to conduct their pastoral work for the Portuguese community in Ayutthaya. This certain community was called "Moo Baan Portuget" by the Thai people. Surely, those Portuguese men, mainly soldiers and merchants, came to Siam with their own wives or married local women. They fathered children and needed to provide for their education. The Catholic Church, therefore, began to serve the Thai community through education, as Archbishop Bressan wrote:

> The Catholic Church has a long tradition of education which dates from the old monastic schools and includes the prestigious universities that continue to the present day. Although educating children was not compulsory at that time, many parents sought to improve their children's lot in life by allowing them to gain a quality education. There was, moreover, a desire to provide them with religious instruction, which indicates the use of a catechism of some sort. Although members of the Order of St. Dominic, who were in the communities, were quite disposed by their training to teaching, and although they certainly taught Christian doctrine to children and adults, we have no clear evidence that they organized schools.[7]

Teaching and preaching Christian doctrine to the Portuguese children was not a difficult task for the Portuguese missionaries because

[7] Luigi Bressan, Op.cit., p. 2.

they spoke the same language. However, all the missionaries realized their mission very well to pronounce the Good News to all peoples in the world responding to Jesus Christ's words, "Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time (Matthew 28: 19-20)" It is certain that the Portuguese missionaries learned the Thai language in order to communicate with the Thai people. However, there was evidence that it was the Jesuits who first organized schools in Siam. Fr. Thomas de Valguarnera founded the first Catholic school in Ayutthaya in 1656. "De Valguarnera lost no time in studying the Siamese language and he was received by, and taught Portuguese, one of the four most important Buddhist abbots in Ayutthaya. At the same time Valguarnera explained the nature of his faith, thereby giving an indication of his later activities as a pedagogue." [8] The Language of the audience is always necessary for evangelism. The missionaries in Thailand, from generation to generation, have recognized this fact very well. That is the reason why all of them become fluent in the Thai language - both spoken and written.[9]

However, the Gospel was preached to the Thai people not only through language and education but also through deeds of various kinds. The foreign missionaries were witnesses to our Lord Jesus Christ through different kinds of activities. Surely, we Christians, I may say, in Thailand now are the fruit of their labor. The missionaries' services, which correspond to the community needs, include healthcare, community development, social work, charity, and so on. Different groups of missionaries had different missions. But education seems to have been one of the most important services provided by the foreign missionaries in Thailand.[10] Today, even though we Christians are "nobody" in terms of population, in terms of education we are certainly "somebody." Thai parents always trust and would like to send their children to study in Catholic and Protestant schools. Every year many Thai parents are disappointed because the Catholic and Protestant schools cannot accept their children on account of their limited space.

---

[8] Ibid., p. 4.

[9] Most, if not all, foreign missionaries in Thailand are very good at the four skills of the Thai language. Some could even write texts of Thai language for school children. For example, Brother F. Hilaire from the Brothers of St. Gabriel wrote *Daroon Sueksa* which has been popularly used in primary schools.

[10] When the Protestant missionaries first came to Thailand in the time of Rattanakosin (Bangkok) in 1828, they were famous for providing medical work including evangelistic and educational works. See George B. Mcfarland, *Historical Sketch of Protestant Missions in Siam 1828-1928* (Bangkok: Bangkok Times Press, 1928).

CHRISTIAN TRADITION AMONG TRADITIONS

Language seems to be no big problem for foreign missionaries in living their daily lives and conducting their missions. At this moment the number of foreign missionaries is growing less and less. However, the number of local priests, brothers and sisters is growing more. This implies that we Christians, since we are Thais, have no problem with Thai language in living our daily lives. We have some problem with the authorities in the Ministry of Education who do not allow us to officially use some words in Thai which, they think, may make people confused with the uses of those words in Buddhism, though. But this is not a big problem because, in practice, we are still able to use any word freely in our own contexts.

The central problem for Christianity in Thailand is not Thai language, but Thai culture. To inquire into this question, we need to know first (1) what is Catholicism and (2) What is Thai culture? Catholicism, as we all know, is a Christian tradition, a way of life and community.[11] Certainly, a Catholic community must have a Christian tradition in a certain cultural context or a certain way of life. This implies that a Christian tradition must always be located in some certain cultural context.

Then what is Thai culture? It is remarkable that Thailand is located in Indochina, the land between India and China. According to orthodox history, it is believed that Thai people lived in the south of China a long time ago. However, in terms of culture, Thai people have been influenced by India rather than China. Why so? M.R. Kukrit Pramoj, one of the great Thai scholars, remarked, "Why haven't the Thai people been influenced by Chinese culture (except some small matters?) Why have they been mostly influenced by Indian culture? I suppose that this is so because Chinese culture is too rigid for the Thai people who are flexible and don't like strict rules. Indian culture is more flexible. We have adopted Indian culture in two ways: Hinduism and Buddhism."[12] I think M.R. Kukrit's remarks are highly reasonable because they are supported by two main factors: phenomenally and historically. Phenomenally speaking, Thai people always love freedom and do not like strict rules and disciplines. In Thailand we have a motto "Those who do according to their voluntary minds are authentic Thais." Many people still believe and hold this motto. Sometimes they follow this motto so much that they lack self-discipline in their lives.

Historically speaking, it is true that Thailand has been mostly influenced by India through her Hindu and Buddhist traditions. Hinduism had come to Thailand through the Khmer people before Buddhism did.

---

[11] For more details, see Richard P. McBrien, *Catholicism*, new edition (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994), pp. 3-17.

[12] Kukrit Pramoj, "Culture" in *Inculturation, the Proceedings of the Conference of the Catholic Priests in Thailand*, at Saengtham College on October 19-23, 1981, p.3.1.

However, before Hinduism was welcome, there was evidence that Thai people had already adopted animism. Animism holds a belief in "Phii" (Ghosts). There are two kinds of "Phii": good and evil. When Hinduism came to Thailand, it did not throw away the belief in "Phii" and the traditional rituals and practices. Thus it was easy for Thai people to welcome "this new comer." Similarly, when the Buddhist missionaries came to Thailand, they did not tell people to throw away their animist and Hindu beliefs and practices. Thus it was not hard for Thai people to welcome and adopt Buddhism as "another new comer." Little by little, Buddhist doctrines have been "absorbed in their blood." Finally, Buddhism has become the national religion of the Thai people. This does not mean that there are no "signs" of Hinduism among the Thai Buddhists. Once my Hindu friend from India came to work in Assumption University, in Bangkok. He told us that it seemed to him that he found Hindus everywhere, not Buddhists as he imagined.

Actually, Buddhism was brought to Siam or Thailand as an "imported" religion from India, but its inculturation was so successful that no Thai people have ever thought that it was originally an imported religion. . Thai people call the Indians "Khaeg,"[13] but no Thai people have ever felt that Buddhism is the religion of the Khaeg. They have always thought that Buddhism is the religion of the Thais. Thus in Thailand we have another motto: "If you are an authentic Thai, you must be a Buddhist." This motto implies that if you are not a Buddhist, you are not an authentic Thai. Surely, this attitude causes a lot of problems, especially with the Muslims in the South of Thailand. In fact, to be a Thai it is not necessary to be only a person of one ethnic group and one religion.

Islam and Christianity were "later new comers" in Siam. Yet for the Thais in general, Islam is the religion of the Khaeg, and Christianity is the religion of the Farang. Many Thai people still believe that those who are Christians are not authentic Thais. Some may say that the Thai Christians are Thais by nationality but Farangs by spirit.

It is true that all religious traditions are located within particular cultural traditions. In other words, all religious traditions are "universals" within the "particulars" of cultural traditions. Buddhist tradition, for example, is "universal" in the sense that its essential dogmas are common to all particular cultural contexts. So is Christian tradition. Yet why has the Christian tradition been less successful in Thai society in terms of inculturation?

---

[13] While Thai people call Chinese "Jeck," they call the Indians "Khaeg." They call all the Europeans "Farang." However, the word "Khaeg" refers not only to the Indians but also the Parkistanis, the Bangladesh people, the Ceylonese, the Nepalese, the Malays, the Persians, the Arabs and all peoples in the Near East and the Middle East (except Jews), and the Africans .

LACK OF INCULTURATION: THE CASE OF CATHOLICISM IN THAILAND

Two questions may be raised: (1) Can the Gospel be preached without accepting the cultural traditions of the target groups? (2) If the answer to the question (1) is affirmative, then how? Before answering these questions, let us first consider how knowledge, attitudes and skills in general can be transferred from generation to generation. Obviously, all of these things cannot be transferred without certain cultural traditions. Traditions have played their important role in families, communities, nation states and in the Church herself. Throughout the history of mankind both traditions and texts have played an important role in the so-called transmission. Recognizing this fact, Christians, especially Catholics, consider that both Christian Tradition and the Bible are necessary for their faithful lives. The Catholic Church does not regard revelations as restricted to the Scripture alone (*sola scriptura*). As the Fathers of Trent say, "These truths and rules are contained in the written books and unwritten traditions which have come down to us…all traditions concerning faith and morals…come from the mouth of Christ or are inspired by the Holy Spirit and have been preserved in continuous succession in the Catholic Church."

As mentioned above, Catholicism always means a Christian Tradition, a way of life and a community. This means that the Christian Tradition must always exist in a certain way of life of a certain group of people. The Christian Tradition cannot exist by itself. In other words, the Christian Tradition must always be located in certain particular traditions. It is "the Tradition in traditions." Thus the answer to the question (1) is it possible that the Gospel, in principle, can be preached without accepting the traditions of the target groups. How? By "imposing" the traditions of the missionaries themselves on the target groups of people. According to the history of the Church, St. Peter, who was a Jew, once wanted to make all Christians Jewish-like. This way may be called "Peter-minded." St. Paul, who was a Jew but who better understood Romans, Greeks, and other Gentiles, wanted to allow Christians to be as they were in their own cultural traditions. We may call St. Paul's way "Paul-minded." St. Peter's way is harder or more rigid than St. Paul's. Even though it seems possible in principle, it is really hard in practice because of the fact that "Old ways die hard." Unfortunately, the Western missionaries in Siam at the very beginning followed St. Peter's way. I believe that this is the major reason why Christianity has not been popular in Thailand.

It may be argued that there are several causes that make Christianity unsuccessful in Thai society. Some people may say that throughout the history of the Kingdom of Thailand all kings have respected and adopted Buddhism, so it is quite easy for Buddhism to become popular among the Thai people. If a king were a Christian, then it would be easy for Christianity to be popular, because his subjects would follow him. The

French missionaries, they may argue, seemed to recognize this fact, so those missionaries tried their best to convert King Narai the Great. However, their effort was in vain. King Narai never converted to become a Christian even though he was very impressed and pleased with the missionaries. Others may argue that Christianity has not been popular because it was a late-comer when compared with Hinduism and Buddhism. Still, others may argue that Buddhism was such a great religion for the Thai people that it precluded other religions.

I do not think that the above three arguments are very compelling. First, Buddhist doctrines are not innate. They do not naturally arrive in people from birth through heredity. Long before Buddhism came into Siam, Thai people believed in "Phii." Yet why did the Thai people at that time welcome and adopt Buddhism? Why is it that the Thai people now do not see Buddhism as an "imported" religion but as innate? Second, it does not matter whether a religion is an earlier or later comer. But it does matter whether a religion responds to the needs of the people or not. An example from business may make this clear. A new company is always welcome among consumers in so far as its products respond to their needs. In fact, in business an old company may lose its customers if its products no longer respond to the customers' needs. Certainly, if both old and new companies can give products that respond to the needs, both of them will have their own customers. Third, it is exactly true that Buddhism is a great religion, but this cannot prevent the Thais from adopting something new. As a matter of fact, Thai people are basically generous and tolerant. They can easily adopt something new from the West like, for example, democracy and modernization, without losing their own identities, in so far as they think it is good for them. As we well know, democracy and modernization, the two ideals imported from the West, can get along well with the Buddhist way of life.

Thus the main reason why Christianity has not been popular in Thai society is the ineffective "how" of the missionaries. The foreign missionaries did something which is against the central habit of the Thai people, namely love of freedom and flexibility. When the earlier groups of missionaries came to Ayutthaya, they had no problem when working with the Portuguese and expatriate Christians because Christian tradition was in their particular European traditions. Problems happened when they tried to preach the Gospel to Thai people. They did not welcome the cultural contexts of the Thai people, so their preaching was filled with "dos and don'ts." They ignored the fact that Thai people are lovers of independence and flexibility. When Thai people sensed that Christianity was very rigid, like Confucianism, it was hard for them to welcome and adopt it, because it explicitly went against their character.

In order to see the problem clearly, let us consider landscape architecture as an analogy. The Ideal Garden is to the Gospel as the local landscape is to the local tradition. In the history of landscape architecture,

there were two styles of landscaping: English and French. The English style will adapt the Ideal Garden to the local landscape, but the French style will do the opposite, namely, adapt the local landscape to the Ideal Garden. In fact, both ways are logically and factually possible even though the French style is more difficult. It happened that the missionaries in Siam chose to follow "the French style," probably because they believed that the Gospel could never change. At this point they perhaps misunderstood the idea of the permanence of the Gospel. Of course, the "substance" of the Gospel will never change, but its "form" can be changed and appropriated. Water is always water: in the form of ice, liquid or gas. So is the Gospel. The missionaries did not make this distinction, so they tried to Westernize the Thai people with their dos and don'ts. The Western tradition is like ice (more rigid), whereas the Thai culture is like water (more flexible). To make the Gospel in the form of "water" is easier than to make the Thai culture in the form of "ice." The missionaries did the opposite. That is the reason why they could convert only the expatriates, the slaves, the sick, the poor and those who occupied the margins of the society.

When turning to the history of Buddhism, we see the opposite. The Lord Buddha himself revalued and changed the meaning of Brahman who was a very familiar God to all the Indian people. This demonstrates that the Lord Buddha was very good at inculturation. Thus Buddhism was very successful in his lifetime. When the Buddhist missionaries came to Thailand, theThai people had been already familiar with animism and Brahmanism. The Buddhist missionaries did not force people to leave their old ways of life, but they revalued and changed the meanings of traditional beliefs and practices. This is opposite to the "Peter-minded" Christian missionaries. They brought with them a lot of "dos and don'ts." They could not make a distinction between Thai culture and Buddhism. All traditional beliefs and practices were considered as "superstitious." Instead of revaluing and changing the meanings of those beliefs and practices they preferred to prohibit those traditions. It was very hard for Thai people to welcome Christianity under this kind of attitude. As a matter of fact, both Buddhism and Christianity were "imported" to Thailand, but Buddhism has never been "alien" to the way of life of the Thai people because of its very effective inculturation.

LESSONS FROM THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

When turning to the history of the Catholic Church, we may find that the Church at the beginning was good at inculturation. The Church at the earlier period recognized well that inculturation is explicitly related to Incarnation. It is believed that the Lord Jesus Christ as God is transcendent, and that as man he was a Jew who spoke Aramaic and lived his life in the Hebrew tradition. After his life, death and resurrection, some of his apostles wrote the Gospel in Greek and made it appropriate for different audiences

in different cultural backgrounds. In early centuries the Christian writers used Greek philosophy to explain and justify the doctrines and used conventions from the Roman Empire and Asia Minor in liturgy. Christmas day is a very good example of inculturation. According to the evidence, Jesus Christ was not born on December 25. On that day the Romans celebrated one of their gods. When they were converted to become Christians, they still celebrated that day but with the new meaning, namely, the birthday of Jesus. In 600, Pope Gregory the Great advised the missionaries who were going to Great Britain not to destroy the old shrines or places for worship of the pagans but to change them into churches. He also advised the Christians to celebrate the old festivals of the pagans [though in Christian form]. In 1659 the office now known as the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith advised the missionaries who were going to Asia not to persuade the pagans to change their traditions and practices except when they were against religious doctrines or moral rules. However, those missionaries ignored and did not follow the advice since there were afraid that the new converts might lose their faith. In 1939 Pope Pius XII announced this advice officially. In Vatican II, inculturation was mentioned more than 40 times. Pope Paul VI often mentioned inculturation. Pope John Paul II also mentioned it often in documents, bishops' conferences and speeches when he visited Asia and Africa. All these people appreciated and supported inculturation. Surely, it a duty of the Church to promote inculturation as the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* puts an emphasis on the following:

> …the Church…has profited from the history and development of mankind. It profits from the experience of past ages, from the progress of the sciences, and from the riches hidden in various cultures, through which greater light is thrown on the nature of man and new avenues to truth are opened up. The Church learned early in its history to express the Christian message in the concepts and language of different peoples and tried to clarify it in the light of the wisdom of their philosophers: it was an attempt to adapt the Gospel to the understanding of all men and the requirements of the learned insofar as this could be done. Indeed, this kind of adaptation and preaching of the revealed Word must ever be the law of all evangelization. In this way it is possible to create in every country the possibility of expressing the message of Christ in suitable terms and to foster vital contact and exchange between the Church and different cultures.[14]

[14] See the Pastoral Constitution "Gaudium et spes" in Vatican II, p. 946.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

In 1981 the problem of inculturation was seriously raised in the Catholic Church in Thailand. Every year a conference for the Catholic priests in Thailand is held on October 19-23. On October 19-23, 1981 a conference was held on "Inculturation" at Saengtham College, Sampran, Nakhon Pathom. The objectives of the conference were as follows:

- To explain the meaning of inculturation both theologically and socio-culturally.
- To collect all experiences and practices about inculturation in Thailand and its neighbors in order to see its strengths and weaknesses, its advantages and disadvantages.
- To study the activities of the Christians at the present time in order to make them harmonize with the culture in their daily activities and religious services such as Mass, marriage, worship, etc.
- To study religious vocabulary in order to make it more suitable and to help it correspond better to the meanings of Thai words and the uses of Thai people.[15]

The conference was presided over by Bishop Ek Thabping who was a strong supporter of inculturation. He invited many experts and scholars in the area to participate in the conference. Those scholars included Ajarn Siri Phetchai, Fr. Robert Costet, M.E.P., Fr. Bronislas Pasag. M.E.P., Khun Ying Malee Sanitwong Na Ayutthaya, Fr. Augustin Moling, S.J., and M.R. Kukrit Pramoj, who was the thirteenth Prime Minister of Thailand in 1975. This was a very good start. Cardinal Renato R. Martino[16] made it clear in his opening speech:

> Fortunately, inculturation is no more merely identified with rituals and superficial expressions. The problem is much further reaching than that since it is a matter of devising ways and means to present Christ and his message in cultural forms, symbols and expressions that are proper to the local cultural group, of implanting the Christian message into a local culture, and of conveying Christianity in a way that is meaningful and living for those to whom it is offered…But to witness fruitfully we must not shut ourselves in a ghetto; on the contrary, we must remain in the world , acknowledge ourselves as

[15] See the *Proceedings of the Conference of the Catholic Priests in Thailand*, 1981, p. A.

[16] He was Apostolic Nuncio to the Kingdom of Thailand then, and he is currently President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

> members of the group in which we live, participate in their cultural and social life through the various contacts and affairs of human life , be familiar with the religions and national traditions, lay bare the deeds of God which lie hidden in them, acknowledge their spiritual and moral value, preserve and promote them…By a sincere and patient dialogue we discover more and more the marvelous treasures that God has distributed among the nations of the world- treasures that perhaps we do not share at the same degree. Just think of a few of them, more conspicuous in these regions: filial piety, care for the aged parents, warm hospitality, respect, generosity in helping the relatives-in-need and the poor, readiness to support a good cause, and so on. These are traditional values upheld as sacred by the older generation, but less so by the young people who happen to have little or no cultural roots and who, in any case, are more exposed to these modern currents that destroy very basic human values, such as an unquestioning submissiveness to the State, the legalization of divorce and abortion, materialism, consumerism. Here, it is obvious, the Christians, together with their bishops, must discern, purify and sometimes counteract.[17]

This conference highlighted the importance of inculturation among the priests in Thailand. One concrete result was the establishment of the Catholic Commission for the Inter-Religious and Cultural Dialogue. This office is still active. Unfortunately, it happened that Bishop Ek Thabping had a very short life. He died in 1985. Since his death no other bishops have been seriously interested in inculturation. However, many priests in the Northeast of Thailand have tried to do their best by using local music to celebrate Mass.

So far the Catholic Church in Thailand has had only one synod, namely, Ayutthaya Synod. It was organized by two bishops in 1665. It achieved three accomplishments:

1. The establishment of local religious congregations.
2. The publication of doctrines for missionaries.
3. The establishment of seminaries in order to produce local priests.[18]

---

[17] See the *Proceedings of the Conference of the Catholic Priests in Thailand,* 1981, p. D-E.

[18] See *Catholic News Weekly*, Vol. 29, No. 26, June 26- July3, 2005, p. 9.

The synod was held 340 years ago. Now it is time for another synod, namely, Bangkok Synod. It will be organized by Cardinal Michael Michai Kitbunchoo on August 15-19, 2005 and on December 3-6, 2005. It is time for the Church to pay attention and reflect on the problem of inculturation. We do hope that the Church will not proceed with the spirit of "dos and don'ts," otherwise Christianity will never gain much influence in Thai society.

School of Philosophy and Religious Studies
Assumption University of Thailand
Bangkok, Thailand

CHAPTER IX

CATHOLICISM IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN VIETNAM: ITS MEANING

DO LAN HIEN

Catholicism is a religion; firstly it targets the transcendental, but it needs to put down roots in a culture to reveal itself. So it is a real entity to be affected by and has affects on changes in economy, politics, ethics, philosophy, culture, and lifestyle of the country in which it exists. Therefore, it concerns what is very real, concrete, intimate, simple and has direct affect on community development in Vietnam.

Study of the relation between Catholicism and social development is a novel matter in Vietnam, though globally there are many studies of the role of religion in general and of Catholicism in particular in social development. There exist contrasting notions. One opinion views the positive role of Catholicism in the development of a community and confirms that Catholicism is a driving force for social development. Men supporting this point of view cite sources demonstrating Catholicism as a proponent and promoter of development, progress of the society and its considerable effect on the ongoing thinking of mankind.

In contrast, another notion views that the religious effect of Catholicism on culture is an act of indirect suppression of authentic humanistic culture, because religion is a spiritual space tying up the thinking and spirit of human beings in boundlessness and the infinity of nihilism, metaphysics, and illusion, while life is real and existent. In general, religion is an element against or restraining of social development and progress.

It is of our opinion that the role of religion in community development is a dichotomy. If it is compared metaphorically, religion conduces the human being towards virtue or makes him more virtuous. Religion is a comfort, spiritual prop and rescue for the suffering man. So, religion and mishap are often concomitant. In the face of religion, man becomes small, poor or feels guilty, poor and mundane before God; while the building of a happy and prosperous life needs healthy and confident people having aspiration and hope in the future, and ready to put aside sorrowful sadness.

In Vietnam's case, after more than four centuries of mission and development, it is confirmed that in Vietnam the percentage of people professing Catholicism is rather high, around 10 percent, spread over the country with strong, well-organized and stable management force. Catholicism makes a remarkable contribution to Vietnam culture in painting,

architecture, music, culture, philosophy, religion. There are a few products made by Catholicism, but the more or less particular imprints of Catholicism to be analyzed below make spiritual life and Vietnam society more copious.

In the process of the mission of Catholicism in Vietnam, there were very few foreign missionaries who made important contribution in evangelization, as well as introduction of a Catholicism culture to Vietnam nation. Nevertheless, the character of this evangelization in introducing Catholicism (a Catholicism imbibed of course with European spirit rather than the 'primitive' one of Vietnam), and this meant also introducing that occidental civilization, technology in astronomy, geography, mathematics, medicine, techniques, language. Moreover, these missionaries left valuable works, documenting and valuing the contemporary status of a society, customs, rites, etiquettes in Vietnam in the 18th and, 19th centuries, in which there are historical documents collected by the missionaries but not noted down by Vietnamese history. These are very important documents for domestic and foreign scholars on subject matters dealing with that historical stage of Vietnam.

Before that, the occidental culture was only known by the Vietnamese through such publications as new literature, new verse (Neo-literature) transmitted form China, Japan and translated into Chinese characters; as a result they were, to a certain extent, refracted. Due to Catholicism's mission process, such occidental philosophical and theological notions, thoughts such as theism, atheism, idealism, materialism, ontologism of universe, origin of the world, absolute entity, god…have been propagated in Vietnam.

In the 19th century, when Catholicism was not only a religious phenomenon but also a political matter, it became one of the elements disturbing Vietnam ideology. Catholicism put the Vietnamese to thinking about matters not-yet-solved by other religions when they introduced into Vietnam such classifications as the 'right way' versus heresy (true religion or not), prohibition or not of the Way (religion), Catholicism as the Way (religion). In meaning, the Way becomes the essence (main point) of the universe, it is of ubiquitous existence, it is in every material, infinity in time and space. Are these ideas true? So, in such ideological confrontation, more or less, philosophical notions, categories have been opened up for discussion, even in an opaque manner and with weak reasoning.

Furthermore, the Vietnamese, while receiving Catholicism also received a new world outlook, ideology from the occidentals in the interpretation of matters dealing with the natural world and human beings.

As far as belief is concerned, the introduction of the Catholicism in Vietnam in part satisfied a shortage in spiritual life of Vietnamese; previously they only knew the existence of Buddha, now of Christ.

Regarding ethics, the ethical thoughts of Catholicism evaluated positive points, because the occidentals instilled into man equality and

fraternity and educated them towards holy things. However, these things in Catholic dogma remained theoretical only; what is more interesting is the effect of those dogmas on social life: in short, these matters themselves include other complicated ones.

There are often two opposite trends when evaluating the role of Catholicism in education of ethics: one considers it as the ideal ethic yardstick of the mankind; another one considers it, i.e., the Catholic ethical ideals, as utopian, a bundle of rejected theories of morals, ethics. It means that ethical education's ideas insofar as they are said to be "good" are to such an extent unrealistic. To substantiate the above judgments, arguments in "…love your enemy and lend a helping hand to the man who dislikes you, give goodness to the man who curses you and pray for the man who slanders you. If you are slapped on one cheek, ask to be slapped on the other cheek. If your outside clothes are robbed, don't try to prevent the inside ones to be robbed. If someone asks for alms, give him, if some thing is taken away by someone, don't try to get it back" [Lk 6:27-30].

> Theologians and the Catholic Church do not consent to the above-mentioned interpretation of the Bible. According to them, spiritual things should be construed by spiritual language, by metaphors lying behind these messages. Its ideological contents are propagation, inspiration for leniency, and fraternity in human being. We agree with the theologians in this point; in the Bible every dogma could not be interpreted or construed by modern language but it should be put in the literature style and context of the Bible.

The Catholic doctrines (tenets) are of positive and inspiring value, too. More than twenty centuries ago, Catholicism raised ideas against slavery, cultivated classical emancipation, opposed racial discrimination, advocated monogamy, peace protection, opposition to war…However, these forms of emancipation in Catholicism only reflect the wishes and aspirations of the Jewish race who wanted a victory over stronger races and were eager for their own demarcated land; the extension of these ideas to others only came into being later. The notions of society, nation, country mentioned in the Bible only indicate a clan society-a human community based on bloodline relations, common asset ownership, but not notions of a nation in terms of human community, having common material life, language, territory and cultural identity. So, ideas of slave emancipation and liberation from poverty in the Bible should be put in the context of clan society, not the feudal or capitalist epochs.

But, these doctrines have direct influences on the life of modern society. In real life, Catholic followers considered ethical thoughts in the Bible an authentic ethical code and they led not only religion but also

secular life into compliance with the admonitions of this ethical code. As a result, in Vietnam, in areas where there are people professing the Catholicism, social security and order are stable - such social evils as robbery, prostitution, gambling, narcotic addiction, divorce and crime are of low incidence in comparison with non-Catholic areas. The percentage of Catholics convicted of crimes is very low. Due to the fact that in Vietnam the Catholic Church applied a strict, long-term and continuous educational method in various forms, the Catholic people are deeply imbued with an ethical sense; their sense of doing good and fighting evil are bolder than in non-Catholic people. With ardent belief that the face of Christ is reflected in the poor, many Catholic followers are devoted, sacrificing their lives to do such work that the non-Catholic could not do,--taking care of lepers, the elderly, the poor, as well as establishing schools for orphans, and disabled children.

The theory of Catholicism is to encourage or admonish people to practice morality: according to Catholic teaching, a rich man going to heaven is like a camel going through a needle's eye. In Catholicism, divorce is not allowed, abortion or contraception is strictly prohibited, even in the case of deformed fetus…Therefore, on this point, the absolutivity of blind human 'morality' is one of the elements reversing the development, progress of mankind and society.

> With relation to family, in the past the Church considered that the main purpose of marriage is reproduction and raising of children. Nowadays, the Church views family as church at home (*ecclesia domestica*), as a cell weaving itself. And it is clearly seen that in order to religiously imbue mankind it is imperative to imbue the Catholic family. So, today Catholicism is interested more in family matters, nuptial relations, filial relations. In general, the Catholic viewpoint on these issues is appropriate and in accord with Oriental psychology in general and Vietnamese psychology in particular. According to it, family is a cradle of compassion and happiness, the best place to cultivate kindness, to teach a sense of responsibility to the community. Making spiritual the family first lies in *love*. Nuptial attachments crystallize into children and these children are the family of the future. The parent is an incarnation of the Father-Christ love, so they have filial respect as the Christian does to Jesus. And children enable the heart in Jesus' heart to respect the parents. Generally, it encourages filial piety, abeyance, care of parent, remembering parent's birth and piety. It is a requirement appropriate to the filial piety tradition of the Vietnamese that opposes divorce. In Catholicism, marriage

> is a pledge between Christ and religious society and this bond is indivisible. So, divorce is an insult to the pledge; an immorality, because it disturbs family life and abandons the children.

At present, the market economy is synonymous with a hectic rat-race life. The rich are engrossed in making money, they have money, but time shared with family and children is rare, that resulting in a dwindling of family education, entrusting of children's education to the school and society. In this context, the Catholic ethic brings into play a positive role alleviating the severity of insatiable seeking of profit, fierce competition, and indifference of the human being. The dogma of marriage and family, as above analyzed, contributes to reinforce the good traditional family relations of the Vietnamese, because the family is a real community of love and life. It is the family which makes considerable contribution to the building of peaceful and happy life for everyone.

In regard to economic aspects, it is confirmed that religion in general and Catholicism in particular do not touch on economic development issues. Religions and Catholicism are not an exception, claiming to pay attention to soul and spirit only and ignoring and disdaining the flesh and material aspect. Looking for a role of religion in economic development seems off the point.

But in the process of developing and propagating good news, the Church through history perceived and understood the material aspirations of human beings and helped them to reach aspirations and full development in all aspects. It is the opinion of Catholicism that the human being is an indivisible double-sided reality: material and sacred. The spirit and material are indivisible; the reality of the human being is the spiritual and fleshly element. Selecting one out of the two is impossible. And happiness is complete when it includes the flesh. Therefore, in his message on the development to the nations published in 1967, Pope Paul VI emphasized even in the preamble that "nations who just recovered their independence see that they need not only political freedom but also economic and social independence. If so, this makes people fully developed and confident to take a place in the community of nations (1).

This means that religion should not necessarily give priority to the spiritual only: rather, spirit and body should be mutually complementary. Together with "taking care of spirit," religion targets directly towards the flesh and secular interests. The Catholic elevates labor, seeing labor as obedience to God and co-creator with God, because the God has worked for six days to create the universe and creatures and God wanted the "primitively rough nature" created by Him to be perfected by the human being. Nowadays, mankind, assisted by machine and equipment, can control and change nature and man feels himself to be actually a metaphor son of God. Catholicism does not see such manual and simple work as stevedoring,

cleaning as humble , because, through working, the human being—no matter how humble his task—earns his livelihood as well as builds God's kingdom. In line with this spirit, an expedient life style, diligence, readiness to work hard to remold nature, are instilled in Vietnamese Christians in general and working peasants in particular. They have an ardent aspiration to build a happy life: respect of righteousness, faith, readiness of sacrifice for good deeds, and defense of the poor, lonely people. Therefore, they make positive contribution in the construction and development of community.

However, in the time of technology the human being recognizes limits to development and acknowledges the hazards it brought about. Dreadful actual situations confront the future fate of the human being, such as environmental pollution, depletion of natural resources and risk of complete extinction. In this circumstance, the Church pays attention to environmental matters and those matters are within the teaching area of the Church. It is their opinion that nature is a gift given by God to the human being and he should receive, reconcile, cherish and protect it. In God's creation, the human being belongs to nature and nature is his companion, so if the human being respects and utilizes it in an intimate manner, it becomes a chance for him to meet God. If every follower brings these doctrines into practice, religion could be considered as a positive element in the evolution of the human being, making his thought and unconscious work change and helping the human being prevent crises and build and develop the community.

From the psychological point of view, religion has a role to "enliven" the human being. A man for his whole life comes to the church to repeat sacred prayers and believes in this practice without any reflective interpretation. For him the God may be of real non-existence and have no need to know what the universe is: his only real interest is in this real world- according to his perceptible capability- that is, how much does an egg cost! He prays to God for the price of eggs not to increase and he has strong belief in his prayer, this is his religion. Religion is life, reality for its believers—thus it enlivens the human being.

> Religion has not only as emotional element but also a politically sensitive element, which means it can be easily capitalized on for erroneous political purposes: it could bring about unexpected great social changes. Catholicism in Vietnam has had a developmental period rife with changes, spiritual and temporal. religion-and-nation relations sometimes became ideological struggles, struggle for national sovereignty and state security. However, in the history of the Vietnamese Catholic Church there were progressive thinkers among the Catholic contingents, and many patriotic followers. They are actually Catholic

> followers who know how to combine two ideals--Catholicism and the fatherland. They are the very men who made ground-breaking changes for the face of the Catholic church in Vietnam. They argued that the faithful of God while leading a life devoted to society and country need not and should not betray their faith, because before they became Catholic disciples they were all already Vietnamese citizens. Because they have become God's children (Catholic believers); there is no any reason for them to erase their nationality and stand outside the nation, the community.

The generalized studies on the influence of religion on the spiritual and social life in Vietnam, while indicating the influences of religion on community development—have emphasized what in religion is very realistic, concrete, intimate, simple and has direct effect on the development of the community. It is not impossible to reduce religion to life, history, reality or transcendentalism. All such complicated development of religion as the increase of sects and today's mysterious new religious movements are due to the endless novelty in expression, indeed a characteristic of religion. Such a phenomenon ensures anchorage for the world religions and religion's eternal future. Due to the fact that in recent decades confronting the complicated development of religion, scholars and political organizations in the world are back to studying religion again! Philosophical study of religion not only criticizes the religious outlook, the issue of whether there is or is not a God, etc., but such study also examines relations between religion and reality, religion and ethics, religion and culture. Specific study of subject-matters now raised by scholars seem to be contrary to tradition or not satisfactory to previous points of views on religion and definitions of religion. For example, the new scholars view religion neither as a form of social consciousness nor as the supernatural or mystic world, but rather view it as reality and life. Religion is non-cognitive, non-linguistic, non-conceptual, relational human being. Religion is not necessarily theistic; to be 'religious' can mean -- not necessarily belief in a deity—but that man has spiritual inclinations, seeking a meaning, a value for life; that he is one who wants to go further than the present and wants to look for the depth of existence. Religion is only associated with theology when it construes (explains) its faith and creed, as well as in competing with other faiths. So, the core matter of religion is not belief in the God but rather an involvement in how a human being transforms himself, going beyond the trivial things.(2)

According to them, religion is an element of life,-- it belongs to infrastructure not superstructure. Religion is practice, it relates to the conduct, virtue and lifestyle of a human being. The true function of religion is not to make human beings think, but to make man act and help him live.

It is only perceived by men who profess a religious life. These feelings are not superior direct perception, but they are characteristic experiences, and the value of those experiences is not less than scientific ones. According to them, it should be conceived that religion not only pursues issues of external character, such as the origin of human beings, but also his internal life development. To phrase this another way, religion is deemed to be the material essence of human being.

Exhaustive and comprehensive discussion of these issues within only one essay is not possible. What is needed is in-depth study, work which can better satisfy the contemporary demand for answers to questions raised by religion. Hopefully, there shall be opportunities for us to come back to these issues in order to study and dwell upon them.

Institute of Philosophy
Vietnam Academy of Social Scientists
Hanoi, Vietnam

NOTES

[Lk 6:27-30]: The Bible—The Gospel according to St. Luke

1. Monthly magazine *Catholicism and the Nation*, No. 6/1997, pp.13-14

2. Reference books:

- *Does Religion Give My Life Meaning?* New York, 1989
- Monthly magazine *Catholicism and the Nation*
- Rhush Rhees, *On Religion and Philosophy*, Cambridge University press, 1997
- Nicholas Lash, *TheBbeginning and the End of Religion*, Cambridge University press, 1996

CHAPTER X

ROMAN CATHOLICISM AND FILIPINO CULTURE[1]

ROLANDO M. GRIPALDO[2]

In this paper the author illustrates how the introduction of Roman Catholicism to the Philippines has effected two fundamental influences, viz., Westernization in terms of Hispanization and later Americanization, which enables the native Filipinos to see and gradually adopt a different culture, and syncretism, where the sacred and the profane are blended, that is to say, the Filipino indigenous rituals and practices are made compatible to Catholicism. The author likewise argues that folk Catholicism is in general the Filipino way of expressing religion as a way of life.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to provide pieces of evidence to the oft-quoted expression, "Religion is a way of life." Religion is here assumed to mean a personal relationship with a spiritual being directly or through an organized institution, or a way of life, or both. Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and many others are religions in the above sense.[3] Even some Chinese philosophical positions are considered religions in the sense of a way of life.[4] In the words of Lara Shapiro ("Religion and the supernatural," n.d.):

> Even though the Chinese world-view does not involve supernatural powers or beings it is still a religion because it is the foundation for a way of life. The Chinese world-view based on Yin and Yang explains changes and how changes occur. This is a philosophical view and is the foundation for a way of life. Dao is the ultimate and is what causes the cycles to change. To understand Daoism and Yin and Yang is to understand the true nature of the true ultimate reality. A religion is a way of life or path that is based on a philosophy or world-view. Therefore it is not essential for a religion to have a supernatural dimension. Daoism and Confucianism are religions, they are practices and ways of living based on philosophies of the ultimate reality, but neither Daoism nor Confucianism believe in a supernatural dimension. Practicing religion is an activity man does so that he may feel that he is part of and at peace

with the true ultimate reality, be it Daoism, Confucianism, Christianity, or Judaism.

Since the position taken here is that religion is a way of life, it is therefore apparent in Roman Catholicism that the teachings of Christ (see Palmer 1998-2005, Perry 2003, and American Life Helping Institute 2005)—at least some if not all of them—and the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, particularly on the sacraments and the agreements in the various councils (see Cloud 1995; Rausch, n.d.; and Infomedia, Inc. 2004), will find expression in the practices of the faithful. As a preliminary background, therefore, I will present the fundamental teachings of Christ and the doctriness of the Church.

CHRIST'S TEACHINGS

The teachings of Christ can be gleaned from the sermons (and discourses) and the parables.[5] The Great Commission (Perry 2003) says: "1. Make disciples of Christ, from all nations; 2. Receive them into the household of God through baptism; and 3. Teach them to obey everything Jesus has commanded" (Matt. 28:18-20). The Sermon on the Mount is the most important among these teachings. It consists of ten beatitudes, the new laws, the Lord's prayer, the teachings on money, and the warnings. The beatitudes, which were intended to alleviate the suffering of the believers, are:

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
2. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
3. Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.
4. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
5. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.
6. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
7. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
8. Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
9. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.
10. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

These new laws (Matt. 5:21-43) are additional but specific, more stringent, and in some instances more difficult to follow than the Ten Commandments (see Perry 2003):

Old Law	New Law
Murder	
1. Thou shalt not commit murder.	Thou shalt not be angry with thy brother or thou shalt be guilty before the court.
Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.	
Whoever says, "You fool," shall be guilty to go into the fiery hell.	Thou shalt not call someone, "You good-for-nothing," or insult him, or you shall be guilty before the supreme court.
Reconciliation	
2. [In reference to Cain and Abel.]	Reconcile first with your brother your differences before presenting an offering to the altar, or leave the offering and reconcile yourself first with your brother.
	Make friends quickly with your opponent at law. You will not come out of prison until you have paid up the last cent.
Divorce	
3. Whoever sends his wife away, let him give her a certificate of divorce.	Anyone who divorces his wife, except for the reason of unchastity, and marries another commits adultery; he also makes her an adulteress. Whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.
False vows	
4. You shall not make false vows, but shall fulfill your vows to the Lord.	Make no oath or do not swear at all, either by heaven, by earth, or by Jerusalem. Noteven by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Just say, "Yes" or "No," beyond which is evil.

Go the extra mile	
5. An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.	Whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. Let someone who sues and takes your shirt have your coat, too. Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him another mile. Give and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.
Love your neighbor	
6. You shall love your neighbor and enemy.	Love your enemies and hate your pray for those who persecute you. You are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

The Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9-13) accompanies "instructions on giving and fasting" (Palmer 1998-2005). Give in secrecy, not in public or with the sound of a trumpet; otherwise you are like the hypocrites. Likewise pray with secrecy in an inner room with its door closed. Do not pray in public in order to be seen by men or you are hypocritical. Pray, then, the Lord's Prayer by glorifying His name, affirming the coming of His kingdom on earth, asking forgiveness of your debts the way you forgive your debtors, and by beseeching Him to guide you against temptations. When fasting, do not appear gloomy but anoint your head and wash your face in order that men will not notice you are fasting. All these that you do secretly God the Father will reward in full (Matt. 6:1-8. 16-18).

Regarding wealth or money, Christ says that treasures on earth can be eaten up by moth and rust, and stolen by thieves, but treasures in heaven, which one should store up for oneself, are lasting: where your earthly treasure is, so your heart will there be. You cannot serve two masters: God and wealth. Do not worry about food and clothing, but have trust in the Lord, and He will feed and clothe you. Finally, do not worry about tomorrow. Seek God's kingdom and His righteousness first, and God will provide (Matt. 19-34).

The warnings, together with the golden rule and the parable of the wise and foolish builders, constitute the last section of the Sermon on the Mount. Christ says: "Do not judge so that you will not be judged." This warning is meant for hypocrites who are far worse than the ones they have judged. Ask for the kingdom of God, seek for it, and knock at its door, and you will have it—you will find it with its door widely opened. Enter the narrow gate for it leads to life, though few will find it. You will know the good and the bad trees by their fruits. Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of God, for he may in fact have not done the will of My Father. The golden rule says: "[T]reat people the same way you

want them to treat you." In the parable of the wise and foolish builders, Christ says that everyone who listens to his teachings and acts on them is like the wise man who builds his house on the rock that withstood the rains, floods, and winds while he who does not act on them is like the foolish man who builds his house on sand which fell with a thud when the rains, floods, and winds fell, blew, and slammed on it, respectively[6] (Matt. 7:1-29).

TEACHINGS OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Roman Catholic Church's teachings were formulated and defined by various ecumenical councils, twenty-one of them (see Hall, n.d.), that started in 325 AD as the Council of Nicaea and ended, so far, in 1962-65 as the Second Vatican Council. The ecumenical councils[7] were meant to resolve divisive views on Church doctrines, which when ultimately resolved through lengthy debates, became the official Church teachings. These teachings form part of the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church, which began with Peter as the first pope. Here is how Hall (n.d.) describes the various councils.

1. Council of Nicaea (325 AD): resolved the problem of the Holy Trinity. God the Father and God the Son (Jesus Christ) were co-eternal and co-substantial (Nicene Creed). Arius's belief that Christ was created and inferior to God the Father was deemed heretical.

2. First Council of Constantinople (381 AD): resolved the position of the Holy Spirit in the Holy Trinity. The Holy Spirit proceeds from God the Father and, therefore, is coequal and cosubstantial with Him. Moreover, the patriarch of Constantinople is second in dignity only to the bishop of Rome. Apollinarianism was condemned by granting the full humanity of Christ.

3. Council of Ephesus (431 AD): resolved the issue on the status of Mary. It rejected Nestorianism which considered Mary only as the "mother of Christ," by decreeing that Mary was likewise the "mother of God." Jesus is here decreed to have two natures—God and man—united in Himself.

4. Council of Chalcedon (451 AD): firmly refined the God-and-man nature of Christ as "unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, [and] inseparably" forming a unity.

5. Second Council of Constantinople ((553 AD): finally resolved and reconfirmed the position that Jesus' two natures, human and divine, are united perfectly in one being by explicitly rejecting the Nestorian writings.

6. Third Council of Constantinople (680-681 AD) [likewise called Trullanum]: affirmed the position that Christ has two wills, human and divine, without division and confusion, by condemning Monothelitism (Christ had no human free will). It also rejected Pope Honorius I's affirmation of this heresy.

7. Second Council of Nicaea (787 AD): declared that although the veneration of saints' images and icons in religious devotion is legitimate,

this veneration must be distinguished from the worship that is only due to God.

8. Fourth Council of Constantinople (869-870 AD): the main purpose of this council was to depose Photius, the patriarch of the Eastern Catholic Church based in Constantinople. Photius rejected the revision of the Nicene Creed by the emissaries of Pope Nicholas I of the Western Catholic Church. The original says that the Holy Spirit proceeds "from the Father," but the revision says, "from the Father and Son." This council further deepened the split of the two Catholic Churches.

9. First Lateran Council (1123): ratified the Concordat of Worms (1122) which was a compromise arrived at by Emperor Heinrich V of the Holy Roman Empire and Pope Callixtus II over who has the right to install bishops and the clergy. This is known as the investiture controversy. The concordat provided that the elections of bishops and abbots of the German kingdom be made in the emperor's presence.

10. Second Lateran Council (1139): called by Pope Innocent II to reaffirm the unity of the Church after the death of the anti-pope, Anacletus II.

11. Third Lateran Council (1179): called by Pope Alexander III to end the papal schism of anti-pope Callixtus III. After the death of Pope Hadrian II, the cardinals nominated two popes, Alexander III (Roland of Siena) and Victor IV (Octavian of Rome), who got the minority votes, but Victor IV, with the support of Emperor Frederick of the Holy Roman Empire, usurped the title of pope. The emperor waged war against the Roman Church and the Italian states. After Pope Victor IV's death, two other anti-popes were nominated, Paschal III and Callixtus III. In the end, Pope Alexander III won the war and convened the third Lateran council, which declared that one could be deemed elected as pope by the College of Cardinals only by a two-thirds vote. One cannot become a bishop until one reaches the age of thirty. The Cathars were excommunicated and arms should be taken up against them and against the mercenaries of war.

12. Fourth Lateran Council (1215): the Eucharist is defined with the word "transubstantiation" officially used for the first time. Precepts like annual confession, Holy Communion, Easter duty, and the like were adopted.

13. First Council of Lyons (1245): deposition of the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II confirmed.

14. Second Council of Lyons (1274): effort at reconciliation between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches failed.

15. Council of Vienne (1312): abolished the Order of Knights Templar, which was a military order involving heavy and light cavalry.

16. Council of Constance (1418): theory of conciliarism affirmed, the council of Constance was above the pope. It made the three simultaneous popes resign, and a new pope was elected, Martin V.

17a. Council of Basel (1431-37): Pope Martin V wanted the council transferred to Ferrara, but some members refused and deposed the pope by electing an anti-pope, Felix V. Pope Martin V declared the Council of Basel heretical.

17b. Council of Ferrara-Florence (1437-39): the effort to end the schism between the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church again failed.

18. Fifth Lateran Council (1512-17): condemned conciliarism, the doctrine that the council is over and above the pope.

19. Council of Trent (1545-63): basically anti-Protestant, declared tradition as coequal to Scripture as a source of spiritual knowledge; reaffirmed the seven sacraments, the existence of purgatory, the necessity of the priesthood, the doctrine of transubstantiation, and justification not only by faith but also by works; maintained the efficacy of relics and indulgences; retained clerical celibacy and monasticism; upheld the veneration of the Virgin Mary and the saints; and considered the Church as having the sole right to interpret the Bible.

20. First Vatican Council (1869-70): decreed that in matters of faith and morals, the pope is infallible when he speaks officially and with clear intention to do so.

21. Second Vatican Council (1962-65): encouraged vernacularization of the liturgy and active participation of the laity; decreed ecumenism and the role of the media social communication; emphasized collegiality with the pope; proclaimed the Blessed Virgin Mary as the "Mother of the Church'; and made declarations on religious freedom, religious education, and on the Church's relationships with the other religions, among others.

THE CATECHISM

The Roman Catholic Catechism (see CBCP 1997) summarizes the teachings and dogmas of the Church and elaborates on them. The Baptist, David W. Cloud (n.d.), mentions some of the important doctrines that define Catholicism as against Protestantism. The ones mentioned here are not subscribed to by Protestants, particularly the Baptists, but they help explain the practice of Roman Catholicism as a religious way of life in the Philippines.

1. Tradition equal with Scripture;
2. Bible interpretation the sole right of pope and bishops;
3. Mary, sinless, perpetual virgin, mother of God, queen of heaven, co-redemptress with Christ;
4. Rosary and prayers to the Virgin Mary;
5. Fullness of salvation only through the Catholic Church;
6. All grace comes through the Catholic Church;

7. No Christian unity apart from the Catholic Church;
8. Salvation includes the Muslims;
9. Supremacy of the pope;
10. Prayers of the dead;
11. Prayers for the dead;
12. Salvation through baptism;
13. Penance necessary for salvation;
14. The Church can forgive sins;
15. Existence of purgatory;
16. Indulgences and good works for the dead;
17. Sacraments and liturgy communicate grace;
18. Sacraments are necessary for salvation;
19. Infants are born again through baptism;
20. The mass is a sacrifice united with Christ's One True Sacrifice.
21. The mass is the conversion of bread and wine into the very body and blood of Christ;
22. The priest has this power of conversion;
23. The mass is conducted in communion with the dead;
24. Elements of the mass to be worshipped and carried in processions;
25. Sins must be confessed to a priest;
26. Forgiveness of sins and escape from purgatory through indulgences;
27. Salvation through the good works of the "saints";
28. Veneration of relics; and
29. Veneration of images.

ROMAN CATHOLICISM IN THE PHILIPPINES

Before going into the religious influences on the culture of the people, let us review how Roman Catholicism was introduced to the Philippines historically. The Philippines consists of many religions. Islam was introduced by Arab traders and Sufi teachers to the Philippines in 1210 AD (see Khalifahp, n.d. and Jubair 2004). Roman Catholicism was peripherally introduced in 1521 by Ferdinand Magellan when he sponsored the first Catholic mass at Mazawa, Butuan City in Mindanao,[8] and when he converted to Catholicism the Cebuanos under Chief Humabon (see Agoncillo and Guerrero 1977: 76-77), but more vigorously in 1565 when the Spaniards established a colonial government in Cebu and in 1571 when Miguel Lopez de Legazpi conquered Manila from the Muslim chieftain, Rajah Soliman (see Miller 1982). Taoism was introduced in the 10th century by Chinese merchants (Leyson, n.d.), Indian Buddhism in the 18th century by the Indians through the Malayan peninsula, Chinese Buddhism also in the 18th century by Chinese traders and immigrants (Leyson, n.d), Protestantism in 1899 by "the first Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries

who arrived with the American soldiers" in that year (see Gov.ph 2005 and Gonzalez III, n.d.), and so on. The 2005 religious statistics record released by the Philippine Government (Gov.ph 2005) says that the Philippines is "[p]redominantly Christian":

Catholics – 82.9%
Protestants – 5.4%
Islam – 4.6%
Philippine Independent Church – 2.6%
Iglesia ni Cristo – 2.3%

The remaining 2.2% are Buddhists, Taoists, Confucianists, Mormons, animists, freethinkers, and others (Miller 1982 and "Religious groups…" n.d.).

Animist and Pagan Cultures

The non-Islamized tribes of the Philippines were animistic communities headed by a chieftain or datu. He or she in many cases was the ruler, lawgiver, and sometimes high priest at the same time. People believed that virtually everything such as trees, creeks, rocks, etc., are inhabited by spirits. According to a British anthropologist, Edward Burnett Tylor (1974), who called this religious belief "animism" in his book, *Primitive culture*, such a belief system is a natural development that dates back to prehistoric times. Tylor argues that primitive people experienced in visions, dreams, and hallucination the presence of dead relatives which made them infer that lifeless bodies were inhabited by souls or anima. Ultimately they believed that these souls continued living and dwelt as spirits in rivers, trees, rocks, skies, etc.

Another British anthropologist, Robert Ranulph Marett (1909), thought, however, that primitive men of Paleolithic times were not that intellectually sophisticated as proposed by Tylor as to think in terms of spiritual explanations, but rather they simply inferred, based on their sentiments and intuitions, that animate objects do have lives and wills of their own while inanimate objects may likewise have lives and wills in that they somehow behaved in some mysterious ways that made them appear alive. But they did not distinguish the soul and body as two separate entities (see Hefner and Guimaraes, n.d.; O'Connell and Singer 1999; and Aburrow, n.d.).

Later, many of these nomadic groups formed farming villages. As a consequence, they started practicing Neolithic polytheistic beliefs regarding gods and goddesses with individual responsibilities in all aspects of nature. Daniel Quinn (see "Theism debate," n.d.), makes a distinction between "animism" and "paganism" redolent of the Protestant focus upon

the fallen, sinful, corrupted nature of humankind and the universe, quite contrary to that of the Catholic Church:

> It's easy to distinguish animism from paganism. Paganism is a farmer's religion ("pagan" means "of the country"). There were no farmers here until about ten thousand years ago. Before that, the religion of humanity was animism (and it still is among tribal peoples). It's not, in fact, a religion in the way most people think of religion [i.e., organized religion]. It's based on no "religious" belief. Rather, it embodies a worldview: the world is a sacred place, and humans belong in that sacred place. The religions of our culture (the "major" religions) perceive the world to be a place of illusion and evil—not a sacred place, but rather a place to be escaped from in order to reach some "better" place that is our true home. At the same time, the religions of our culture perceive humans to be fundamentally flawed, so that if the world were a sacred place, humans wouldn't belong in it. In the view of our culture's religions, humans are miserable creatures living in a miserable place.

By the time the Spaniards came to the Philippines, some native tribes had already become farming communities with paganism as their religion. Other communities in certain parts of the archipelago were already Islamic in religion, particularly in Mindanao and some parts of the Visayas and Luzon.

The early Christianization of the Philippines was rather slow. The first recorded baptism occurred in Cebu in 1521 during the voyage of Ferdinand Magellan who is said to have discovered the archipelago. In the course of time, the Christianization process spread to the different islands and areas of the Philippines, but its success was due partly to the tolerance allowed by political and religious authorities for the natives to embrace Catholicism while simultaneously incorporating some elements of their animistic and pagan practices. These gave rise to what is known in the Philippines as folk Catholicism or folk Christianity. As King (2002: 5) says:

> Animism is a term for any religion in which souls of dead people or spirits of nature play an important role.… [O]fferings and special festivals may be held to honor the souls of the dead. Followers…also may worship spirits believed to exist in fields, hills, trees, water, and other parts of nature....This often happens, for example, in the religious practices of Southeast Asian folk traditions.

Roman Catholic Influences on Filipino Culture: The Westernizing Influence

If religion is a way of life, then by implication Roman Catholicism must have visible influences in the lifestyles of the people. Since there are many components of culture, I would like to mention only the more significant ones wherein the Westernizing or Hispanizing (later Americanizing) influence of Christianity in Filipino culture is highly visible.

In his book, *Catholicism in the Philippines*, Zaide (1937) virtually identifies Catholicism with Westernization and civilization. No doubt the early religious missionaries, who were themselves specialists—architects, anthropologists, mathematicians, cartographers, etc.—were zealous in their evangelical work and introduced various innovations to the indigenous culture. The missionaries founded towns and pueblos, developed agriculture and industries, constructed roads, bridges, irrigations, and canals. They introduced education both for men and women, propagated the Latin alphabet, and built schools, libraries, museums, hospitals and orphanages. They introduced printing and encouraged the development of religious literature, fine arts, musical compositions, and made musical instruments like the Bamboo Organ of Las Piñas. Christianity has somehow refined the Filipino character. These innovations were slow in coming, however, and the reformists and revolutionists felt the established Catholic Church was responsible for the slow progress or why the Philippines, then considered a province of Spain, did not grow economically and politically on a par with those provinces or regions of Spain itself.

THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE

Culture Defined

Culture is here defined as the "totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought" ("Culture defined," n.d.). Another source ("Culture…," n.d.) says:

> According to Samovar and Porter (1994), culture refers to the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving. Gudykunst and Kim (1992) see culture as the systems of knowledge shared by a relatively large group of people.

All these definitions presuppose the *interiority* of phenomenological experience, as human beings cannot have a cumulative deposit of cultural components without this experience

Components of Culture

In such an empiricist description, culture is so broad as to include anything that mankind did in the past, is currently doing, and will be doing in the future. If this is the case, then religion, as well as art, language, politics, education, economics, philosophy, literature, and virtually every human or social science is a component of culture. But going more deeply, if religion itself is a component of culture, in what way does it influence culture, that is, the other cultural components?

Perhaps, among these components, religion is the most influential because as we earlier define it, religion is not only limited to one's spiritual relationship with the Other, it is also a way of life. In the case of the Roman Catholic religion, it is both one's personal relationship with God through the community that is the Church and a way of life.

The following are some culture components where Filipinos perceived and adopted the Western (or Hispanic and American) ways as a part of their cultural upbringing:

Religion and Politics. One component of culture is politics. The introduction of Catholicism enabled the natives to change rituals and practices, and in the long run, the political system. In Spanish colonization there was virtually no separation between Church and State because the Spanish colonial government in the Philippines favored conversion of the natives and even during the time of Magellan, the effort at conversion and baptism was vigorously pursued.

During the Philippine Revolution of 1896, the revolutionists accused the friars of holding back, for political reasons, many aspects of life, including politics, and began to think of the separation of Church and State. During the American colonial period, this principle was firmly established which after independence in 1946, the Philippines, as a republican state, continued to implement the American Protestant interpretation of the statement of Jesus Christ to render "unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:21). This means that the Christian religion is limited to the salvation of souls and should not contribute in political matters.[9] In the Catholic community, in contrast, it has been taken for granted that it is a priestly duty to disagree with the policies of government when detrimental to the welfare of the citizens of the state. Bishop Bacani (1987:47) says that priests "should not 'play politics,' but serve the political good of the people." They should do a "balancing act" of serving the "people even in political matters without succumbing to the temptation of playing politics." Bacani goes on:

> Priests will…keep to their competence if they remember that they are spiritual leaders for unity; that their role is in the education of the consciences of the faithful; that they fulfill their role best through their teaching and through lives lived according to the gospel; and that the primary agents for the transformation of the secular sphere are the laity.

Leonardo Mercado (2004: 172), using Pannikar's (1973: 28-47) model, calls this "profane autonomy" variation 2, where the sacred and the profane are coequal and separate. The ethical dimension of religion makes it difficult to separate religion and politics in the Philippines because an evil and corrupt politician is necessarily religiously unethical. In addition, religious leaders are taken to symbolize the morally righteous. That is why some political leaders, like former President Corazon Aquino and the present President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, sought advice from a cardinal or a bishop on certain political decisions which have moral implications. Cardinal Sin was said to be instrumental in helping oust Ferdinand Marcos and Joseph Estrada from their respective presidential positions because of alleged bad governance or corruption. Mercado (2004: 173-81; see also Pannikar 1973) describes this actual practice as "theandric ontonomy," where the sacred and the profane, though coequal, slightly overlap.

Religion and Ethics. Philosophy is the next component of culture, and the most important aspect of philosophy that has a personal and social dimension on religion is ethics. The philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas on what is natural as against the defects of nature has a great impact on many of the doctrines of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church accepts what is natural, and rejects what is unnatural and against nature (see *Roman Catholicism* . . . , n.d.). Hence, artificial birth control is taboo. It is natural for a man and a woman to get married, and procreate but unnatural for lesbians or for homosexuals. The Catholic teaching, "What God has joined together, let no man separate" (Matt. 19:6), in the sacrament of matrimony disallows divorce, and since its pro-life advocacy considers the fetus to have life when the sperm unites with the ovum (Bertens 1999: 137), abortion is strictly prohibited.

What is natural likewise justifies the correction of what is defective in nature. Diseases and physical defects (like a harelip) can be corrected by the use of medicines and/or by operation which are artificial or human-made. But in general, human cloning (which is tantamount to creating a human being) is disallowed. We are not supposed to tamper with nature, but we may be allowed to enhance what is natural. So we can use fertilizers to enrich the growth of our plants, take vitamins to make us healthy, and so on.

Religion and Language. The Filipino language is littered with Christian or Catholic words and phrases such as *pasyon* (passion of Christ), *misa* (mass), *baptismo* (baptism), *Ama namin* (our Father), *banal na sakripisyo* (holy sacrifice), *sakramento* (sacrament), *panalangin* (prayer), *komunyon* (communion), and so on. Many of these words are foreign to the ethnic Filipino language: they are basically borrowed and are mostly transliterations. In addition, Hispanic and American names proliferate among the Filipinos, and many have names of saints.

Religion and Education. The doctrine of Church-State separation prohibits the teaching of any religion in state schools, colleges, and universities, perceiving the teaching of one religion in state classrooms to discriminate against the others. Hence, religious education is restricted to religious Sunday schools, seminaries, schools of theology, and sectarian colleges and universities. Religious education can also be conveyed in Sunday sermons by Catholic priests and Protestant ministers, and on holy days—such as Ash Wednesday, Holy Week, Christmas Day, and the like—when masses and sermons take place.

It is, however, important to note that the Catholic religious orders were responsible for establishing many schools in the country, the oldest university in the Philippines being the University of Santo Tomas. Despite their early weaknesses, these schools began the Westernizing influence through educating the sons and daughters of wealthy Filipinos and mestizos.

Religion and Economics. Religion in this instance has caused the government to pursue global employment to address the economic problem of poverty. Since artificial birth control is disallowed, only the educated and financially capable Catholics practice what is known as "family planting with family planning." The majority of the population who are generally uneducated (though many are literate), and those who belong to the inarticulate (the "poorest among the poor") (see Beltran 1987) are engaged in only "family planting." Consequently, the growth of population of the Philippines is more rapid than what the growth of its economy and inflation could allow. Translated into economic terms, the poverty level of the country increases every year. This causes panic to the Philippine government, and tension exists between the government policy of planned parenthood through the use of artificial birth control methods and the Catholic Church is resistance to that policy. The rhetoric of creating more jobs annually to address the increasing number of the unemployed has compelled the Philippine government to encourage its people to seek "global employment" or "greener pastures" throughout the world, not only of its professionals—doctors, architects, nurses, seamen, engineers, computer technicians and scientists, teachers, artists, and the like—but also its labor workers and domestic helpers. This partly explains the phenomenon of the Filipino diaspora.

Religion and Literature. The first published book in the Philippines is the *Doctrina Cristiana* in both Spanish and Tagalog which appeared in 1593. Since then there have been countless Catholic publications from seminaries, Catholic associations, and Catholic schools. Unfortunately, these publications are of limited edition. The C*atechism of Filipino Catholics* of 1997, for example, prepared by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, has four editions with a total number of only 48,000 copies. Considering that there are more than 80 million Filipinos, of which about 63 million are Catholics, the catechetical dissemination of Catholic teachings and doctrines has to rely on pulpit sermons, on radio and television masses, and on sermons in open spaces such as the Luneta and in large buildings.[10] But very few Filipino Catholics can go to Church, mostly in urban areas; only few in the provinces and remote barrios can go to the municipal churches to listen to sermons, and only a few listen to radio and television sermons, which are supposed to provide the proper way of adoring God and venerating the saints. The net result of this lack of dissemination is the blending of native religious rituals and practices with Catholic rituals and practices.

Religion and Art. It is in art that a number of religious works, especially pictures of saints, processions, and cathedrals, have been widely disseminated—particularly in calendars distributed as gifts or sold at trifling prices during the Christmas season. In addition, when the faithful go once in a while to the municipality, they can view the architectural design of the church and some of the religious sculptural busts or figures of famous saints and bishops. On some occasion, they watch Lenten or Christmas religious plays held openly or in covered halls or auditoria in the locality. There are also pictures of saints, the Virgin Mary, and the child Jesus in scapularies.

The novels of Jose Rizal, such as *Noli me tangere* and *El filibusterismo,* depict the influence of the friars on government and the people, while the paintings of Esteban Villanueva (*Basi revolt*, 1821) and Juan Luna (*Spolarium*, 1884) project the aesthetic of suffering as in the passion of Christ. As Flores (2003) notes, "Both the works of Villanueva and Luna reveal a similar calvaric effect of terror and grief, but gesture toward different trajectories."

In music, the Spanish Westernized traditions seeped into the musical compositions of Filipinos. To quote Dioquino (2002):

> …Hispanization was tied up with religious conversion, and in the next three centuries, the people's musical thinking was affected, resulting in a hybrid expression heavily tinged with a Latin taste. It produced a music connected to and outside the Catholic liturgy and a European-inspired secular music adapted by the Filipinos and reflected in their folk songs and instrumental music.

> The large number of liturgical and para-liturgical vocal genres that developed included songs used inside as well as outside the church. These included Christmas songs and practices such as *pastores*, *daygon*, *galicon*, *tarindao*, and the outdoor re-enactment of the Holy Couple's search for lodging called *pananawagan*, *panunuluyan*, *pananapatan*, or *kagharong*.
>
> The custom of chanting the passion of Jesus during Lent gave rise to the *pasyon*, a practice widespread among the lowland Christians. The verse narrative on the life and sufferings of Jesus Christ appears in almost all major Philippine languages….The *pasyon* is sung in homes, village chapels, or even in outdoor makeshift sheds erected for the purpose….A more extensive and complicated rendition of the life and passion of Jesus Christ in the form of outdoor dramas also takes place during Lent. These passion plays are called *senaculo*….Another related Lenten celebration is the *moriones* of Marinduque [regarding the conversion and subsequent beheading of the centurion Longinus, who pierced the side of Jesus].

ROMAN CATHOLIC INFLUENCES ON FILIPINO CULTURE: THE FOLK INFLUENCES

Adoration of God and Veneration of Saints

To contrast the folk rituals and practices, on the one hand, and the more developed ways of adoring God and venerating the saints, on the other, let me introduce some terms.

"Adoration, or *latria* in classical theology," says Miravalle (2002), "is the worship and homage that is rightly offered to God alone. It is an acknowledgement of excellence and perfection of an uncreated, divine person. It is the worship of the Creator that God alone deserves." On the other hand, "Veneration, known as *dulia* in classical theology, is the honor due to the excellence of a created person. [It] refers to the excellence exhibited by the created being who likewise deserves recognition and honor." God has granted the saints "to intercede for those on earth who are in the process of pursuing the same holiness [as those of the saints]." The devotion one has to the saints does not stop with the saints, but it reaches to God: "To give honor to the saint who has excelled in loving union with God is also to honor the object of his loving union: God Himself." However, the devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, though classically known as *hyperdulia*, though indeed superior to the veneration of the other saints, is

inferior to the adoration we give to God Himself. In what then does this proper devotion or veneration of the saints consist?

The veneration of saints has been part of Catholic culture worldwide, but there was concern that too much Catholic preoccupation with saints opened the way for the "encroachment of superstitious practices" (McBrien 2001). In 1969, the Catholic Church trimmed its liturgical calendar by dropping many of the saints so that "proper attention could be given to more important saints." The Second Vatican Council shifted the emphasis on saints as "miracle workers" to saints as "models or exemplars of the Christian life." Any "abuses, excesses or defects" that may have developed here and there in the process of the veneration of the saints must be removed or corrected. It is not in the "multiplicity of external acts, but…in the more intense practice of the love of Christ for all" that defines the "authentic cult of the saints." McBrien (2001) has quoted the Christian humanist Erasmus of the 16th century:

> No devotion to the saints is more acceptable to God than the imitation of their virtues….Do you want to honor St. Francis? Then give away your wealth to the poor, restrain your evil impulses, and see in everyone you meet the image of Christ.

It is in light of this section that I will now discuss folk Catholicism in the Philippines.

Folk Catholicism: The Acculturation of Pre-Hispanic Culture and Roman Catholicism (Blending of the Sacred and the Profane)

The inhabitants of the Philippines were animists, pagans, or Muslims when the Spaniards introduced Roman Catholicism. The dissemination and inculcation of the Christian faith took centuries to become effective. In this process, the missionaries had to accommodate some of the animistic and pagan practices of the natives. Jose de Mesa (1987: 1) calls the dissemination process *inculturation* or "the concern and the process for making the Gospel meaningful and challenging within a specific cultural context." In this sense, *to inculturate* is to indigenize. In the process likewise, the natives *acculturate* or adapt/adjust to the new culture. By the 1840s, however, according to Teodoro Agoncillo and Milagros Guerrero (1983: 97):

> …real Catholic doctrine was not understood by the [natives], who saw little distinction between magic and the Catholic belief in miracles, idolatry and the veneration of saints and images, superstitions, and certain Catholic rituals.

There are few Filipinos today—educated Catholics and Protestants—who know their respective faith, but most average Filipinos are uneducated or inarticulate and know very little of the teachings of Christ and the doctrines of the Church. Moreover, there are relatively few Filipino and missionary priests in the Philippines, such that the dissemination of the faith is badly needed. The consequences of this lack of education among the majority of the faithful is a mixture of non-Catholic and Catholic practices, or folk Catholicism. As Tope and Nonan-Mercado (2003) argue: "Christianity in the Philippines is really a unique folk variety." What are some of these folk practices?

Self-Flagellation (Acting out Christ's Passion) and Crucifixion. In the annual liturgical cycle all relive the life of Christ, especially at Holy week and Easter. Many Filipinos relive the passion of Jesus Christ, in a form called in the local language *penitensiya* (penitence) to atone for one's sin. An extreme few even flagellate themselves while walking the distance that Jesus walked. According to Beltran (1987: 114-15):

> The flagellants perform this ritual [sometimes using broken pieces of glass embedded on a piece of wood] usually to fulfill a vow. Many do it as an expression of gratitude for favors received, such as the healing of an ailment. Some claim having been told in a dream to lash themselves. Others said it was to take up a vow of relatives who were no longer able to perform the ritual.

Arsenio Añoza, a faith healer who was a self-flagellate, decided to have himself crucified in 1961 on Good Friday. He was the first to be nailed on the cross in the Philippines. He took a vow and had this done from 1961 to 1976. For him, flagellation was not enough to enhance his healing powers. He believed that crucifixion is a means of getting closer to the experience of Christ in his passion, and since it is the "most difficult mortificatory vow to fulfill," then it is most likely to achieve the desired sacred esoteric healing power. After Añoza's retirement, other faith-healers followed him from late 1970s to the present. Then foreigners joined in: a Belgian woman and a Japanese man were crucified in San Pedro, Kutud, Pampanga.[11]

The crucifixion rites became popular and soon it was indorsed by the Philippine Department of Tourism as part of cultural tourism. The soft drink companies came into the picture and various types of food were sold to many tourists, local and foreign so that the solemn mournful Good Friday was turned into a festive occasion. Baker notes that "Unlike in the West, the sacred and the profane often co-exist harmoniously in the Philippines."

Spiritual Healing Using the Baptismal Water. Some of the early Filipinos were converted en masse during the visit of Magellan to the Philippines in what is known as mass baptism because "many Filipinos associated baptism with their own indigenous 'healing rituals', which also rely on the symbolism of holy water—very typical of Southeast Asian societies" (Russell, n.d.). Holy water as defined in the catechism is "water blessed by the priest with solemn prayer to beg God's blessing on those who use it, and protection from the powers of darkness." Easter water is holy water but is "blessed with greater solemnity" on Holy Saturday (see East Lewis…, n.d.). So when Filipinos perform the healing rites, they use the holy water from the Church and sprinkle them to the patients with some prayers.

Water is the symbol for cleansing used in ancient faiths, among the Greeks and Romans, Egyptians, Indians, Jews, and indigenous Filipinos. It is said to have been introduced in Catholic Churches by Pope Alexander I as recommended by St. Matthew during Apostolic times, though this is doubted by others, "to attract converts from Judaism by using a rite with which they were familiar in their former faith" (East Lewis…, n.d. and "Holy water," n.d.).

Cult of the Virgin Mary. The Filipinos venerated the Virgin Mary in various capacities as "a shield against foreign invasion, as a protector during travel, and even as a fertility goddess. Filipino children often called her Mama Mary" (Tope and Nonan-Mercado 1983). The Baclaran Church of the Redemptorist Fathers where the shrine of Our Mother of Perpetual Help is located "has become the mecca for Christian pilgrims from all over the world," because the "novena devotion in the shrine rarely fails to result in the granting of the devotees' petitions" (Buenavista, n.d.).

Devotion to the Virgin Mary is found universally throughout the Philippines in its various cities, municipalities, and provinces. Some of the famous feasts in honor of the Virgin Mary are those of Our Lady of Fatima (13 May) in Valenzuela, Bulacan; Our Lady of Salambao (19 May, see below) in Obando; Our Lady of Caysasay (21 May) in Taal, Batangas; Our Lady of the Abandoned (12 May) in Marikina; Our Lady of Antipolo (or the Nuestra Señora de la Paz y Buen Viaje); Our Lady of the Holy Rosary of La Naval de Manila; and the Virgin of the Poor introduced from Belgium to the Philippines in 1958, among others.

Veneration of Saints. Not only the Virgin Mary, but even the saints are venerated for prayers answered. A patron saint is a person from whom a devotee "claims special protection or prayers" (see Answers.com, n.d.). Here is a quote from Hernandez (1990) on the "Obando fertility rites":

> In prehispanic times, May was…the season for fertility dances. The Catholic Church pragmatically convinced the

> natives to conduct their dances in front of saint's images instead of idols.
>
> In Obando, Bulacan every May 17 to 19 fertility dances are performed in the parish church and then on the streets of the town. The three-day fiesta is celebrated in honor of San Pascual de Baylon, Sta. Clara and Nuestra Señora de Salambao (Our Lady of Salambao). Prayers are offered to the three saints—Sta. Clara is the patron saint of the childless; San Pascual de Baylon is the model of religious virtue; and Our Lady of Salambao is the saint to whom fishermen pray for bountiful catch.
>
> For Santa Clara, the childless dance and the praying for children, the unmarried dance in the hope of finding a mate (with the women and men dancing on separate dates). Parents dance in thanksgiving for finding a mate and for the blessing of children. Fishermen and farmers dance for a good harvest.
>
> According to experts, the dance must be performed with gyrating hips in time to the music and with belief. Many of the town's people join in the dance although they may have no particular petition. One can observe the numerous childless couples, thankful parents, grateful farmers and fishermen dance along the streets together with colorfully costumed women to pray for children and a good harvest. [edited]

The Franciscans brought the images of Santa Clara and San Pascual from Spain but the fishermen Julian and Juan de la Cruz found the image of the Virgen de Salambao (Virgin Mary) in 1793 inside their net (salambao) (see Darang 2005).

Cult of the Child Jesus (Sto. Niño). Images of the adult Jesus are venerated, like the image of the Black Nazarene in Quiapo Church, brought by the Augustinian Recollects from Mexico to the Philippines between the 16th and 17th centuries, and the image of the Crucified Christ (see Beltran 1987:116-18, 122). The image of the Child Jesus, however, is also venerated. Tope and Nonan-Mercado (n.d.) say that "Worshippers bathed images of the Santo Niño, or Holy Child. They clothed the statues with rich brocade, treating the Child Jesus as a princely guest in their homes." They believed the Sto. Niño can help them in times of need and can protect them from danger. The devotion of the Child Jesus in Tondo had a parade with children dancing with merriment. But some "devotees treat their images like spoiled babies," like mannequins, or like favorite pets. Some businessmen display the Santo Niño image side by side with the Buddha image for good luck (Beltran 1987: 120).

Father Ferdinand Dagmang (n.d) describes how a group of people express their devotion to the Santo Niño in Calumpang, Marikina. He says:

> In this ritual, their recognized leader and educator in faith (*Mang Bening*) was believed to be used as a medium by the Santo Niño and sometimes by Jesus and on rare occasions by God the Father. In most of their meetings where the Santo Niño presents himself through *Mang Bening*, healing was the central event where the "God-man encounter" happens. In instances where Jesus appears, there usually is no healing session but a *pangaral*, an exhortation or hortatory message on how to conduct one's life or how to deal with one's *kapwa* (fellow human being).
>
> When God the Father in *Mang Bening* appeared, the setting becomes that of "fear and trembling" where the Father castigates the errant members or the more hard-hearted ones among the group…
>
> …My literature study on the topic led me to the discovery of the pre-Hispanic rituals of *sapi* among native babaylans (or catalonan, baglan, baylanes, mambunong, etc.). These indigenous priestesses (and sometimes priests) of yesteryears were the recognized mediums of *anito* (spirit) worship….
>
> I found out that in pre-Hispanic times religion was healing, and healing was a religious ceremony that the folks usually held in places called *simbahan*, their place of worship….
>
> …In this *sapi* [or langkap, talaytay, suklob, sanib, tungtong] ritual, the babaylan was supposed to be possessed by a benevolent *anito* (spirit) who brings blessings and healing to sick people. Prayers and sacrifices were the normal offerings to the benevolent *anito,* who is supposed to be more powerful than the malevolent ones. Within these ritual-meetings, people would also ask the *anito* in the babaylan other favors, like protection of their crops from locusts or their lives from the dangerous *buwaya* [crocodiles] that inhabit their rivers….
>
> In pre-Hispanic times, some persons would have the experience of being "filled" (possessed) by spirits, sometimes by benevolent ones.[12] In our present context, both the medium and the spirits are Christianized. The spirits are now the saints and the divine persons of the Trinity. [edited]

> Dagmang tries to explain this phenomenon of the *sapi* in a positive light by quoting some Biblical verses. John to Jesus: "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us." Jesus: "Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. Whoever is not against us is for us." (Mk. 9:38-40)

Anting-Anting or Amulets. It is estimated that about 18 percent of the Filipino population are "involved in cults, many of which are quasi-Christian splinter groups" (Baigent, n.d.) The largest group is the Tadtad (see Apologetics Index 1996-2005), so named because "they hack their enemies to death in order to prevent them from attaining a 'second life.' They fight [the] Muslim [secessionists] and/or [the] communists." The Tadtad includes the Catholic God's Spirit group and the Alsa Masa. They perform daily rituals such as prayers, meditation, and magic. They wear *anting-anting* or amulets which they believe protect them from harm, particularly bullets. They spend the rest of their time in farming and other livelihoods.

Their rituals are a mixture of Christian teachings and folklore. Many wore red turbans, others wear all-white attires, and still others wear shirts with magical inscriptions; they carry bolos and knives and "chant prayers over their machetes to make them powerful." If a member is killed by bullets, it means he has not been completely purified through their rituals.

Death and Other Rituals. Indigenous Filipinos are traditionally fond of joyous celebrations. They celebrate rice planting and harvesting through the performance of certain rituals; they also celebrate death anniversaries of ancestors and relatives. These are blended (a kind of syncretism) in such Catholic rites as All Saints' Day, All Souls' Day, and the Fiesta de Mayo.

Every town, city, and barrio of the Philippines celebrates a fiesta in honor of its own patron saint. The introduction of the fiesta has a long history which originally meant saving through contributions for possible calamities. Eventually the funds (formerly in kind and later in money) were used for celebrating fiestas, which drew people to the village center or capital (*cabecera*). According to John Leddy Phelan (EMANILA.com 1998-2005):

> Not only did the fiestas provide a splendid opportunity to indoctrinate the Filipinos by the performance of religious rituals, but they also afforded the participants a welcome holiday from the drudgery of toil.

> The religious processions, dances, music, and theatrical presentation of the fiestas gave the Filipinos a needed outlet for their natural gregariousness. Sacred and profane blended together.

CONCLUSION

Indigenous Filipinos had basically animistic and pagan rituals and practices. The introduction of Roman Catholicism to the archipelago had a Westernizing influence among the people such that they became aware of many of the religious rituals and practices of the West. The successful Hispanic Christianization of many Filipinos was due largely to the Filipino perception that their own rituals and practices, with some modifications, could be blended with those of Catholicism. The emergence of folk Christianity is therefore a happy compromise that ensures the continued survival of Catholicism in the country and the continued manifestation of the natural gregariousness or the native festive spirit of the Filipinos. In other words, folk Catholicism—or the syncretism of the sacred and the profane—is, in general, the Filipino expression of religion as a way of life.[13]

Department of Philosophy
De La Salle University
Manila, Philippines

NOTES

1. Paper read at the University of Indonesia during the International Conference on "Relation between Religions and Cultures in Southeast Asia," held on 27-28 June 2005 and sponsored by the University of Indonesia and the Council of Research for Values and Philosophy. The qualification "Roman" in the title is necessary because there are the United Catholic Church in the United States (Bowman 1997) and the Greek/Eastern Orthodox Church (Petersburg Gospel Center 2005 and Knight 2004). Their origins can be traced to the Roman Church.

2. Dr. Rolando M. Gripaldo is professor of philosophy at De La Salle University, Manila. He is the editor-in-chief of the Filipino *International Journal of Philosophy*, which is abstracted in *The Philosopher's Index*, Bowling Green, Ohio, and the executive-governor of the Philippine National Philosophical Research Society. He has published five books plus more than seventy articles, edited two books, and read myriad papers both domestically and internationally.

3. See in this connection, Jamal Badawi ("Religion and Politics," n.d.): "In Islam, the word 'religion' means a way of life, a way of living that includes all aspects of life, be they spiritual, moral, social, economic, or even political"; Mary T. Begay ("Navajo religion is life and land," n.d.):

"Our way of life is our religion, and our teaching. If we are relocated by force, we will die slowly...In every way, here we are connected to the land. We belong here"; IndiaNest.com (1999-2005): "Hinduism is a way of living according to one's understanding of the principles of the Vedas and the Upanishads" (edited); and Bowhunter (2005): "You don't only act like a Christian when you are in church but when you're out of church too—[m]aking Christianity a way of life. If being a Christian was only going to church and not living your daily life for Christ, then you are not a Christian" (edited).

4. Some may simply identify "religion as a way of life" as spirituality. *Wikipedia* (2005) defines spirituality broadly as "a concern with matters of the spirit....It may include belief in supernatural powers, as in religion, but the emphasis is on personal experience."

5. Ken Palmer (1998-2005) lists 33 sermons and discourses from the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. He also lists 58 parables excluding the parable about John the Baptist, the seaside parables, and the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, which he includes in the sermons and discourses.

6. For a summary of the meaning of the Christian life, see American Life Helping Institute 2005.

7. According to Marty (n.d.), "The term ecumenical (from the Greek *oikoumene*) refers to 'the whole inhabited world,' but in the history of Christianity it has come to refer to efforts to bring together Christians." Hall (n.d.), on the other hand, says that the pope has the "inherent authority to declare a council ecumenical" in view of the existence of various local or regional councils.

8. This interpretation has been challenged by some Filipino historians. They claim that the first mass was not in Limasawa island but in Mazawa (or Masao), a village in what is now known as Magallanes in Butuan City, Mindanao (see Borrinaga 2003 and de Jesus, n.d I have read the debate on this matter from other sources, and I am more inclined to believe that the first mass was in Mazawa rather than in Limasawa.

9. The Vatican has prohibited clerics from holding elected office. Some secularizing orientations in Catholic countries in Europe such as Spain, France, and Italy as well as some Protestant countries such as Germany and Great Britain go further toward disenfranchising any religious voice with regard to government decisions (Dunphy 2005).

10. The El Sheddai (God Almighty) group of Catholics held masses at the Luneta and these are televised. Many large buildings such as the Government Service Insurance System and even malls held masses from 1200 to 1300 HRS. There are also many Protestant groups, which discuss Biblical passages in radio and television stations. But most of these reach only the urban areas and an unclear listership among the masses and the urban poor.

11. When it turned out later that the Japanese, Shinichiro Kaneko, was a "pornographic actor specializing in sado-masochistic roles," foreigners in 1997 were prohibited from undergoing crucifixion in San Pedro, Kutud.

12. Mercado (1997:21) calls this ancient practice shamanism and the shaman is the specialist who "enters into a controlled ASC [altered state of consciousness] on behalf of his community." He makes diagnoses through omens and heals. Shamans claim to see good and evil spirits and souls.

13. One may describe folk Catholicism as a manifestation of what Bulatao (1966:1-16) calls "split-level Christianity."

REFERENCES

Aburrow, Yvonne. N.d. *Paganism and polytheism*. Available at http://www31.brinkster.com/ yewtree/articles/paganism.htm. Accessed: 20 April 2005.

Agoncillo, Teodoro and Milagros Guerrero. 1983. *History of the Filipino people*, 5th ed., 18th printing. Quezon City: R. P. Garcia Publishing Co.

American Life Helping Institute. 2005. *The meaning of life according to Christ*. Available at http://www.meaning-of-life.info/TeachingsofChrist.html. Accessed: 12 April 2005.

Answers.com. N.d. Available at http://www.answers.com/topic/patron-saint. Accessed: 9 May 2005.

Apologetics Index. 1996-2005. *Tadtad*. Available at http://www.apologeticsindex.org/t16.html. Accessed: 7 May 2005.

Bacani, Teodoro C. 1987. *The Church and politics*. Quezon City: Claretian Publications.

Badawi, Jamal. N.d. *Religion and politics*. Available at http://www.islamonline.net/English/ introducingislam/politics/article03.shtml. Accessed: 11 April 2005.

Baigent. N.d. *Folk Christianity*. Available at http://www.us.omf.org/content.asp?id=9289. Accessed: 7 May 2005.

Baker, Nicholas H. N.d. *Modern day crucifixion in the Philippines*. Available at http://www.wildcat.co.uk/text/crucifixion_txt.htm. Accessed: 10 May 2005.

Blank, Wayne. N.d. *The origin of baptism*. Available at http://www.keyway.ca/htm2003/ 20031106.htm. Accessed: 9 May 2005.

Begay, Mary T. N.d. *Navajo religion is life and land.* Available at http://www.xpressweb.com/ zionpark/index3.html. Accessed: 11 April 2005.

Beltran, Benigno P., SVD. 1987. *The Christology of the inarticulate: An inquiry into the Filipino understanding of Jesus the Christ*. Manila: Divine Word Publications.

Bertens, Kess, MSC. 1999. Recent discussion in Indonesia about abortion. In *Impact of high technology on health care*. *Forum in Bioethics 6*. Manila: University of Santo Tomas.

Borrinaga, Rolando O. 2003. Continuing controversy. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 18 January.

Bowhunter. 2005. In *Catholicism is the only true Christianity*…By Aycan Gulez. Available at http://www.perspectives.com/forums/forum70/26743-10.html. Accessed: 11 April 2005.

Bowman, Robert M. 1997. *What does it mean to be "Catholic"?* Available at http://www.rmbowman. com/catholic/unity.htm. Accessed: 12 April 2005.

Buenavista, Alberto and the KaiZak Center. N.d. *Places: Baclaran (Redemptorist) Church*. Available at http://www.geocities.com/palanyag/places.html. Accessed: 12 May 2005.

Bulatao, Jaime, SJ. 1966. *Split-level Christianity*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University.

CBCP (Catholic Bishop's Conference of the Philippines). 1997. *Catechism for Filipino Catholics*. Manila: ECCE and Word and Life Publications.

Cloud, David W. 1995. *The new Catholic catechism*. Available at http://www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/Cults/Catholicism/catechism.htm. Accessed: 12 April 2005.

"Culture defined": A recent etymology of the word "culture." N.d. Available at http://imej.wfu.edu/articles/1999/1/02/demo/gallery/Literary/defcult.html. Accessed: 20 April 2005.

Culture: Everything, we as people are. N.d. Available at http://www.stanford.edu/~hakuta/E_CLAD/sfusd_cult_03/melissa/Culture%20efined.htm. Accessed: 20 April 2005.

Dagmang, Ferdinand. N.d. *Devotion to the Santo Niño of Calumpang, revisited*. Available at http://eapi.admu.edu.ph/eapr95/dagmang.htm. Accessed: 7 May 2005.

Darang, Josephine. 2005. Purely personal: Obando dance honors three saints. *Inquirer News Service.* Available at http://news.inq7.net/mobile/html_output/20050508-36326.xml.html. Accessed: 9 May 2005.

De Jesus, Vicente. N.d. *Mazaua: Magellan's lost harbor*. Available at http://firstcircumnavigator. tripod.com/Mazaua.htm. Accessed: 13 May 2005.

De Mesa, Jose M. 1991. *In solidarity with the culture: Studies in theological re-rooting*. Quezon City: Maryhill School of Theology.

Dioquino, Corazon C. 2002. *Folk traditions. Manila: National Commission for Culture and the Arts.* Available at http://www.ncca.gov.ph/cultur&arts/cularts/arts/music/music-folktrad.htm. Accessed: 7 May 2005.

Dunphy, Harry. 2005. Spaniards want religious leaders to stay out of government decisions. *Manila Bulletin*, 8 June.

East Lewis County Catholic Community. N.d. *Holy water.* Available at http://landru.i-link2.net/shnyves/holy_water2.htm. Accessed: 11 May 2005.

EMANILA.com. 1998-2005. Philippine fiestas: The old and the new. Available at http://emanila.com/pilipino/history/index.php?subaction=showfull&id=1080096387&archive=&start_from=&ucat=2&. Accessed: 11 May 2005.

Flores, Patrick. 2002. *Suffering colonialism: Modernity as sacrifice and salvation in Philippine colonial painting*. National Commission for Culture and the Arts. Available at http://www.ncca.gov.ph/cultureandarts/perspectives/colonialpaintingPflores.htm. Accessed: 7 May 2005.

Gonzalez III, Joaquin L. N.d. *Christianity returns to America.* Available at http://www.usfca.edu/ TRIP/Gonzalez.pdf. Accessed: 12 April 2005.

Gov.ph. 2005. *About the Philippines*. Available at http://www.gov.ph/aboutphil/general.asp. Accessed: 12 April 2005.

Gudykunst, W. B. and Y. Y. Kim. 1992. *Communicating with strangers*, 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Hall, J. H. N.d. *Ecumenical councils*. Available at http://mb-soft.com/believe/txs/councils.htm. Accessed: 12 April 2005.

Hefner, Alan G. and Virgilio Guimaraes. N.d. *Animism*. Avaialble at http://www.themystica.com/ mystica/articles/a/animism.htm. Accessed: 20 April 2005.

Holy water. N.d. Available at http://www.kensmen.com/catholic/water.html. Accessed: 11 May 2005.

IndiaNest.com. 1999-2005. *Hinduism*. Available at http://www.boloji.com/hinduism. Accessed: 1 April 2005.

Infomedia, Inc. 2004. *Ecumenical council.* Available at http://encyclopedia.lockergnome. com/s/b/Ecumenical_council. Accessed: 12 April 2005.

Jubair, Salah. 2004. *A nation under endless tyranny*. Available at http:/www.moroinfo.com/ch1_ onceuponatimeprint.html. Accessed: 12 April 2005.

Khalifahp. N.d. *The arrival of Islam in the region and the formation of the Muslim Sultanate of Mindanao and Sultanate of Sulu.* Available at http://islamic–world.net/khalifah/ kahlifahp.htm. Accessed: 12 April 2005.

King, Jenny. 2002. *World's religions*. N.p.: Worldlink Marketing Corporation.

Knight, K. 2004. Eastern churches. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* 5 (1909). Available at http://www. newadvent.org/cathen/05230a.htm. Accessed: 12 April 2005.

Leyson, Jose Florante J. N.d. The Philippines. *International Encyclopedia of Sexuality*: Philippines. Available at http://www2.hu-berlin.de/sexology/IES/philippines.html.Accessed: 12 April 2005.

Marett, Robert Ranulph. 1909. *The threshold of religion*. London. Methuen.

Marty, Martin E. N.d. Ecumenical Church councils: Including the Roman Catholic Listing. Avaialbe at http://mb-soft.com/believe/txs/councils.htm. Accessed: 12 April 2005.

McBrien, Richard P. 2001. The veneration of saints. Available at http://www.the-tidings.com/2001/0810/essays.htm. Accessed: 9 May 2005.

Mercado, Leonardo N., SVD. 1997. Philippine shamanism and inculturation. In *Doing Filipino theology*. Manila: Divine Word Publications.

_____. 2004. Church-state relation and Filipino philosophy*: Philosophia: International Journal of Philosophy* 33(2).

Miller, Jack. 1982. Religion in the Philippines. *Focus on Asian Studies 2 (1*).

Miravalle, Mark. 2003. *What is devotion to Mary?* Available at http://www.chnetwork.org/ journals/mary/mary_4htm. Accessed 9 May 2005.

O'Connell, Lisa and Amanda Singer. 1999. *Paganism: Mysteries revealed*. Avaialble at http://library.thinkquest.org/28111. Accessed: 20 April 2005.

Palmer, Ken. 1998-2005. *Teachings of Jesus Christ*. Available at http://www.lifeofchrist.com/ teachings. Accessed: 12 April 2005.

Pannikar, Raymundo. 1973. *Worship and secular man*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd.

Perry, Richard. 2003. *The elementary teachings about Christ*. Available at http://www.lastdays mystery.info/elementary_teachings_about_christ.htm. Accessed: 12 April 2005.

Petersburg Gospel Center. 2005. *Orthodox (Eastern).* Available at http://www.gospelcenterchurch.org/OrthodoxEastern.html. Accessed: 12 April 2005.

Rausch, D. A. N.d. *Ecumenical church councils: Including the Roman Catholic listing*. Available at http://mb-soft.com/believe/txs/councils.htm. Accessed: 12 April 2005.

Religious groups in the Philippines. N.d. Available at http://www.seasite.niu.edu/Tagalog/Modules/Modules/PhilippineReligious/religious_lgroups.htm. Accessed: 12 April 2005.

Roman Catholicism natural family planning. N.d. Available at http://catholicism.about.com/cs/nfp/a/nfp91002.htm. Accessed: 25 June 2005.

Russell, Susan. N.d. *Christianity in the Philippines*. Available at http://www.seasite.niu.edu./ crossroads/russell/christianity.htm. Accessed: 11 May 2005.

Samovar, L. A. and R. E. Porter. 1994. *Intercultural communication: A reader*, 7th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Shapiro, Lara. N.d. *Religion and the supernatural*. Available at http://www.butte.cc.ca.us/~wmwu/inclass_essays/religion_and_the_supernatural.htm.Accessed: 11 April 2005.

Tope, Lily Rose R. and Detch P. Nonan-Mercado. 1983. *Folk Christianity*. Available at http://www.filipinoheritage.com/religion/folk_christianity.htm. Accessed: 7 May

Tylor, Edward B. 1874. *Primitive culture*. New York: Henry Holt & Co.

Wikipedia. 2005. *Spirituality*. Available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spirituality. Accessed: 14 May 2005.

Zaide, Gregorio F. 1937. *Catholicism in the Philippines*. Manila: Far Eastern University.

CHAPTER XI

READING RUMI WITHIN THE INDONESIAN CONTEXT

MULYADHI KARTANEGARA

Although Rumi has been viewed by scholars as "the most eminent poet whom Persia has produced," or as "the greatest mystical poet of Islam," [1] and that according to Prof. Annemarie Schimmel, "No other Islamic poet and mystic is known so well in the West as he is," [2] still, in Indonesia, Rumi is not so well known. Only very recently when some Indonesian scholars translated several of Rumi's original works, especially *The Mathnavi* and *Fihi Ma Fihi*,[3] and some secondary works on Rumi by Western scholars, such as William Chittick and Annemarie Schimmel,[4] did Indonesian readers know Rumi much better. [5] As for Indonesians themselves, there have been only a few scholars who wrote specifically on Rumi and his teachings,[6] and translated Rumi's other works into Indonesian (in most cases not directly from Persian).

---

[1] See William Chittick, *The Sufi Doctrine of Rumi: An Introduction* (Tehran: Aryamehr University Press, 1974), p. 10.

[2] Annemarie Schimmel at the Conference on Rumi held at the University of California, Los Angeles, April 1987.

[3] The whole Mathnawi has been trnaslated into Indonesian by Anand Krishna, and published by Gramedia, jakarta. While "Fihi Ma Fihi" was translated from an English version (Arberry) by Ribut Wahyudi S. Pd with the title *"Inilah Apa Yang Sesungguhnya*" and published by Risalah Gusti, Surabaya, 2002.

[4] William Chittick book, *The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi* and Annemarie Schimmel's *I am Wind You Are Fire* (The Life and Works of Rumi) were already translated into Indonesian.

[5] As an Indonesian, I see that Rumi is better known and appreciated now. Anand Krishna and his group, for example, have performed Mawlavi "whirling" dance regularly in his own center, sometimes the dance performed publicly. Even our Sheykh Kebir Helminski, the spiritual guide of the Mawlawi order, has visited Indonesia several times, and he will visit Indonesia again regularly. Therefore we can see that Rumi's influence is getting bigger and more substantial.

[6] In 1983 I wrote on Rumi as a BA paper, entitled *Berlian dari Negeri Rum*, and later published as a book, entitled *Renungan Mistik Jalal ad-Din Rumi*, by Pustaka Jaya, Jakarta, 1986. And in 1989, I rewrote this work for my master's thesis at The University of Chicago entitled *The Mystical Reflections of Rumi*, now being prepared by Teraju publisher for publication.

As one who has once studied Rumi's teachings, I came to realize that many of his mystical doctrines and practical wisdom, taken from real life, are very important for Indonesian people to understand and quite relevant to the current situation of this country facing many ethnico-religious and political problems. It is for these reasons that I am pleased to present in this seminar some relevant topics, such as: (1) the rehabilitation of Sufi's image, which has been so negatively conceptualized by some of Indonesians as *bid'ah* (heresy), escapism, and a self-centred search for salvation; (2) The reformulation of the concept of *taqdir*, which has been so long viewed fatalistically as predestination. Here, Rumi is to offer a progreesive concept of *taqdir* more suitable to the challanges and demands of the modern ages; and (3) the transcendent Unity of religions, needed badly not only by Indonesians, facing many ethnical and religious problems, but also, I believe, by the world society, searching for real solutions for current global crises and problems, in view to building a globally peaceful and harmonious society. In order to know who Rumi was, however, I would like to present, before these very interesting topics, a glimpse of his life and works.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Rumi's original name was Jalal al-Din Muhammad, but he was later known as Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi, or simply Rumi. He was born in Balkh on September 30, 1207 AD.[7] He belonged to a royal family, since his grandfather Jalal al-Din al-Khatibi married 'Ala' al-Din Muhammad Khwarizimshah's daughter, princess Malika-i Jehan, who gave birth to Muhammad Baha' al-Din Walad, Rumi's father. Baha' al-Din Walad was of great learning and piety, an eloquent preacher and distinguished professor. He was a Sunni scholar, who held orthodox opinions and exhibited anti-rationalist tendencies.

In about 1219, Baha', together with his family and few friends, quietly quit his native city, Balkh, to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, knowing that he would probably never return. The first city he visited was Nishapur, where, according to a legend, he met Farid al-Din 'Attar, a noted poet, who presented him with a copy of his "Asrar-nameh" (the Book of Mysteries). He told Baha' that his son, Rumi, would soon be kindling fire in all the world's lovers of God.[8] He was also met by the great Shaykh Shihab al-Din 'Umar Suhrawardi, another eminent Sufi there.

From Nishapur he went to Baghdad, where he recieved the tragic news of the siege of Balkh, of its capture, and of its complete destruction by

---

[7] See Afzal Iqbal, *Life and Works of Muhammad Jalal-ud-Din Rumi* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1974).

[8] William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi* (Albany: State University of New York, 1983), p. 2.

Jengis Khan. In 1220 Baha went from Baghdad to Mecca, performed the pilgrimage there, proceeded thence to Damascus, and to Malatiya (Melitene). From Malatiya he went to Arzinjan (Armenia), and then to Zaranda, about forty miles southeast of Konya, where he and his family lived for four years. It was here, in the city of Zaranda, that Rumi married a young lady by the name of Jawhar Khatun, a daughter of Lala Sharaf al-Din of Samarqand, in 1225.

Now, the city where they lived at that time belonged to the Seljuk dynasty. The reigning ruler, 'Ala' al-Din Kayqubad, invited Baha' and his family to Konya, the capital city of the Western Seljuk empire, immediately after having heard of Baha' al-Din's arrival at Zaranda. Baha' al-Din accepted the invitation, and moved with his family to Konya in 1228. Baha' was an eminent theologian and a great teacher and preacher, and later he became the spiritual guide for the Sultan. It was for this reason that he recieved the honorific title "Sultan al-'Ulama'" (the King of Men of Knowledge).[9] Baha' al-Din died here in 1230.

After the death of Baha', Rumi took over his father's position as the advisor to the scholars of Konya and to his father's disciples. Impressed by his profundity of knowledge and the vastness of his experience, Badr al-Din Gohartash, the Sultan's teacher, built for Rumi a college called Madrasa-i Khudavandgar, where he taught and preached to the people.[10] Along with his former teacher, Burhan al-Din's advice, Rumi continued his education at Aleppo, where he stayed at the Madrasa Halawiya and received further instructions from Kamal al-Din b. Al-'Adim. From Aleppo Rumi moved to Damascus and lived at the Madrasa Maqdisiya. Here, he met such great figures as Muhy al-Din Ibn 'Arabi, Sa'ad al-Din al-Hamawi, 'Uthman al-Rumi, Awhad al-Din al-Kirmani, and Sadr al-Din al-Qunyawi.

In 1236 Rumi came back to Konya and continued to teach at Madrasa-i Khudavandgar, where about 400 students attended his lectures, winning special attention from kings, princes as well as waziers. For many years Rumi had enjoyed his fame and occupied a highly respected position as a leader and scholar of Islamic sciences in Konya, up to the moment when the most decisive event in his entire life took place: his encounter with a mysterious dervish, Shams al-Din of Tabriz, who came to the city as an old man of sixty in 1244.[11]

So powerful was the enchantment of Sham's personality that Rumi chose to give up his activities as a professional teacher and preacher, only in order to strengthen his bond with the dervish. For some time they were inseparable. This relationship, however, brought about the anger and envy

---

[9] Ibid., p. 2

[10] 'Ali Nadwi, *Rijal al-Fikr wa'i-Da'wah fi'l-Islam* (Damascus: Maktab Dar al-Fath, 1965), p. 256.

[11] See Aflaki, *The Legends og the Sufis* (Manaqib al-'Arifin) Adyar, India, Wheaton, Illinois: The Theosophical Publishing House Ltd., 1977), p. 20.

of Rumi's disciples, who were entirely cut off from their master's guidance and conversation. As a result, they assailed "the intruder" with abuse and threats of violence. This unfriendly atmosphere was soon sensed by Shams, and so he left Rumi, after having lived in Konya for sixteen months, for Damascus.

This separation was so painful for Rumi and afflicted his feeling so deeply, that he sent his son, Sultan Walad to beg Shams to come back to Konya. Rumi was happy when finally Shams came back to Konya. These two men became so deeply absorbed in their profound conversations that Rumi's love for his master increased dramatically. So what had happened before was to repeat, and Rumi's disciples became angry and jealous again and hated Shams so much. This dangerous situation caused Shams to take refuge once more in Damascus. But this time he never came back. Rumi finally decided to go to Damascus himself to find his beloved master. He, however, never made it, and finally came back to Konya without Shams.

Soon after he came back from Damascus, Rumi established his own order (*tariqa*), called Mawlawi, a name taken from the honorary address "Mawlana" (Our Master) which was given by his disciples to their beloved Master, Rumi. But not long after, Rumi's health deteriorated and he soon became ill. On Sunday December 16, 1273 Mawlana Rumi finally passed away as the sun went down at Konya.[12]

Rumi left for us some great and beautiful works.. Among them are: (1) "Maqalat-i Shams-i Tabriz" (The Discourse od Shams of Tabriz), containing some mystical dialogues betwen Shams al-Din as the master and Rumi as the disciple. (2) "Divan-i Shams-i Tabriz" (The Mystical Odes of Shams of Tabriz), consisting of about 2,500 mystical odes; (3) his magnus opus "Mathnawi Ma'nawi" (The Mathnawi of Jalal al-Din Rumi), a long poem of about 25.000 rhyming couplets, divided into six books; (4) "Fihi ma fihi" (Discourse of Rumi), the only main prose works consisting of Rumi's sayings as taken down by his eldest son, Sultan Walad, and finally (5) "The Ruba'iyyat" (The Quatrains of Rumi), comprising about 1, 600 authentic quatrains. It contains Rumi's ideas on different themes in Sufism, such as resignation, selflessness, love, faith, reason and union.[13]

THE REHABILITAION OF THE IMAGE OF SUFISM

Sufism (*tasawwuf*), as the spiritual aspect of Islam, has long been suspected and misunderstood as, (1) *bid'ah* (heresy) which undermines Islam from within and misleads the Umma from the true understanding of Islam. Of course, they have based their suspicion on historical information, involving many mysterious utterances (*shatahat*) from the Sufis. In the past,

[12] See Aflaki, *The Legends of the Sufis*, p. 86.

[13] See the Introduction to Rumi, *Ruba'iyyat of Jalal al-Din Rumi*, selected and translated by Arberry (London: Emery Walker, Ltd.,, 1949), pp. Xxv-vi.

we have known the extremely famous case of al-Hallaj, who was executed for this very utterance Ana al-Haqq (I am the creative Truth), meaning I am God.[14] In Indonesia a similar case also took place in the case of Shaykh Siti Jenar (the sixteen century mysterious mystic), who was also executed by the council of Walis (Dewan Wali) for his mystical doctrine, *Manunggaling Kawulo lan Gusti*, implying "his mystical union with God."[15] Most of Indonesian modernists, especially those who follow the Wahabi movement, do not like Sufism and consider it as a misleading doctrine (*bid'a*) and therefore to be avoided.

Second, *tasawwuf* has also been misunderstood as escapism, meaning having a tendency to "escape from the realities of life by absorbing his mind in entertainment or fantasy."[16] Of course, this attribution has been related to the Sufi's doctrine of *zuhd* (asceticism), a doctrine that teaches us not to be so tightly attached to this worldly life (*dunya*), so that its allurment does not make us forget God, the Creator. While *zuhd* can be conceived also as a mental act, the critics of Sufism considered it to be the retreat from the physical world, that is from social life, and to live fully a hermit life. This kind of criticism is still persistent.

The third negative image of Sufism is when *tasawwuf* is identified with poverty (*faqr*) and backwardness. Of course we know, in tasawwuf, the concept of poverty (*faqr*). But this does not necessarily means material poverty. Instead, this should be understood as the awareness that we, human beings, are poor and needy (faqir); and only God is self-sufficient (*al-Ghani*). But still, the critics of Sufism have taken only its literal meaning and associated Sufism with poverty, backwardness and weakness.

Now, after some reflections on Rumi's teachings, I am fully aware that Rumi can very well be rehabilitate, through his teachings and practical wisdoms, the distorted image of Sufism. First, to the accusation that *tasawwuf* is a *bid'a*, Rumi says that *tasawwuf* is not *bid'a*, but the very essence of Islamic religion. It is the spirituality of Islam. The Mawlana refers to his Mathnawi as "the roots of the roots of the roots of (Islamic) religion in respect of its unveiling the mysteries of attainment to the truth." As the roots or essence of religion, Sufism cannot be, by its very nature,viewed clearly by all poeple, and hence their misunderstandings thereof. One of the most commonly misunderstood is Abu Mansur al-Hallaj's utterance, "*Ana al-Haqq*" (I am the creative Truth) or I am God. This utterance has been for so long misunderstood as Sufi's arrogance,

---

[14] For the information on the process of al-Hallaj's execution, see Carl W. Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism* (Albany: State University of New York, 1985, pp. 63-72.

[15] As for the execution of Sheykh Siti Jenar, see Abdul Munir Mulkan, *Syekh Siti Jenar: Pergumulan Islam-Jawa* (Yogyakarta: Bentang, 2000), h. 163-182.

[16] See Oxford American Dictionary, ed. Eugene Ehrlich (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 217.

since the Sufi here claims to be God or like God. Rumi, however, has his own interpretation of it. Instead of being arrogant, this utterance, according to him, is the expession of humbleness from the Sufi side. In his "Fihi ma Fihi," Rumi states:

> This is what is signified by the words Ana al-Haqq, "I am God." People imagine that this is a presumptious claim, whereas it is really a presumptuous claim to say Ana al-'Abd, "I am the slave of God." And Ana al-Haqq, "I am God" is an expression of great humility." The man who says Ana al-'Abd, I am the slave of God" affirms two existences, his own and God's," but he who says Ana al-Haqq, "I am God" has made himself non-existent and has given himself up and says "I am God", i.e. I am naught, He is All; There is no being but God's." This is the extreme of humility and self-abasement.[17]

Therefore, only God who has real existence, not the others, nor even the slave of God.

As for another accusation, that Sufism is equal to escapism, this can be easily counterbalanced by the fact, that Rumi, a great Sufi of any age, has lived from very early in his life at a royal palace at Konya. Far from being a hermit, Rumi lived a normal life, having wives and children. This fact by itself indicates that to live a hermit life is not at all an absolute condition to be a Sufi. Rumi, who lived his entire life in a palace, still became a great and famous Sufi. Rumi, through this practice, was actually a very effective critic of the so-called negative Sufism.

Not only did the practical wisdom of his life, but also his calls for "self-assertion" in a social life become a very powerful answer to the all these negative impressions of Sufism. According to him, the ultimate bliss cannot be achieived individually. It should be a common enterprise by working hard in real life. Of course, we should admit that most of the Sufis did not have the good fortune of Rumi. Some of them lived a very humble life. But also it is the undeniable fact that many Sufis lived a normal life and actively participated both in social-cultural and even political life.

As for the accusation and negative image of Sufism as identical with poverty, Rumi provided a very effective answer.. The fact that he lived in a royal palace, can become clear evidence that Sufi is not identical with material poverty. In real life, Rumi possessed everything he needed: goods, family, knowledge, dignity, etc. With all these he taught us that Sufi is not identical with poverty, and the like. Instead, he showed us otherwise.The negative image of the Sufi as a weak man, and Sufism with

---

[17] Nicholson, *Rumi Poet and Mystic* (New York: Samuel Weiser, 1974), p. 184.

feebleness and helplessness, can be very countered by the imageries Rumi has built for the Sufi. Rumi identifies the real Sufi—the man of God or the perfect man, with the universal intellect (*al-'aql al-kulli*) and the manager or administrator (*mudabbir*) of the world.[18] To emphasize his spiritual strength, Rumi compares him with a hunting lion, on whom all other beasts depend. Rumi calls the perfect Sufi the *qutb* (the pole). Describing this Rumi says:

The *Qutb* is (like) the lion: and it is his business to hunt: (all) the rest (namely), these people (of the world), eat his leavings.

So far as you can, endeavor to satisfy the *Qutb*, so that you may gain strength and hunt the wild beast.[19]

In another place Rumi used another image for the real Sufi: a falcon, a very strong bird, "who alone knows the return way to the King." The imageries he used to describe the real Sufi show us clearly that a Sufi should be a strong, durable and mighty man, not the opposite, such as described by those who misunderstood it. The teachings of Rumi and his practical wisdoms, therefore, can very well rehabilitate the ill-defined image of Sufism and restore it to its proper and lofty one.

RUMI'S CONCEPT OF TAQDIR AND FREE CHOICE

In addition to the rehabilitation of the image of Sufism, Rumi also reformed the concept of *taqdir*—together with *tawakkul* dan free will—and updated it, so that it became more suitable to the challanges and demands of our age. In Indonesia, and, I believe, also in many other Muslim countries, *taqdir* has been commonly conceived as predestination or predeterminism, a view that "everything in this world—including human's acts—has been predetermined by God. Therefore, our situation is just like that of a puppet, which is entirely depend on the puppet player's will. According to them, we basically just undergo everything that has been programmed by God. Only because we do not know what is going to happen in the future that we should strive for our life, but in reality everything has been predetermined by Him. This is, of course, a fatalistic concept of *taqdir* and human acts, in which there is no place whatsoever for human freedom. People usually say, "We just make a plan, but it is God who really determines the result."[20]

If we carefully read Rumi's works, however, we will soon find out that it is precisely this fatalistic concept of *taqdir* that Rumi criticized very convincingly, and as an alternative he offered his own concept, a very progessive one, indeed. To reform this long misunderstood concept of

---

[18] Rumi, *The Mathnawi of Jalal al-Din Rumi*, vol. V, translated by Nicholson (London: Luzac & Co., Ltd., 1968), p. 141.

[19] *Ibid*.

[20] This saying is very common, spoken especially when someone did not succed in achieving his goal.

taqdir, Rumi felt constrained first to refine the concept of *tawakkul*, conceived as a total surrender to God's will, then to prove logically the existence of human free will or free choice, and finally to present his own concept of *taqdir* as "the law of life." Let us begin with the first, on *tawakkul*. His concept of *tawakkul* can be seen quite clearly from the following verses:

> The party of beasts said to the Lion: There is no work better than trust in God (tawakkul): What indeed is dearer to God than resignation?
>
> Often do we flee from affliction (only) to (fall into) afflictions: recoil from the snake (only) to (meet) the dragon...
>
> 'Yes,' said the Lion: But the Lord of his servants set a ladder before our feet.'
>
> Step by step we must climb towards the roof: to be necessarian here is (to indulge) foolish hopes.
>
> You have feet: why do you make yourself out to be lame? You have hands: why do you conceal the fingers (whereby you grasp)?
>
> When the master put a spade in the slave's hand, his object was made known to him (the slave) without (a word falling from his) tongue...[21]

From here we could see clearly that according to Mawlana Rumi human beings cannot just be idle, without doing anything. Man should, instead, work hard and keep doing something with all the facillities God has given to him, such as hands, feet, seses, reason, mind and heart. Rumi says, "If you are putting trust in God, put trust (in Him) with your work: sow (the seed), then rely upon the Almighty."[22]

The second effort that Rumi tries to make for this reform is to prove logically that human beings do have the freedom of choice or free will. For Rumi, man is indeed free to make his own choice. If he is not free, how can he say, "Tomorrow I will do this or I will do that? Why should he feel guilty after having committed an evil act, and, if everything was predetermined from beginning to end, why is the entire Qur'an full of commands and prohibitions?[23]

Rumi looks upon free will positively as the endeavor to thank God for His beneficence. Free will is, indeed, the 'trust" (*amana)* that God bestowed upon man, with respect of which man is continually put on trial. As the reflection of God's attributes, man shares His free will to a certain extent. For, "If none but God has the power of choice, why do you become angry with one who committed an offense (against you)?" For Rumi, the anger within us is but a clear demonstration of the existence of a power of choice in man. He argues that even animals can recognize the freedom of

---

[21] Rumi, *The Mathnawi*, vol. I, p. 53.
[22] *Ibid*.
[23] Rumi, *The Mathnawi*, vol. V, p. 182.

choice in man. "If camel-driver goes on striking a camel, Rumi says, "the camel will attack the striker. The camel's anger is not (directed) against his stick: Therefore, the camel has got some notion of the power of choice (in man)."

After proving the existence of the power of choice in man, Rumi was to offer a very progessive concept of *taqdir*. For Rumi *taqdir* does not mean that the fate of individuals was predetermined, but rather that taqdir is the law of life, which will never change. According Khalifa 'Abd al-Hakim,

> What is called taqdir, for Rumi, is only another name for the law of life, and obviously no law can be law unless it is free from possibility of change or repeal. It is true, that destiny is immutable, and the law of God cannot be changed. And the law of God is that if you steal, you and the society you belong to shall be exposed to certain consequences: and if you speak the truth, certain beneficial effects will follow. God does not compel anyone to steal, tell lies or speak the truth. Actions proceed from free choice, but their consequences are predetermined.[24]

With this, Rumi thus was able to resolve the problem of *taqdir* which had troubled the Muslim society, including the people of Indonesia, for so long. He criticized the misleading notion of taqdir held by the Necessitarians (*Jabariyya*) and substitued for it a dynamic one.

THE TRANSCENDENT UNITY OF RELIGION

The last of Rumi's ideas, which for me is very relevant to the people of Indonesia, facing many ethnic and religious problems, is his concept of the transcendent unity of religion. This idea is very relevant to, and in reality needed by, a country like Indonesia, having so many different ethnicities, cultures, languages, and, above all, religions. Sometimes, this diversity brings about many benefits, but very often has also created many problems and conflicts, such as those happening in several places in Eastern parts of Indonesia, especially in Ambon and in Poso, South Sulawesi.

Like other Sufis, Rumi believes in the transcendent unity of religions and sees that controversies between adherents of religions have occurred because they looked only at the external form of religion and not at its meaning (essence). They were deeply bound with the formal and traditional outlook which sees other religions in part, and consequently it does not allow a vision of the essential unity of all religions. In his famous

[24] Khalifa A. Hakim, *Iqbal as the Thinker* (Lahore: The Institute of Islamic Culture, 1959), p. 166.

story of the elephant in the dark house, Rumi tries to show how narrow-minded people try in vain to describe the essence of their religions.[25]

It is clear, therefore, that as long as we are not able to see the meaning of religion comprehensively and understand it instead in its narrow sense, disputation will arise. The settlement to the disputation can be achieved, according to Rumi, only if we can see the transcendent unity of their ultimate goal. In his "Fihi Ma Fihi," he elaborates this further:

> I was speaking one day amongst a group of people, and a party of non-muslims were present. In the middle of my address they began to weep and to register emotion and ecstasy.
>
> Someone asked: "What do they understand and what do they know? Only one Muslim in a thousand understands this kind of talk. What did they understand, that they should weep?
>
> The master answered: It is not necessary that they should understand the inner spirit of these words. The root of the matter is the words themselves, and they do understand. After all, everyone acknowledges the Oneness of God, that He is the Creator and Provider, that He controls everything, that to Him all things should return...
>
> Though the ways are various, the goal is one. Do you not see that there are many roads to the Ka'ba? For some the road is from Rum, for some from Syria, for some from Persia, for some from China, for some by sea from India and Yemen. So if you consider the roads, the variety is great and divergence infinite; but when you consider the goal, they are all of one accord and one. The hearts of all are at one upon the Ka'ba. The hearts have one attachment, an ardour and a great love for the Ka'ba, and in that there is no room for contrariety. That attachment is neither infidelity nor faith; that is to say, that attachment is not compound with the various roads which we have mentioned. Once they arrived at the Ka'ba, it is realized that warfare was concerning the road only, and their goal was one.[26]

In another place, Rumi traies to show how religions differ only on the surface. It is only the matter of naming things, not the essence behind

---

[25] For the story of the elephant in the dark room, see Rumi, The Mathnawi, vol. III, pp. 71-72.

[26] Rumi*, The Discourse of Rumi* (Fihi Ma Fihi), translated by A.J. Arberry ((New York: Samuel Weiser, 1977), pp. 108-9

the names. And disputation will end only when we gain a comprehensive picture of them.

> Four people were given a piece of money.
> The first was a Persian. He said: "'I will buy with this some angur.'
> The second was an Arab. He said: 'No, bacause I want 'inab.'
> The third was a Turk. He said: 'I don't want 'inab, I want uzum
> The fourth was a Greek. He said: 'I want stafil.'
> Because they did not know what lay behind the names of things, these four started to fight. They had information but not knowledge.
> One man of wisdom present could have reconciled them all, saying: 'I can fulfill the needs of all of you, with one and the same piece of money.
> If you honestly give your trust, your one coin will become as four; and four at odds will become as one united.'
> Such a man would know that each in his own language wanted the same thing, grapes.[27]

It is therefore the understanding of the essence of one's religion which is very important, not just its external form. And it is through the understanding of the essence of religions that the conflicts between them could be effectively reduced or even solved.

Islamic Philosophy
Pramadina Islamic University
Jakarta, Indoensia

[27] Idries Shah, *The Way of the Sufi* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1969), p. 103.

CHAPTER XII

RELIGION AND POPULAR IMAGINATION: ISLAM IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIAN CULTURE[1]

YASRAF AMIR PILIANG

The relation between religion and culture, particularly in the context of contemporary Indonesian culture, is characterized by its problematic and contradictive nature. There is a generally accepted notion that religion is not a part of culture, because religion is a creation of God, whereas 'culture' is a product of man. However problematic and contradictive its nature is, there is an apparent inter-relation—or more precisely mixture—between religion and culture. The emergence of 'popular culture' in contemporary society, in particular, has a tremendous impact on religious life, and produces a kind of 'popular imagination' within religious discourse: popular thinking, popular speech, popular rituality, and popular religious symbol.

The development of 'popular imagination' in contemporary religious life, especially in Indonesia, indicates a certain degree of religiosity, in the sense that a certain immanent principle, form, strategy or value of popular culture is used in religious discourse. The contradictive mixture of a transcendental religious principle and the immanent principle of style and lifestyle in the post-modern condition has drawn religious life and discourse towards a kind of contradiction and paradox: a paradox between the sacred and profane, divinity and worldliness. In this paradoxical situation, religious institutions and authorities have faced a difficult challenge, in order to be able to place religion in an appropriate cultural position.

INTRODUCTION

There is a certain complexity which characterizes the discussion of the relationship between religion—particularly Islam—and culture in Indonesia. This complexity is due to the plurality of Indonesian culture itself, in terms of its languages, principles, cultural forms and ideologies.

---

[1] Paper presented at the International Conference "Relation between Cultures and Religions in Southeast Asia", organized by The Philosophy Department, University of Indonesia and the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, Catholic University of America, Washington DC, June the 27th and the 28th 2005.

Not only because Indonesia has various local, ethnic and tribal cultures, with its various customs, traditions, and belief systems, but also because within its cultural space, several forms of *Zeitgeist* intersect one another in a complex way: pre-modern, modern and post-modern.

On the other hand, there is another cultural complexity as a consequence of the influence of globalisation, the information age and virtual life. The recent development of post-modern lifestyle has influenced the way religion is seen, understood and practiced. The development of global capitalistic-popular culture has fundamentally changed the way religious messages are communicated and religious doctrines are interpreted. The development of 'mass culture' and 'popular culture' has produced a kind of 'popular religious imagination', as can be seen from various religious phenomena.

In fact, 'popular approach' in Islamic development is not a new phenomenon, because in the early Islam spread by Islamic religious leaders ("wali"), various 'cultural-popular approaches' were used in their religious mission. The use of local, ethnic or indigenous cultural forms (i.e.: puppets, ethnic music, local song, dance and theatre) as media of religious discourse and communication can be seen from various examples. There is no fundamental contradiction between local culture and religious principle, at least in their similarity of foundation, namely: transcendence and spirituality.

The development of recent 'mass culture' and 'popular culture' in capitalist society has a different model of discourse in comparison to religious discourse. The main *raison d'etre* of popular culture is not spirituality or transcendence, but materiality and profanity. In this sense, there is disjunction between religion principle and the principle of popular culture, which is basically material and profane in its nature.

The inter-relation between culture—particularly popular culture—and religion can be seen from several ways. First, religious leaders use the model of popular culture in their religious speech and communication (popular dance, song, music, theatre, film, video art), which was previously banned by religious communities. Second, popular culture uses religious messages, themes, signs and symbols in their cultural production, but these are avoided by religious communities, because of their incongruity with religious principle. Third, popular culture uses religious symbols, but generously appreciated by the communities, because of its congruity with religious doctrine.

The inclination of popular culture towards religious life has created a kind of 'popular imagination' in religious life, a particular imagination produced in religious discourse (thinking, sign, image, forms, messages, and rituals) based on models of imagination developed in popular culture. As the imagination produced is not appropriated to the deep 'spiritual discourses', it leads towards a paradoxical and contradictive situation: a

paradox between deepness and surface, simplicity and glamour, spirit and desire.

RELIGION AND POPULAR IMAGINATION

The problematic and contradictive relation between religion and culture can be seen from different points of view. In terms of Islamic understanding of culture, religion is not regarded as a part of culture. Religion (and nature) is a creation of God, whereas 'culture' is a creation of man. Culture is not only differentiated from 'nature' (as a binary opposition between nature/culture, as it is understood by Levi-Strauss), but also from 'religion'). God creates everything from nothing to make "being." Man 'creates' something from something already existing as God creation (being). However, although religion is not a part of culture, it does not mean that religion is totally separated from culture.[2]

It is more appropriate to say that in Islamic understanding, culture is a part of religion. This is completely different from the position of culture in the modern Western society (since the Renaissance), in which culture is totally separated from religion, and regards culture as an autonomous entity, which has its own principle's, norms and values. The autonomy of culture (and art) is a main principle of modernism in Western culture. In Islamic understanding, religious doctrine is seen as a primary shaper of culture. The doctrine itself is regarded as something beautiful; therefore the beauty cannot be separated from the doctrine, and vice versa.[3] In Islamic understanding of culture, religion and culture harmoniously meet in 'religiosity', in the sense that in any culture there is always a transcendental aspect and values.

The relation between religion and popular culture is another tricky discourse. 'Popular culture', in this sense, is a particular category of culture, which differentiates it from other categories of culture. In this connection, it is essential to define 'popular culture' in its relation to religious life. The development of religion in contemporary society cannot be separated from the development of mass media, mass culture and popular culture. There is a mutual symbiosis between the discourse of religion and the discourse of mass culture and popular culture:

> 'Mass culture' has an ambivalent and plural meaning. It has a negative as well as positive connotation. It is related to progress as well as degradation, to democracy as well as

---

[2] Ali Audah, Kreativitas Kesenian dalam Tradisi Islam, in Yustiono et.al (eds), *Islam dan*

Kebudayaan Indonesia: Dulu, Kini dan Esok, Yayasan Festifal Istiqlal, Jakarta,1993, p. 14.

[3] Syu'bah Asa, 'Estetika Islam dan Permasalahan Kesenian Masa Kini', in *Ibid*., p. 27.

> totalitarianism. It relates to a certain 'degree of culture'. In its more neutral meaning, 'mass' means 'common people', as it is opposed to the elite. Based on this meaning, 'mass culture' can be seen as a synonym of 'the culture of common people', that is, the culture which grew and existed in a certain group of people, based on its particular social principle, form and value. In its more negative sense, the term 'mass' means something that is low, base, cheap, vulgar, common or mean, as an opposite of something high, expensive, supreme, glorious, masterpiece. It refers to 'common people', working people or 'ordinary people', as opposed to elite, high class, or professional groups. There is a connotation of 'mass' as a majority group controlled by a minority group or elite, who have higher life standards. [4]

The term mass culture is often used with a meaning similar to the 'popular culture', because the word 'popular' also points to the concept 'common people'. The term 'popular' in its history also points to a low, base and average aesthetic standard. [5] Even though having several similarities, many cultural thinkers clearly differentiate between 'mass culture' and 'popular culture', because popular culture has comprised a wider sense of culture, which includes 'the culture of the people', which is not a part of mass culture.

Theodor Adorno, a thinker from the Frankfurt School, uses the term 'culture industry' to describe a 'mass culture' in its specific context, namely the context of industrialisation. 'Culture industry' is a category of culture massively produced according to an industrial principle. It is a culture controlled from above by a group of elites, to differentiate it from the culture of the people, which is growing from the bottom (grassroots culture). Culture industry, therefore, is a mass culture in a specific sense, in which the mass of people are controlled by the elite from above.

To explain the meaning of 'culture industry', Adorno then differentiates between 'high culture' and 'low culture'. 'High culture' is a culture that has a high standard (quality, aesthetic, taste), which is created based on high creative abilities and innovative power, through which 'newness' can be continuously produced. It is a culture based on the progress of spirit and continuous invention. In contrast, 'low culture' is a culture that has a low quality, creativity and innovative standard, which highly rely on reproduction, repetition and imitation techniques. Mass

---

[4] Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Fontana Press, 1990, pp. 192-197.

[5] *Ibid*., pp. 236-238.

culture and popular culture, according to Adorno, are part of this 'low culture', due to their base, cheap, mean and vulgar characters.[6]

'Popular imagination' is a term used here in a very specific way in its relation to popular culture. The term is a modification of a related concept used by Susan Sontag in the context of sexuality, a 'pornographic imagination'. As understood by Sontag, pornography is a kind of resistance to a dominant culture, by developing a certain fantasy or imagination specific to the social group. In the sense, that there is a kind of conscious 'imagination' developed in the pornographic discourse in seeking its objective.[7] In the same way, in popular culture—or culture in general—there is a kind or imagination or fantasy developed consciously by common people, which differentiates them from other kinds of imagination, for example, imagination in the discourse of high culture. We talk here about the 'different level' of imagination. 'Popular imagination', in this sense, is a different form of imagination, fantasy and illusion characterized by its base, cheap, common, vulgar and mass characters, and used to gather the mass of people in various social (and religious) discourse. Popular imagination encompasses various forms:

First, popular thinking. In this sense, we talk about different forms of thinking, which are influenced by various avenues of popular discourse, for example: television, mass media and other media discourse. Included in this category are various popular psychological or 'how to' books, packaged in certain ways as if they are a genuine religious thinking. 'How to' books, systematically packaged in a popular setting, cannot be differentiated from other forms of popular culture, in the sense that they create a writer as a 'star', and readers as 'fans' or as a silent majorities. Included also in this category are various books of Spiritual Quotient (SQ) or Emotional Spiritual Quotient (ESQ), in which the term 'spirituality' is used here in a rather 'popular way', in the sense that it is not clearly referred to certain source or life process (spirit, soul); therefore, it can merely be seen as a kind of therapy for certain psychological or physical problems, without any relation whatsoever to religious principle. [8]

Second, popular religious speech. In this kind of popularity, the communication of the sacred text is embellished with various popular symbols or images. The principle of popular imagination, as it is developed in popular entertainment (comedy, music, dance, pantomime), is used in various religious speeches and communication. In certain religious prayers, a model of popular culture is also used, in which the masses are passively controlled by religious elite ("da'i, ustazd, kyai") as a method to arouse

---

[6] Theodor Adorno, *The Culture Industry*, Routledge, London, 1991, pp. 85-92.

[7] Susan Sontag, 'The Pornographic Imagination', in Elizabeth Hardwick, *A Susan Sontag Reader*, Penguin Books, 1982, p. 212.

[8] Alfathri Adlin, 'Kecerdasan Spiritual, Kecerdasan Arbitrasi SQ: Antara Agama dan Semiotika, *Journal of Psyche*, 2000, Vol.I, No. 2, pp. 37-43.

their emotion. As widely used in popular culture, certain 'mass psychological methods' are also applied as a way to control the masses, to evoke their emotion (crying, hysteria, ecstasy). Religious speakers, in this specific sense, can be seen as 'popular figures' and 'stars', who define and offer various 'popular imaginations' of religious life; and the masses can be seen as 'fans', as in popular culture, who treat the religious figure as 'superstar': passively imitate their habit, seek their signature, collect their things (fetishism), imitate their appearance (fashion, hairstyle, object). Public prayer ("do'a akbar," national prayer) is among the public ritual forms, which are arranged precisely like the arrangement of popular entertainment show: the fashion used, the arrangement of space, the shoot by television broadcasting, the mass psychological methods used.

Third, popular rituality. In this sense of popularity, different forms of religious rituals (fast, pray, "zakat, hajj") are massively executed based on a paradigm of popular culture, especially as they are treated as commodity forms. The ritual execution is systematically organized by using 'a logic of commodity' in their production. Several forms of ritual are classified and segmented according to the existing social class and lifestyle. They are arranged in a certain way according to a principle of 'social difference' as generally used in the world of consumer lifestyle. Some psycho-graphic methods are also used to determine the theme, class and its economic aspect, as in popular culture. For example, there are some packages of fasting ritual, arranged based on social class in society: a "ramadhan" (fasting month) holiday package, a special package of "sahur" (the meal eaten before daybreak during the fasting month), a special package of "berbuka" (breaking the fast) in high class hotel with the presence of celebrities. The ritual of "hajj" (pilgrimage to the sacred place of Mecca) is also organized in certain ways, in which some model of popular culture and commodity culture is also consciously applied.

Fourth, popular religious symbol. In this context of popularity, there is a contradictive mixture of religious principle ("syari'ah") and the principle of popular culture. Different forms, styles and images of popular imagination are peculiarly applied in religious discourse, which leads to a contradictive fashion of religious life. In this contradictive situation, there is an extensive tension between a transcendent religious principle and the immanent appearance of style. The tension can easily be seen in the contemporary phenomena of fashion, especially woman fashion ("jilbab"). As widely known, the main principle of fashion in Islamic doctrine is to close the major parts of the human (woman's) body, as a basic principle of keeping its holiness and purity. However, due to the great pressure of style in the world of contemporary lifestyle, (part of) the religious principle is defeated by the power of lifestyle and appearance. We can easily find some paradox and hybrid examples of women's Moslem fashion, which destroy the religious principle, by showing certain parts of a woman's body, for the sake of style and lifestyle.

PLURALITY OF CULTURAL READINGS OF RELIGION

There is an apparent difference between religious 'doctrine' and 'practice'. Practice is an everyday reality, which is basically cultural in it nature, in the sense that it can be separated from the doctrine itself. In other words, doctrines do not always shape practice. Practice, in its religious terms is shaped by doctrine. But practice, can also be produced in a certain cultural setting without the intervention of the doctrine, as a pure cultural activity. In a more extreme situation, it is the practice itself that becomes a powerful shaper of doctrine, in terms that it can be adjusted to the cultural need, context and environment. As put forward by Bourdieu, practice (religious practice) is shaped by 'cultural capital' and "habitus," in such terms that there is a 'logic of practice', which is basically cultural in its character, clearly separated from 'logic of religion'. However, in certain conditions, this logic of practice can shape everyday religious ritual, in which the ritual is removed from the religious doctrine, and logic of culture is used here in its more profane meaning. [9]

In this connection, a 'popular reading' of religion can be seen as a part of the multiplicity of reading provided by the logic of culture. There is a multiplicity of 'cultural readings' of religion, in which the so called 'religious practices' are shaped not by religious doctrine but by 'cultural interpretation' of the doctrine. In order to understand the cultural interpretation of religious principle, a useful analogy can be made, namely a semiotic analogy. In semiotic studies, de Saussure makes a clear distinction between the study of sign as a system, structure and relation ("langue"); and the study of the concrete use or practice of sign system in everyday life ("parole")[10] "Langue" is a study of language as a system of code; "parole" is a study of the social practice of the sign system. The difference between "langue" and "parole" can be used analogically to explain the difference between 'doctrine' and 'religious practice'.

As also suggested by Kuntowijoyo, in *Paradigma Islam*, what are produced by certain cultural practices of religion are new codes, so that certain aspects of religious doctrine can be appropriated to the frame of mind and knowledge system of the local people. A continuous process of 'coding', 'decoding' and 'recoding' of religious principle is needed, in order to make a religious discourse more dynamic in its character.[11] In this connection, the role of 'discourse' is highly central in producing and reading of text and practice. Discourse is understood as a set of textual (and practice) arrangements, which organise the action, position, and identity of

---

[9] For a comprehensive understanding of the term 'habitus', see Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

[10] Ferdinand deSaussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, Duckworth, London, 1990, p. 15.

[11] Kuntowijoyo, *Paradigma Islam: Interpretasi Untuk Aksi*, Mizan, Bandung, 1991, p. 368.

people who produce it.[12] Discourse analysis of religious text focuses on kinds of action provoked by text, logics of the action, and the effect of the action itself on the people who practice it. [13]

In the context of religious interpretation, rather than refer to a certain rule, code, convention or doctrine (for example "fiqh"), local religious communities produce their own codes based on their own socio-cultural situation and environment. Religious communities produce what is called a 'logonomic system', as a set of specific rules that is local in its character, which regulates condition of production and reception of religious texts. The system determines who has authority to produce, to communicate and to know (to receive, to read, to understand) meanings, in what condition and modalities certain texts, actions, and meanings are produced.[14] Cultural production of religious practice, in this sense, can be seen as a 'textual production' rather than a 'textual reproduction', a 'meaning production' rather than a reproduction of meaning.

When a certain individual (group of people) reacts to a religious sign or text, he/she is involved in the process of 'sign production'. He/she uses signs (chooses, selects, organises, and combines with a certain code) in order to understand the contextual meaning of the religious text. In the process of 'reading', he/she makes an interpretation, by using all capacities of language, sign and code in order to understand the cultural meaning of the text. In the process of reading there is an open space for changing codes, as a way to produce a cultural meaning of the sacred text, so that it is appropriate to the social condition and knowledge system. [15]

There are many models of textual reading: 'cultural reading', 'conservative reading', 'literal reading', 'fetishist reading', and 'deconstructive reading'. Fetishist reading, which is "mystification" reading that releases the text from the communicative context, neutralizing the communicative textual messages, to fill the text with a mystical power or certain charms, which influence the people who use it (gives power, heal disease, multiplies money, and so on).

There is also a 'paranormal reading', in which a sacred book like "Al-Qur'an" is interpreted according to paranormal imagination to produce a 'new text' like a charm, incantation, talisman, amulet, "susuk." The use of magical method, in the name of religion, as a way of medical or paranormal treatment (for example a "ghost buster," or fortune-teller) in several local television programs can be seen as a form of a 'para-normalization of

---

[12] Tony Twaites (et.al), *Tools for Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, MacMillan Ltd., 1994., p. 135.

[13] J. D. Johansen and S.E. Larsen, *Signs in Use: An Introduction to Semiotics*, Routledge, London, 2002, p. 53.

[14] Robert Hodge & Gunther Kress, *Social Semiotics*, Cornel university Press, 1988, p. 4.

[15] Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1976. p. 152.

religion', in the sense that 'paranormal medical-spiritual practice', which is not in line with religious doctrine because it is "syirik" (prohibited by religious doctrine because it acknowledges more than one God) has today become a practice, which is called 'religious'.

> There is also a 'liberal reading' of the sacred text. The Liberal Islamic Network (JIL) in Indonesia, for example, can be seen as a movement which celebrates the liberal-deconstructive-prospective reading of the sacred book (Al Qur'an), in the sense of seeking for its future possibilities. In their interpretation of Al Qur'an, they make an explicit distinction between religion and culture, in the sense that religion is a product of God, and culture is the genuine product of man, through their capacity of interpretation and creativity. What the holy book determined as a rule of God, in their view, is no more than a social product of human culture. For example, the use of Moslem female headgear ("jilbab") as the command of God ("wajib") in their view is no more than a pure product of human culture.
>
> In this connection, there is dialectic between code and message. Although a certain code controls the transfer of messages, the message itself is capable of structuring the code, so that it gives way to a language creativity. One might structure expression and content following the possibilities opened by the dynamic of cultural reading. In this way, a text can produce new discourse, with new expressions and contents, which were unthinkable previously. [16] In the social reading of a sacred book like Al-Qur'an, there is 'creativity to change the rule' (rule changing creativity), that is, when discourse situation demand the changing of code. This is to show that relation between "langue" and "parole," between 'systems' and 'event', is not a static and unchanging relation, but in contrast, becomes a basis of the dynamic character of language. [17] Religious practice can be removed from its religious original context, because of the process of recontextualization and recoding opened by discourse formation, as Foucault understands it [18]

[16] *Ibid*. p. 188.

[17] Paul J. Thibault, *Rereading Saussure: The Dynamics of Signs in Social Life*, Routledge, 1998, p. 9.

[18] *Ibid*. p. 189.

It can be seen from the above models of reading, that every model of reading develops its own sphere of imagination, fantasy and illusions, in accordance with its cultural and knowledge system. In this sense, a text like Al-Qur'an can be seen as a 'social product', in which it is continuously 'forged' in the language practice and social discourse ("parole"), in which the text is interpreted, reinterpreted in various contexts, to seek for new sets of code, in accordance with social need, condition and value. In popular reading, for example, imagination, fantasy, and relation are popular in its character in the sense that it has a lower average standard of imagination.

Religious Intertextuality

In the context of its cultural practice, there are at least two orientations of religious 'text'. First, there is the vertical-transcendental-theological orientation, the orientation of meaning toward the original meaning (logos), called a 'retrospective interpretation' by Derrida. Second, the orientation of a horizontal-immanent-humanistic meaning, which is culturally formed in everyday life, called a 'prospective interpretation'.[19] Although religious text is an 'Utterance of God', the utterance can be interpreted and used by a certain community, based on existing social and cultural conditions.

In its social and cultural environment, the sacred text becomes an 'open text', meaning that it is open to various models of readings, according to various conditions, habits, belief and cultural ideologies of local people, in which processes of coding, decoding, and recoding are needed. In other words, the religious text can be recontextualized within its new situation, environment. However, in its new interpretation the text might be detached from its original root or spiritual content, and become a pure profane discourse. Recontextualization means that the sacred text can be placed in its plural context of reading, according to the plurality of social and culture context where the text is interpreted and practiced.

In many cases certain religious communities (or individuals) combine a sacred text with other texts in contradictive ways, which produce 'a third text'. To describe this situation, Julia Kristeva introduced the term 'intertextuality'. The relation of a text is not simply a relation between expression and content, or between signifier and signified, as it is understood by a semiotic tradition. Kristeva sees the importance of time-space dimension in textual analysis, in the sense that a text is created in a certain concrete space-time. Therefore, there should be certain relation between one text and other texts in a spatial and temporary relation.

[19] For a brief introduction to Derrida's concept of 'retrospective interpretation' and 'prospective interpretation', see John Sturrock, *Structuralism and Since: from Levi Strauss to Derrida*, Oxford University Press, 1979.

Intertextuality is an interdependence of a text and previous existing texts. A text is not an autonomous and separated entity, but a play of quotation from previous texts. A text can only exist, if in its space various expressions, quoted from other texts and cultural sources, intersect and neutralize one another. [20]

The term 'transposition' is used to explain the trajectory from one text to another, in which one (or several) sign systems are used to destruct one (or several) previous sign systems. There are various forms of destruction: to erase, to replace, to cross, and to scratch. To destruct also means to distort, to change, to play with, cynicism or parody. The use of religious phrase, text, sign, and symbols in the context of popular textual production can be seen as a form of intertextuality for example, religious symbols used by the music group, Dewa, in the context of popular culture. The group tries to 'transpose' a religious sign system to the sign system of popular culture, which has its own logic that is contradicted with religious logics.

Religious Fetishism

Fetishism is one of the main phenomena of popular culture, in which many forms of 'charms' are invisibly used to influence people or masses. The term 'fetish' is used here to describe the character of supernatural-magical power or charms within an object, the object inhabited by certain magical power (charms, idol, talisman, amulet), which is worshipped as something powerful like a deity.[21] The concept is also used to describe a phenomenon of using certain objects or bodily organs (hair, underpants, handkerchief) to arouse sexual pleasure. [22] It is also used to describe a production of commodities in capitalism, in which commodity is not only seen merely as an object with certain use value, but invisibly inhabited by certain enchantment or spell, which give power to people who use it. [23]

In terms of religious phenomena, 'fetishism' can be seen as a form of 'popular imagination', through which one sacred sign or text is detached from its textual function as a message of God and then charged with other 'imagination', namely 'the imagination of magical power', particularly the power of charm and magic. A certain religious sign or text, which was previously used as a vehicle to convey a certain message of God, is then differently used as a vehicle for other power systems. A sign previously

---

[20] Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, Basil Blackwell, 1989, p.36.

[21] Jean Baudrillard, "Fetishism and Ideology", in *For a Critique of the Political economy of the Sign*, Telos Press, 1981, pp. 88-101.

[22] Sigmund Freud, "Fetishism", in *On Sexuality*, Pelican, 1987, pp. 351-357.

[23] Karl Marx, *Capital Vol. I*, Penguin Books, 1976, p. 321.

used as a means of 'representation' (idea, message) is then used to 'present' something: power, magic, charms.

Annemarie Schimmel, in *Deciphering the Sign of God*, brilliantly depicts phenomena of fetishism in Islamic culture, in which fetishism is related to the use of things (like sword, robe, plate, mirror, staff, banner) as worshipped objects, because of their virtual internal power. In another context, a sacred book like Al-Qur'an, through the power of its words, becomes a worshiped object too, by removing its genuine contents and spiritual messages, and by filling it with certain magical or supernatural power. The holy book was removed from its spiritual messages, and filled with some mystic power that can heal, tell fortunes, kill, find jobs, and so on. [24] Not only the whole sacred book, but also the words within the book are regarded to have some mystical power, a "...power of realization".[25] Words said or written (in sheets, curses, miniatures, figures) are able to present magical power that can have many effects—good or bad effects.

In the above case, there is a transformation of the function of words, from a medium of communication into a realization function; from a 'representation' function into a 'presentation' function. Words can not only represent a concept (spiritual message), but also 'present' a power. Several mystical and paranormal television programmes, in contemporary Indonesian television broadcasting, can be seen as 'fetishist reading' of the sacred text, in which a certain (religious) man may be depicted as a very powerful person, who can multiply money, control genie, visualize the ghost, send spirit to certain person, clear certain place from evil power, help people to gain social position, heal all kind of diseases, and kill certain people.

The use of fetish objects can be seen as a part of the history of Indonesian Islamic culture itself, in which the fetishes appeared in many forms, media, and power, and are used in many ritual ceremonial contexts or even in daily life. There are so many examples of fetishism phenomena in Indonesian community:, for instance, how a miniature of Al-Qur'an (text printed in a small format) concealed with black fabric and filled with some spices potion, is used magically to obstruct disaster or to defend from black magic.

Deconstructive Reading of Religion

The sacred text can be read not only through fetishist reading—by removing the text from its signification function, and replacing it with a realization function—but also through a 'deconstructive reading', a model of reading using 'over signification process', that is, by releasing the text

[24] Annemarie Schimmel, *Rahasia Wajah Suci Ilahi: Memahami Islam Secara Fenomenologis*, Penerbit Mizan, 1996, p. 72.

[25] *Ibid*., p. 208.

from its former signification chain and placing it in a new signification chain. The deconstruction process is regarded as an endless process, so that interpretation is kept away from a transcendental signified. This reading can produce a kind of 'deconstructive imagination', namely the imagination of the destruction of the boundaries between sacred text and cultural life.

'Deconstructive reading' is a reading constructed mainly by an 'over-signification principle', by releasing the text from its original context or code, and putting a continuous process of interpretation (interpretation of interpretation) in a specific time-space. In the context of sacred text (like Al-Qur'an), deconstructive reading means to detach the text from its theo-centric characteristic, and to refuse an eternal to be bound to what is finally signified[26] in order to develop open possibilities of imagination and fantasy provided by language and the world, which is unthinkable or unpresentable before.

Deconstructive reading is a way of thinking that celebrates the 'imagination of demolition', as an endless effort to start a new beginning, which is not always 'new' in the modern sense of the word, but new beginning in the sense of 'difference' to existing form. Deconstructive reading, in this sense, is not destructive reading, in the sense of destroying the text itself, but to deconstruct static boundaries established by the text.[27] 'An open imagination' can only be produced in deconstructive reading by using the strategy of 'free play of imagination', as a movement from one signifier to another signifier, so that it is capable of producing new productive differences of imagination.

Prospective interpretation, as suggested above by Derrida, can be seen as an enterprise of seeking and producing 'boundless imagination', which can only be entered by a mentality of openness and affirmation, which explicitly accepts all uncertainties, contradictions, and paradoxes. Previous traditional reading of sacred text (theologic-logocentric reading) is seen as a form of reading, which depended too much on the 'imagination provided by past culture' or 'imagination from God' (logos), which blocks the open possibilities of boundless imagination and fantasy (or event illusion) provided by the world. The traditional reading can also be seen as a form of reading that produces only a 'metaphysical imagination', that is, imagination that is always theo-centric in its character, which closes the space for other 'possible imaginations provided by language and the world. [28] Deconstructive reading is a form of reading that detaches imagination from the 'restricted imagination' of logos, a transcendental imagination, in order to be able to open the boundless possibilities of

---

[26] As quoted by Rosalind Coward & John Ellis, in *Language and Materialism*, Routledge, London, 1977, p. 124.

[27] Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, Athlone Press, 1981, p. 27.

[28] Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, Routledge, London, 1990, p. 279

productive imagination, so that the unimaginable, unthinkable or unrepresentable can be presented as religious and cultural reality.

However, is it possible not to restrict imagination at all in this challenging world? Here, we can see a clear difference between Derrida's notion of deconstruction and Arkoun's. Although Arkoun adopts Derrida's concept of deconstruction, as a way of creating 'productive imagination', in contradistinction to Derrida, who rejects the 'transcendental imagination' (logos), Arkoun decidedly defends the transcendental, while hoping to open the curtain of something unimaginable that is closed by a language system. Without a transcendental signified, in Arkoun's view, everything can be pure 'anarchic imagination'; therefore there should be a 'restriction of imagination'. [29] Several cases of religious 'deconstruction' in Indonesia can be seen as examples of how deconstruction without reconstruction can lead to an excessive conflict with common religious convention or value. For example, the recent case of use of the religious symbol (Allah) by a music group Dewa, or 'a free interpretation' of a ritual of prayer and 'free imagination' of the sacred text (Al-Qur'an) by an Ustazd M. Roy in East Java can be seen as two examples of a contradictive-deconstructive reading of sacred texts in Indonesia.

RELIGION AND LIFESTYLE

It is not a common intellectual habit to talk about the relation between religion and 'lifestyle', because the later is usually discussed outside the frame of religious discourse. However, when we talk about religion as a 'practice', we can immediately see the close relation between the discourse of religion and discourse of lifestyle. There is a kind of a 'lifestyle reading' of religion, in the sense of how religious practice intersects with the practice of life style in contemporary society, in which religion is produced socially as a part of a lifestyle system.

'Life style' is a pattern of the use of time, space, and object in social life. It is systematically constructed in a certain social space, in which activity of consumption intersects with pleasure. It is a place where a theatre of images is shown, [30] a place for 'self actualisation' through a 'semiotization of life'. Everything then can be part of lifestyle, as long as it can be constructed into image, sign and style: politics, education, sexuality, or even religion.

---

[29] See Mohammed Arkoun, *Nalar Islami dan Nalar Modern: Berbagai Tantangan dan Jalan Baru*, INIS, Jakarta, 1994.

[30] To see an introductory definition of 'lifestyle' and its function in the arena of consumerism, see Rob Shields, *Lifestyle Shopping: The Subject of Consumption*, Routledge, London, 1992.

When religion is socially and artificially constructed as part of lifestyle, it leads to a certain paradox: a paradox between the sacred and profane, the transcendence and immanence, the depth meaning and surface meaning. The amalgam of religion and lifestyle can lead to the degradation of religious spirit, in which the sacred is contaminated by the profane; the spiritual is destructed by material; the divinity is infected by the worldliness, the divinity is damaged by desire. There is a melding of entity, a melting of essence, and a confusion of values. The sacred here is curiously presented in its immanent forms (image, sign, appearance) and removed it from its transcendental source (soul, faith, belief).

The blend of lifestyle and religious life can be seen as a 'spiritual' phenomenon of our contemporary religious life. This happens in various religious rituals (fasting, pray, "zakat," "hajj") and various forms of 'spiritual discourse' (spiritual course, celebration of holy days, and television religious programs). In an era dominated by artificiality, 'spirituality' is presented in its simulation form, in which it tends to be reduced to the sign and image forms, which are detached from its spiritual values. Spirituality today oddly appears in its 'simulation form', as understood by Baudrillard. The integration of religious life into the profane discourse' of lifestyle produces many contradictions: divinity/consumerism, transcendence/immanence, sacred/profane, depth/ surface. The spirit of God is a spirit for restricting desire, establishing transcendence, reflection and depth-ness. In contrast, the spirit of consumerism is a spirit for the 'liberation of desire', celebration of madness, fetishism of the surface, and celebration of extremity.

The development of contemporary popular culture has anxiously dragged various religious-rituals (prayer, fasting, "zakat," pilgrimage, "lebaran") into its immanent character. The religious life constructed by free-play of sign and image—as the main logics of lifestyle—has created a surface, artificial and shallow religious-ritual life, which detaches it from its essential meaning and value. The main function of ritual activities is as a medium of 'purification', that is, to purify the soul from various forms of pollution, criminal tendency, and evil power, through a systematic restriction of desire ("an-nafs").

Free play of interpretation of ritual principle by an individual or by religious groups has detached ritual from its original context. What has been developed is a kind of 'hyper-rituality', that is, the reality of ritual that is developed 'beyond' the essence of ritual itself, to produce various forms of 'artificial ritual reality', in which various forms of material culture and lifestyle become a more important element in the ritual itself, rather than the essence of ritual discourse itself as a 'purification of the soul'. In contrast, religious-ritual activities become a place for a 'pampering of the soul', through the spells of signs, images, styles, illusions, prestige, and fetishism, as a form of cultural intoxication.

The multiplicity of commodity culture and lifestyle, in a consumer society, has forcefully driven religious-rituality towards the trap of commodity, in an excessive process of a 'commodification of ritual'. Different forms of sign, image and lifestyle packaging—like the menu for "break the fast," fashion as a symbol of piety, the fashion show, the parcel, the religious holiday package, "break the fast" with artists in a high class hotel—can be seen as a conscious way of constructing 'lifestyle imagination' in the context of 'religious-ritual activities'. Religious-ritual activities are trapped in the model of 'popular culture', in which various forms of artificiality, free play of sign and image are developed, as a way to create 'collective imagination', as an imagination of how to give meaning to religious life.

Imagination developed in various lifestyles is a 'materialist imagination', in which what is called meaning is basically related to something merely profane and material in its character. As religious-ritual activity is trapped in the world of commodity, it has to follow the logic of material, particularly the logics of appearance, sign, image, surface meaning, rather than a deep, essential, transcendental and spiritual meaning. The celebration of 'material imagination' (through clothing, fasting menu, gifts) has intrinsically narrowed the space for the development of spiritual quality itself, because the focus of interest is on the imagination of material and image itself—to the 'medium' rather than to a 'message,' as suggested by Marshall McLuhan—which needs a specific time-space. This can lead to the degradation of spirituality itself, which is removed from its essential meaning.

In what is so called a 'hyper-ritual condition', ritual activities take artificiality as their model of production, which is no longer related to a genuine ritual reality, referential, basic form and natural principle, as it apparently depicted in the sacred book. Ritual realities have been essentially distorted to a certain point, in which they are to be detached from their original reference. Hyper-ritual condition has created a ritual space, in which 'ritual signs' or 'ritual images', which are artificial in their character, are regarded as 'genuine ritual realities', in which falseness is regarded as reality, appearance seen as essence.

Various forms of 'popular imagination' have been developed in ritual activities, based on the principle of artificiality, in which ritual activities are oddly created as if they are part of the original formation (as it was shown by the Prophet); in fact, they are no more than artificial construction, which no longer refer to the original model, but to themselves (simulation). For example, how the ritual of "break the fast" is arranged in high-class hotel, with some famous film artists or celebrities as its patronage, in which popular illusion or fantasy is constructed. In this place, people no longer "break the fast" with 'food' as a material entity, but with 'images' and lifestyle—to consume image and illusion in order to break the fast.

Ritual activities are artificially reduced to a surface phenomenon, outer appearance, and artificial signs, which gradually remove ritual from its deep meaning, essence and spiritual values. Ritual is fundamentally reduced to symbolic entities and sign systems used as an utterance, statement or identity of piety and faith: fashion of piety, headdress, sarong, which are especially designed—and worn in particular occasion of sacred day—as if this 'identity' is fair enough to represent faith and piety. Ritual is reduced to a 'semioticization of ritual', in the sense of encoding ritual forms with particular meaning, which are essentially not a part of essential-ritual principle. Ritual is encoded with some artificial signs, which are completely removed from the context of religious practice ("*ibadah*"), but they are falsely constructed in a certain way as if they are part and parcel of 'ritual discourse'. Fasting holiday package, parcels for sacred day ("iedul fithri"), advertisement using several ritual moments, the religious quiz, popular supernatural medical treatment, are among examples of artificial signs, which are removed from their spiritual values.

Image technology (imagology) is used here to visualize free imagination and illusion of lifestyle in ritual context. For example, the menu for breaking the fast ("berbuka puasa") is encoded with multilevel psycho-graphic meanings, for example, the jumbo package, super package, economic package, in accordance with social class, status, or lifestyle of society. Different places (restaurant, hotel, cafe) are specifically designed with specific decorations with a Mediterranean or Middle East style. Different atmospheres are specifically created in order to sugget that these materials settings are related to the quality of faith or piety.

CONCLUSION

There is a kind of dilemma faced by the religious community in recent capitalistic, global, information and virtual societies. On the one hand, the 'multiplicity of reading' provided by multiplicity of cultural space, has produced 'multiplicity of imagination': traditional imagination, fetishist imagination, deconstructive imagination or popular imagination. Multiplicity of reading and imagination is a manifestation of a dynamic culture, which is capable of producing a creative, innovative and productive idea, concept, imagination and fantasy. On the other hand, this multiplicity of readings, interpretations and imagination—that might lead to a relativistic (or anarchic) model of interpretation—becomes a serious threat for religious authorities and institutions, because one of the main functions of religion as institution is to restrict religious people ("ummah") from anarchic orientation and desire.

The challenge for religious institution and authorities is more impressive in today's post-modern situation, in which there is a massive pressure towards the acknowledgement of heterogeneity, pluralism and relativism in various aspect of life world, including the world of religion

and culture. The amalgam of the discourse of religion and the discourse of popular culture, a tendency toward a deconstructive reading of religious texts, a tendency toward the development of creative, innovative and productive imagination and fantasy in contemporary religious and cultural life, as depicted above, is a provoking sign of how enormous a challenge is faced by religion in the post-modern world. On the one hand, religion has to motivate the production of the multiplicity of imagination and creativity in its discourse; on the other hand, there is a danger of 'boundless' and 'anarchic imagination' in deconstructing the main function of religion as a 'purification of the soul'. A comprehensive and intensive discourse should be arranged in order to be able to place religion in an appropriate cultural position in a continuously changing world.

Cultural Studies
Bandung Institute of Technology
Bandung, Indonesia

REFERENCES

Adorno, Theodor, *The Culture Industry*, Routledge, London, 1991.

Arkoun, Mohammed, *Nalar Islami dan Nalar Modern: Berbagai Tantangan dan Jalan Baru*, INIS, Jakarta, 1994.

Baudrillard, Jean, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, Telos Press, 1981.

_____, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Coward, Rosalind & Ellis, John, *Language and Materialism*, Routledge, London, 1977

Derrida, Jacques , *Positions*, Athlone Press, 1981

_____, *Writing and Difference*, Routledge, London, 1990.

Eco, Umberto, *A Theory of Semiotics*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1976.

Freud, Sigmund, *On Sexuality*, Pelican Books, 1987.

Hardwick, Elizabet, A Susan Sontag Reader, Penguin Books, 1982

Hodge, Robert & Kress, Gunther, *Social Semiotics*, Cornel university Press, 1988

Johansen, J. D. &. Larsen, S.E , *Signs in Use: An Introduction to Semiotics*, Routledge, London, 2002.

Kristeva, Julia, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Columbia University Press, 1984.

_____, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, Basil Blackwell, 1989.

Kuntowijoyo, *Paradigma Islam: Interpretasi Untuk Aksi*, Mizan, Bandung, 1991.

Marx, Karl, *Capital Vol. I*, Penguin Books, 1976.

Piliang, Yasraf Amir, *Hipersemiotika: Tafsir Cultural Studies Atas Matinya Makna*, Penerbit Jalasutra, 2003.

_____, *Posrealitas: Realitas Kebudayaan di dalam Era Posmetafisika*, Penerbit Jalasutra, Yogyakarta, 2003.

_____, *Dunia yang Dilipat: Tamasya Melampaui Batas-batas Kebudayaan*, Penerbit Jalasutra, Yogyakarta, 2004.

deSaussure, Ferdinand, *Course in General Linguistics*, Duckworth, London, 1990.

Schimmel, Annemarie, *Rahasia Wajah Suci Ilahi: Memahami Islam Secara Fenomenologis*, Penerbit Mizan, 1996

Shields, Rob, *Lifestyle Shopping: The Subject of Consumption*, Routledge, London, 1992.

Storey, John (ed), *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994.

Sturrock, John, *Structuralism and Since: from Levi Strauss to Derrida*, Oxford University Press, 1979.

Thibault, Paul J., *Rereading Saussure: The Dynamics of Signs in Social Life*, Routledge, 1998.

Twaites, Tony (et.al), *Tools for Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, MacMillan Ltd., 1994.

Williams, Raymond, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Fontana Press, 1990

Yustiono et.al (eds), *Islam dan Kebudayaan Indonesia: Dulu, Kini dan Esok*, Yayasan Festifal Istiqlal, Jakarta,1993

CHAPTER XIII

WOMEN AND LOCAL ISLAMIC CULTURE IN INDONESIA

SITI MUSDAH MULIA

GENDER INEQUALITY

Throughout the world, religion and women have never been best friends. The Indonesian case is no exception. Many values of local Islamic culture on women's issues are often released in order to strengthen women's role as an object, in order to guard traditional and puritan family values. This article will specially address the local Islamic culture in Indonesia and its influence on the issue of gender inequality.

A number of studies of women and culture in Indonesia have come to a unanimous conclusion that women's status in Indonesia is still notoriously low, and women are very much discriminated against. This means that a conspicuously strong gender imbalance in terms of the relationship between man and woman still prevails.[1] Gender inequality constitutes a delicate social problem that calls for a prompt settlement in an integrative way by analyzing the factors which have contributed to preserving it, including the legal factor which is oftentimes justified from the religious point of view.

The Report on Human Development produced by UNDP in 2000 states that 54.5 percent of the work force in service and commodity products in Indonesia in 1999 consists of women. The number of workers in civil service shows that women tend to be limited to low income and low positions. Compared to men, women are vulnerable to job lay-offs; women are also preferred for these jobs due to their obedience. In general, working hours for women are longer not only because of their domestic activities but because they work outside their home, as well.

Manufacturing industries which start to spread in rural areas in Indonesia give the opportunities to women to work in factories, but normally for the same work they do, they only receive 60-70 percent of the total income of men in the same positions. Most women also work in agricultural and informal sectors. The three working sectors (industrial, agricultural, and informal) show the economic position of women in the

[1] For a description of the forms of gender inequality in Indonesia see the report of the Office of State Ministry for Woman Empowerment of the Republic of Indonesia, *Fakta, Data* dan *Informasi Kesenjangan Gender di Indonesia (Fact, Data and Information about Gender Inequality in Indonesia),* Jakarta, 2001, pp. 71-93.

majority: dominated work which does not require special skill. They have low income and are hardly ever promoted to higher positions which would give them more income and responsibilities. When the economy crisis got worse, thousands of Indonesian women (292.270 out of 435,219 in the year of 2000) were working abroad as housemaids/migrant workers). Women migrant workers are very vulnerable and they can be laid off any time by their employer. They are also often abused. The contribution from these migrant workers to the state foreign exchange is very significant, 3 billion USD in 2001, excluding the cash they take with them after their work contracts are terminated. But for this contribution they are guaranteed social security and do not receive legal assistance from the state. The facts mentioned above just go to show that Indonesia women indeed have not experienced improvement and changes in status. They have opportunities to work in public sectors and are paid, but these experiences do not automatically guarantee their social welfare,. Evidently women face various discriminations and injustice, that has a bad impact on their economy and social security. This reality shows that women are constant partners of poverty.

Gender inequality has an impact on rights in the economy. The study of economy and poverty using feminist analysis proves how far gender inequality goes to impoverish women. Women experience poverty differently from men. Gender deviation in the society in the form of unbalanced opportunity to get education, jobs and access to business ownership makes women's improvement in economy and social welfare limited. Poverty shows serious gaps in gender. Assumptions and opinions of men in the construction of culture and religion of the society are important variables in placing women not only in lower level position but also supporting and strengthening women's marginalization in the economy. These assumptions and perspectives adversely affect women rights in economy and social welfare.

The position of men as the main bread-winners has a negative impact on women's income scale, work lay-offs, opportunities for promotion, and the right to subsidies. . In fact, based on marriage status and age there are more women playing the role of head of the family (68.53 percent widows whereas widowers only 2.17 percent). The percentage of women, aged between 45 and 59, as head of the family is 33,80 percent, whereas that of men is 28.32 percent, -- that of women aged 60 is 37.19 percent with responsibility as single parents and also have to support their own parents.

Gender inequality in working opportunities also causes women mainly to have working positions as nurses, secretaries, and housemaids. Those types of job have a lower level income. The strategic roles played by women in informal sectors evidently support and save the family economic life, especially during an economic crisis. Unfortunately this contribution is not taken into consideration in a number of economy reports. This tendency

also causes limitation to women's access to loans for starting their own small business.

The problems in social economy, especially in poverty that make women belong to a disadvantaged group keep increasing and getting worse due to the influence of globalization. Economic liberalization and globalization widen the gap between the haves and the have-nots thorough the unequal distribution of income , those who are already marginalized in the society become more marginal. New forms of colonialism appearing through globalization impoverish the poor and force women into a corner of a very poor and marginal position and condition. For this reason, feminist perspective and analysis are absolutely essential in the entire program to eradicate poverty. This objective has to be applied and extended both by the state and by the civil society. Feminist perspectives offer approaches to eradicate poverty entirely and justly: focusing on eliminating discrimination against all aspects of women's life: health, education, welfare, job opportunities, or equal income; empowering women to fight for their right to gain access to land ownership, loans, and job opportunities; using equal patterns of relation in nurturing and empowering instead of imbalance, control, oppression and injustice.

NORMATIVE ETHICS

At the normative level, generally all religions place women equal to men, i.e. in position as human beings, and simultaneously servants of God. As human beings, women are free to do all forms of religious ritual and worship as men are. Women are recognized to have a number of rights and obligations, among others the right to improve their quality through improving their knowledge and devotion, and obligation to carry out noble humanitarian tasks. In the Islamic context for instance, normatively women may become leaders in religious communities, consisting of not only women, but also men.

At least, there are several reasons which enable women to develop their potential and true self. First, from the perspective of creation, Islam teaches that the origin of creation of men and women is similar, i.e. from earth, so it is unreasonable to perceive women lower than men. Second, from the perspective of deeds, both are promised rewards if they carry out good deeds and both are threatened with torment if they carry out sinful deeds. Third, from the perspective of leadership, Islam clearly gives both of them equal opportunity to become leaders.

However, when the pattern of relations between women and men is taken to the practical level, prolonged debate, as long as the history of mankind, appears. It is odd that recognition at the normative level does not continue on to the empirical and operational level. In reality, it is not easy for women to realize their dreams and become leaders. There is oddity which is not easily understood, particularly in the circle of Islam:; on the

one hand they have Al Qur'an, which contains clear directions regarding equality between men and women, but on the other there are many obstacles for the rise of women leaders in every sector of life, including the religious sector.

At the normative level, it is also agreed that women shall pursue knowledge, carry out good deeds and humanitarian tasks, both in individual and social life, in family and community circles. Up to this point there is no obstacle for women. However, when the potential, talent, and capability of women develop, as a consequence of empowerment through various activities and their care in carrying out noble humanitarian tasks, which in turn give those women opportunity to achieve position in society, such as religious leaders, judges, members of parliament, or even as head of state, then, suddenly, theological problems regarding the validity of female leadership arise. Other obstacles are low knowledge and understanding of society regarding religious values which explain women's role and position, particularly in women's circles; and still many religious interpretations which work against women's position and role due to the influence of patriarchal culture and a 'gender bias' tradition.

This imbalanced condition arises due to lengthy shackling of society by patriarchal and 'gender bias' values in perceiving relationship between men and women. Patriarchal society demands society's recognition of the power of men and anything with male characteristics. In its perception, men and women are two different creatures so they shall be strictly segregated; men occupy the public sphere while women shall occupy the domestic sphere. Women's position shall be subordinate to that of men. What makes matters worse, a number of religious interpretations confirm such a 'gender bias' perception. It is therefore, necessary to give new more humanistic and more gender-sensitive insights to religious leaders, both men and women, so that in turn there will be a growing awareness in their circles regarding the necessity of religious reinterpretation of tradition, particularly regarding gender issues.

The number of women arising as leaders in various religious communities, including Islam, is very limited, and usually only found in communities or institutions whose members consist entirely of women, such as Islamic Women Organization or Women Islamic Boarding School (*Pesantren Perempuan*). The existing data show that only a few women are successful in becoming the highest leaders in religious organizations or communities where members consist of both sexes. Besides, organizations in which the women appear as leaders are only "annexed organizations" which essentially are part of a holding organization which is led by men. Let us take several religion-based organizations. In Islamic circles, Aisyiah Organization is just an annex or Women's Department of Muhammadiyah; other examples are the Catholic Women's Organization, Hinduism Women's Organization, Buddhism Women's Organization, Women's Bureau of Indonesian Church Association (PGI), etc.

An annexed organization is surely not strong. Such condition does not make the relevant organization fully independent, particularly in determining vision and mission of organization. This organization will always refer to principles outlined by its holding organization which is--*nota bene*-- established on patriarchal values. Then, viewed from the aspect of program, it is obvious that the main program of women's organizations is mostly focused on preaching, education, and socio-economy or charity. In addition, the main objective of the organization is developing women of high devotion and morality with awareness of their rights and obligations according to Islam, and loyal to nation and state. It seems that such an organization still focuses on "women's welfare interests".

Their programs are still women's welfare improvement-oriented, such as fulfilling the nutritional needs of pregnant women. In other words, programs offered by religion-based women organizations are still on the level of short-term women's practical needs, such as clothes, food, health, housing, and social necessities. Whereas programs of women's strategic interest, such as empowerment, awareness-building, and improvement in women's position and status have not yet been seriously handled yet.

No wonder that criticism appears that religion-based women's organizations in Indonesia have not been able yet to differentiate between women's interest and gender issues which become the main attention of global current women's development programs. Therefore, there is nothing wrong if we conclude that the activity of religion-based women organizations mostly focuses on practical needs and has not yet touched essential issues such as strategic interest.

This misogynistic attitude towards women stems from two factors: First, the role of traditional Islamic leaders in spreading a discourse on women is less than appreciative. In addition, the fact that religious discourse in Indonesian Islamic society is *fiqh*-oriented. Second, the mainstream culture in Indonesia is patriarchal. In Indonesia there is a confluence between patriarchal culture and traditions, especially in traditional Islamic society. These two factors work together to create a perspective which marginalizes women.

Actually, Islam in its early period demonstrated its capacity to free its people, especially the women, from any shackle that was discriminatory. Islam is considered by its followers *'rahmatan li al-alamin'*, to be a religion that spreads mercy to all creatures. An example of this mercy is that Islam admits women as equal to men. The measure of a person's glory to their God is dependent on their achievement and the quality of their conduct ('*taqwa*'), without making a difference between the sexes (Q.S. Al-Hujurat, 49: 13). Al-Qur'an does not adhere to the concept of a "second sex" in which one gender or one ethnicity is given priority over another. Every person, regardless of sex or race, has the same chance to be a worshipper and a vicegerent (Q.S. an-Nisa', 4: 142 and an-Nahl, 16: 97).

Consequently, Islam does not justify the domination of a group of humans over others, including of men over women. Islam, according to its name "salima" (سلم) means "peace and safety", and is a religion that gives priority to love, peace, and safety. As a result all kinds of discrimination are inexcusable and not justified by Islam. But in fact, Islam is often considered a religion that preserves discrimination within society. This view may be caused by misinterpretation of Islamic teachings that are removed from their historical context (*asbab an-nuzl*). Such misinterpretations can be seen, for example, in the interpretation of the verses below: 1) Q.S. an-Nisa', 4: 1 talking about the sameness of human being, 2) al-A'raf, 7: 17-25: talking about mistakes made by Adam and Eve in heaven, 3) an-Nisa', 4: 34: expressing that men are the leaders of women, and 4) Ali 'Imran, 3: 36: expressing that men are different from women. In Islamic teaching men are not promised priority with regard to faith, deed, merit or torture in the hereafter. Women have equal opportunities to conduct themselves in the same manner as men in terms of deeds. All mankind, men and women, are equal before God, and their glory is dependent only on the quality of their correct conduct (*taqwa*).

A PATRIARCHAL CULTURE

One of the important things discussed by women in Indonesia is the patriarchal culture, which is considered the root of the misogyny that gives rise to all forms of discriminatory treatment towards women. The concept of patriarchy has caused gender interpretations in Islamic teachings that misrepresent the power of men. An example are the books of Islamic jurisprudence which are mainly written by male scholars. As a result it can be suggested that the problems faced by women in Islamic jurisprudence are not written according to the experience and religious understanding of women themselves. This is largely because of the belief held by the general Islamic public that they do not have the authority to refer directly to the Holy Qur`an and Sunnah, but must, instead, rely on the preacher to interpret the Holy Qur`an and Sunnah.

The patriarchal culture always includes efforts to curb women's freedom and to limit the extent of women's power to the realm of domesticity. The effect of this is that women lack autonomy and are very dependent on men both economically and psychologically. In addition to this, Islamic moral and social norms, as well as the law, take sides with men more than with women. The human rights of women are restricted by religious and cultural values that are adhered to within traditional Islamic society.

Gender inequity and gender stereotype are still very strong in Indonesia. In most regions, especially in rural areas, the traditional customs, beliefs in what is still taboo, and social pressure still oppress women. Daughters are always fed less, made to leave school earlier, and get poorer

health treatment than do male children. When still young, women are often forced to marry at a young age, and sometimes they are forced into prostitution. Apart from their roles as a wife and mother, most women are still treated as machines and, in general, do not know their own reproduction rights.

When Soeharto took control of the government in 1965, Soeharto not only took control of the government, but the freedom of people's movement as well. Most professional and religious-cultural organizations remained under government ruling, such as labour organizations, medical organizations, business organizations, and of course Islamic organizations, in order to control Muslim people to behave and practice the rules of law under the government's guidance.

The existence of Islamic Law in Indonesia always takes two forms: a normative law which is implemented consciously by the *ummah*, and a formal law which is legislated as a positive law for the ummah. The first type adopts a cultural approach, whereas the second uses a structural approach. The legislating process adopts the second type of Islamic law. In the first place, the Islamic law is formally legislated for the benefit of the Muslim people (*ummah*), such as Law on Islamic Court, Compilation of Islamic Law,[2] Law on Haj Pilgrimage Management, and Law on Zakat Management. In the second place, the materials contained in Islamic Law are integrated into a national law without formally mentioning Islamic Law, such as the Law on Marriage promulgated in 1974.

Alt least, there are five main problems with Indonesia`s Marriage Law, that involve the definition of marriage, minimum marriage age, polygamous marriage, husband and wife position, and husband and wife rights. First, the definition of valid marriage: The Marriage Law does not explicitly place registration as a requisite of valid marriage. Consequently, many marriages (some 40 percent) are not registered. Lack of people's awareness to register their marriage is influenced, among others, by the *fiqh* outlook which perceives the validity of marriage in terms of the fulfillment of the obligatory requirements, '*ijab kabul*' (pronouncement of marriage contract), the presence of bride and bridegroom to be united in marriage, guardian for the bride, qualified witnesses, and an 'offer'. Registration is not included in the requirement for marriage to be valid. In addition to being influenced by the religious point of view, other factors which have contributed to the reluctance on the part of the married people to register the marriage, are high cost, complexity, and avoidance of government service.

---

[2] Compilation of Islamic Law is a compilation of Islamic law materials containing marriage law, inheritance (*waris*), and property donated for religious or community use (*waqaf*), which have been formulated by the Indonesian Ulama, and legalized by the Government through Presidential Instruction in 1991. This compilation is intended as additional substance to the structure of the Religious Court.

In the sociological context, unregistered marriage has always resulted in a negative impact on women and children, for the reason that without possessing a marriage certificate, wife and children are not equipped with a legal foundation to claim their rights for inheritance, rights for basic necessities of life, and other rights. Ambiguity arises as regards the validity of marriage. To ordinary people in general, validity of a marriage is marked by the fulfillment of the above mentioned requirements, although the marriage is not registered at the marriage registrar's office. Meanwhile, to the law-enforcing institutions, such as religious court, for a marriage to be valid, in addition to meeting those requirements, it must be registered as evidenced by the State's issuance of a Marriage Certificate.

To protect the rights and interests of wife and child, it is proposed that marriage registration be included as one of the requirements for a marriage to be valid, drawing an analogy from the Al-Qur'an which stipulates the importance of registration of every important transaction made, such as the transaction of lending and borrowing. Marriage is essentially,even more important than any other kind of transaction in the life of mankind. If a certain transaction must be registered, isn't a marriage a more crucial deal to be registered?

Secondly, there is the issue of imposed minimum marriage age. One of the factors which serve the background why the Marriage Law was formulated is widespread child marriage (underage marriage). Another factor is the frequent occurrence of polygamy and high rate of arbitrary divorce which has caused ex-wives and children to suffer and be neglected. As regards the minimum marriage age, the Marriage Law imposes the minimum marriage age of 19 for boys and 16 for girls. The imposition of minimum marriage age of 16 for girls, three years lower than that for boys, has indirectly substantiated the subordinate position of the wife to the husband. Why should there be different minimum ages set between girls and boys? Besides, the determination of the minimum age of 16 violates the substance of the International Convention on Child Rights, which was also ratified by Indonesia in 1990. The Convention underscored that the minimum age is 18 years. To legalize a marriage of a girl at the age of 16 means that the government legitimates child marriage and this undoubtedly violates the child's rights.

Thirdly there is the issue of polygamous marriage. The Marriage Law contains in itself an internal inconsistency because, paragraph 1 stipulates that the principle of marriage is monogamous,[3] but the next paragraph gives ample room for a man to carry out polygamous marriage although the number of wives as specified here is limited to four. What is worth noting is that one of the requirements to be met by a husband to

[3] In line with the research results which assert that monogamy is the firm and main principle in Islamic marriage, see Siti Musdah Mulia, *Poligami Dalam Pandangan Islam*, Jakarta , 2000.

marry a second wife is the knowledge and consent of his first wife. What has often happened in reality is that the consent of a wife has often been manipulated and made up in various ways. Even in the event that the first wife does not give her consent, the Islamic Religious Court can take over the provision of such consent. The reasons of the Court for giving permit to the husband to contract polygamous marriage is as follows: the wife cannot perform her duty as a wife; the wife is physically disabled or suffers incurable diseases; and the wife cannot bear him a child. The three reasons as contained in the Marriage Law do not at all accommodate the divine indictment of Allah the Almighty in Q.S. al-Nisa, 4 :19.

In Indonesia's context, the arguments that can be adopted to strictly prohibit polygamy are the frequent occurrence of '*sirri*' (unrecorded marriage), the high rate of child marriage, the increasing intensity of domestic violence, and the rampant violation of Human Rights, especially violence against women and child abuse. Pursuant to the principle of 'fiqh': when a human action is conceived as producing more 'mudharah' or even '*mafsadah*' (harm) than '*mashlahah*', the 'hukum' (Islamic law's judgment) is '*haram*' (forbidden). It is for this reason that polygamy must be forbidden due to the fact that it is more 'mudharah' than 'mashlahah'.

Fourthly, there is the issue of the husband's and wife's positions. The Marriage Law places husband as the head of the family and wife as housewife. The use of the word "head" connotes domination and gives an impression of authoritarianism. It is quite understandable that ordinary people will regard the husband's position as being identical to a ruler. The implication brought about by this understanding is that a husband may rule in an authoritarian way in his family kingdom, including ordering his wife about with all household activities, and providing her husband with a wide array of services, both physical and mental. Generally speaking, the husband's stereotyped outlook into his family is based on too literal and textual an interpretation made into the Al-Qur'anic verse of al-Nisa, 4 :34 :arr-rijal qawwamuuna 'ala an-nisaa', which is always interpreted that a man is a woman's leader. [4]

Fifthly, there is the issue of the rights of husband and wife. UUP has obviously strengthened the standardized role of a wife based on sex and at the same time substantiates her as a domesticated creature. This domestication is geared to man's effort to domesticate a woman, and segregate her freedom and room. In the community, the obligation of a wife towards her husband is understood as unlimited, as evidenced by the emergence of a cliche: "A wife's obligations and duties are to serve her husband starting from the time he sets his eyes open (wakes up) until he sets his eyes down (falls asleep)." The stipulation that the wife is obliged to

[4] Among others are QS. *al-Baqarah*, 2:187; *al-Hujurat*, 49:13; *an-Nisa*, 4:19.

arrange her household duties well justifies the community's stereotyped idea that the place of a woman is at home.

CONCLUSION

The Islamic teachings, especially those pertaining to women's issues, have generally been read with the understanding which has transcended the text comprehension of the holy books, so that they are out of their historical and anthropological contexts. The *ummah*, therefore, says Syatibi, has long been absorbed into the textual understanding so that they neglect the consideration of *mashlahah* which--*nota bene*--is the purpose of the *syariah* (maqashid al-syariah).[5] The same thing is also expressed by Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd,-- that the religious text-reading done by the Islamic Community has given more emphasis to *talwin* instead of *takwil*; therefore it is not surprising that their reading is mostly influenced by certain ideology or biases.[6]

In conclusion, I observe attentively the word of Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyah, an expert in law of the Hambali school of Islamic law: that Islamic law ('syariah') is built for the interest and universal cause of humanity, namely 'al-mashalahat', 'al 'adl', 'al-rahmat', and 'al-hikmah'. Everything which contradicts such essential and underlying purpose is not part of 'syariah', inspite of being organized in a systematic way.[7] *In uriidu illa al-ishlah mastatha'tu. Wa ma tawfiqy illa billah. Wa Allah a'lam bi al-shawab.*

Islamic State University (IAIN)
Jakarta, Indonesia

[5] See Syatibi, 1975, p.10
[6] See generally Hamid Abu Zayd, 2003
[7] Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyah, *A'lam a-Muwaqqi'in,* p. 3.

PART III

RELIGION, CULTURE AND INTERCULTURAL COOPERATION

CHAPTER XIV

POLITICAL LIBERALISM: A DEFENSE[1] OF STATE NEUTRALITY AND CIVIL TOLERANCE

ROY VORAGEN

> "The only alternative to a principle of toleration is the autocratic use of state power."
>
> --John Rawls[2]

Even though human rights, democracy, and rule of law dominate socio-political and legal-institutional debates, the contents of these ideals in particular and liberalism in general are widely contested as hiding anti-communal or Western values. By example: "Liberalism has its loopholes. The celebration of strong individualism erodes values by clinging to empty proceduralism."[3] And Samuel Huntington says that "What is universalism to the West is imperialism to the rest"[4]. But Thomas Paine already observed 200 years ago that political freedom and democracy are valuable anywhere.[5]

Liberalism is not the same as capitalism; a capitalist country can be illiberal. Liberalism is not the same as democracy; a democratic country can be illiberal.[6] Liberalism is not the same as the rule of law; a country ruled

---

[1] The nature of a defense is clarification -- nothing new can be said. Political Liberalism in this paper is limited to the state. Rawls has always been reluctant to extend his theory of justice to the scale of the world order; he defined the limits of political liberalism in the 'Law of Peoples', Rawls, J., *The Law of Peoples*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001. But Thomas Pogge claims that Kant's imperative has political implications for the global order, see Pogge, T.W., *World poverty and human rights, Cosmopolitan responsibilities and reforms*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002

[2] See p230, Rawls, J., 'Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical', in: *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol.14, No.3, Summer 1985, pp223-251.

[3] See http://www.crvp.org/conf/2005/southeastasia.htm.

[4] See p184, Huntington, S.P., The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996.

[5] See p33, Sen, A., 'Human Rights and Asian Values', in: *The New Republic*, 217: 2-3, 1997, pp33-40; and can be downloaded from: http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/sen.htm.

[6] Elections can be manipulated to serve certain interests that go against therights of individuals, see Zakaria, F., 'Democracies that take liberties', in: *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 76, no.6, November/December 1997, pp22-42; and

by law can be illiberal. Liberalism is also not confined to a certain geography, i.e. the West.[7]

In the following pages I defend a notion of liberalism, i.e. political liberalism. I show why it is more prudential – but not more true than by example religion. Political liberalism does not have loopholes and it does not celebrate individualism in the sense of a fragmented, nihilistic, egocentric, solipsistic, or consumerist self. Political liberalism is more prudential than other political theories because it is able to accommodate existing disagreements on what is the conception of the good life and it is able to appease conflicts between adherents of different conceptions of the good life.

Political liberalism as a political theory is a continuation of moral philosophy in two ways; firstly, "moral philosophy sets the background for, and boundaries of, political philosophy. What persons may and may not do to one and another limits what they may do through the apparatus of a state, or do to establish such an apparatus. We have moral obligations towards each other, some of which are matters of public responsibility, others of which are matters of personal responsibility [...]. [...] Secondly, [...] any account of our public responsibility must fit into a broader moral framework that makes room for, and makes sense of, our private responsibilities."[8]

In the next section I show that the critics of liberalism and counterproposals of communitarians are not only very unpractical and even dangerous, but also unnecessary because of misunderstanding political liberalism. In the third section I contrast political liberalism with comprehensive liberalism, i.e. liberalism that promotes strong individualism. In the fourth section I state that political liberalism needs a notion of individualism, i.e. individualism as citizenship. In the fifth section I discuss the rule of law and democracy, it is necessary to know how to legitimize and limit state power. In section seven I discuss tolerance as a virtue, if we

---

Jayasuriya, K., 'The advent of Asia's "Illiberal Democracies"', in: *The Asian Wall Street Journal*, 14 July 1999, p8; and Chua, A., World on Fire, How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability, New York: Doubleday, 2003.

[7] Defying a political theory as Western could also be a power struggle against Western hegemony; see Buruma, I., Margalit, A., 'Occidentalism', in: *The New York Review of Books*, January 17, 2002, pp4-7; Lee Kuan Yew, 'Is democracy necessary?' in: *The Weekend Australian*, 24-25 April 1993, p20; and Barber, B., Jihad vs McWorld, Terrorism's Challenge to Democracy, London: Corgi Books, 2003.

[8] See p6, Kymlicka, W., Contemporary Political Philosophy, An Introduction, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997; and p6, Nozick, R., Anarchy, State, and Utopia, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998. See also p168, Berlin, I., Liberty, (edited by Hardy, H.), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002; "Political theory is a branch of moral philosophy, which starts from the discovery, or application, of moral notions in the sphere of political relations."

want to limit state power it is important to discuss how society can handle a plurality of conflicting normative systems without the need to fall back on the state apparatus to do so on occasions of arising conflicts. And in the final section I will discuss two examples on the public debate in Europe on the headscarf to show the meaning of neutrality and tolerance in practice, and that is exactly where the strength of political liberalism lies.

ANTI-LIBERALISM

Let me start this section with a quotation from Robert Unger: "Community is held together by an allegiance to common purposes. The more these shared ends express the nature of humanity rather than simply the preferences of particular individuals and groups, the more would one's acceptance of them become an affirmation of one's own nature [...]. The conflict between the demands of individuality and of sociability would disappear."[9] Liberalism can be blamed for too much individualism, but this is for sure too little. And it is also problematic that community and individual are understood in a metaphysical way: they not only have a true meaning, it is also natural that community and individual are linked in a specific way. But there is no general agreement when it comes to metaphysics, and therefore political liberalism does not ground political institutions on nature or on truth.

The quote above echoes Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau claimed that we can distinguish the general will from the will of all as the sum of all separate citizens in a society properly understood. The general will aims at the common good of the sovereign people, and people is here understood as a whole. Rousseau's theory is romantic but dangerous. The question remains how to determine the general will. The danger is that the so called common good will be identical with an individual conception of the good. His theory can lead to a totalitarian state because Rousseau believes that individuals do not necessarily know what is good for themselves: "Whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be compelled to do so by the whole of society, which means nothing more or less than that he will be forced to be free."[10] And to be forced to be free is something that 'horrifies' liberals.[11]

If Unger's above quoted idea of society is to work, existing society needs to change dramatically first, but at least he himself recognized the

---

[9] See p220, Unger, R., Knowledge and Politics, New York: Free Press, 1975; see also p85, Tamanaha, B.Z., On the Rule of Law, History, Politics, Theory, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

[10] See Rousseau, J-J., The Social Contract, as quoted at p179, Hampsher-Monk, I., A History of Modern Political Thought, Major Political Thinkers from Hobbes to Marx, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997.

[11] See pp208-10, Berlin, Liberty. I refer here to liberals as adherents of political liberalism, but it, of course, counts also for adherents of comprehensive liberalism.

inherent danger of it. The neo-Aristotelian, Alasdair MacIntyre, though, is more persistent with his anti-liberalism.[12] For MacIntyre the moral starting point is what "I inherit from the past of my family, my city, my tribe, my nation, a variety of debts, inheritances, rightful expectations and obligations."[13] What MacIntyre in fact criticizes is the individualism of Jean-Paul Sartre: we do not exist because of a past, because of a community; we can – and should – be able to choose – sometimes at random, sometimes daily, sometimes revoked – according to our liking. Liberals, though, do not reject communal values as authoritative horizons, but what liberals in fact say is that individuals should take responsibility for their past and community by closely scrutinizing their past and community, not to ruin but to keep values, communities and its horizons alive.[14] Liberals acknowledge that a valuable life is a life that is lived with and committed to others, and commitments are not questioned every day, otherwise they would not be commitments. But what liberals do not accept is that there is nothing in between acceptance of our community and its goals on one side and on the other Nietzschean nihilism.[15] Communitarians say that the self cannot be divided from its ends, and we can discover those ends only in the community we live in,[16] but living in a community is for liberals not incompatible with criticizing or changing attachments; and re-examining our values and our position towards them requires a certain degree of freedom.

Aristotle, like Rousseau, saw the political arena as the place to excel, because only in society in general and within politics in specific can people realize their true humanity. But we do not agree on what brings about human excellence and because of this disagreement politics is not the right arena in which to excel. We can conclude this section that: "[Communitarians] have assumed that a society must either be a whole, all parts animated by a common view of the good, or collapse into atomistic individualism."[17] This idealized vision of society as brotherhood held together by a metaphysical account on human nature and human excellence fails to acknowledge that we disagree about what is the good life we can live. We have to recognize the fact that many human ideals exist, not all of them are incommensurable and not all values can be put on a scale to

---

[12] See MacIntyre, A., After Virtue, A Study in Moral Theory, London: Duckworth, 1981.

[13] See p205, idem.

[14] See p66, 73, Taylor, C., The Ethics of Authenticity, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991.

[15] See p159, Taylor, C., Hegel and Modern Society, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

[16] See Sandel, M., Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

[17] See px, Larmore, C.E., Patterns of Moral Complexity, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

determine the highest.[18] Political liberalism is able to accommodate existing pluralism by making a state-society distinction: the state is to be neutral about what is the best life to live, and citizens have to tolerate each other's decisions on their ideal of the good life.

COMPREHENSIVE LIBERALISM: A THICK CONCEPTION OF THE GOOD

Political liberalism does not only make a distinction between the political and society, as stated at the end of the last section, but also between the public and the private. What is important in moral life is that we have duties to others, and "that these [duties] are incomparably more weighty than the requirements of a good, or fulfilled, or valuable, or worthwhile life".[19] Political liberalism adheres to a thin conception of the good, and that only the thin conception of the good serves as a moral guideline for politics, i.e. that all citizens deserve 'equal concern and respect'.[20] And only when the requirements of this moral bottom-line are met is the right prior to the good;[21] it is this egalitarian bottom-line that defines when the right is prior to the good.[22] This bottom-line functions as a framework to set out which conceptions of the good are permissible and which are not. Within this framework permissible conceptions of the good can be pursued.[23]

The thin conception of the good should be independent of controversial, thick conceptions of the good life.[24] This political conception is, of course, a moral conception, but only insofar as to serve as the bottom-line of our legal-political institutions.[25] A thick conception can not be agreed upon to serve as the basis for our legal-political structures, the thin conception of the good political liberalism promotes, though, allows a diversity of conceptions on the good life.[26] Political liberalism is not grounded upon metaphysics, nor is it an epistemological doctrine to discover the truth. Political liberalism does not intend to reveal the truth; instead it serves as a "political agreement between citizens viewed as free

---

[18] See p216, Berlin, Liberty; and p248, Rawls, 'Justice as Fairness'.

[19] See p533, Taylor, C., Sources of the Self, The Making of the Modern Identity, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

[20] See Chapter VII, Section 60, Rawls, J., A Theory of Justice, Revised Edition, Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 1999.

[21] See p347, idem. If we have no moral bottom-line, thus when something is right because the law says so or does not prohibit it, the state could make laws that violate the fundamental rights of its citizens, cf. Nazi Germany.

[22] See p89, Taylor, Sources of the Self.

[23] See pp249-50, Rawls, 'Justice as Fairness'.

[24] See p223, idem.

[25] See p224, idem.

[26] See p225, idem.

and equal persons."[27] This political agreement is only to work on a basis of mutual respect between the citizens. To secure this political agreement we try to find an overlapping consensus, a *modus vivendi*. And to reach an overlapping consensus we have to avoid issues under dispute, not because they are not important, but because we have an obligation towards one and another: we are responsible for the political community and should therefore recognize that some disputes cannot be solved through political means.[28]

Comprehensive liberalism is a thick conception of the good life, i.e. it promotes the perfection of the individual, as we can see in the work of J.S. Mill and Kant.[29] And this conception of the good is "extended too far when presented as the only appropriate foundation for a constitutional regime. So understood, liberalism becomes but another sectarian doctrine." [30] The public acceptance of political liberalism is prudential; this acceptance is based on a *modus vivendi* which allows citizens to pursue their own thick conception of the good,[31] comprehensive liberalism as personal autonomy is one among many valuable thick conceptions of the good life that can be allowed to be advanced. This *modus vivendi* is not based on skepticism or on indifference, but is exactly the result of every one's responsibility to take into account that every one has an equal right to pursue one's conception of the good life.[32]

Kingdom of Ends: Equality and Liberty

In section II we saw how difficult it is to define a people, a community based on true nature. This should not mean we are to leap into the other extreme: an extreme, nihilistic form of individualism. Such an extreme is exemplified by Friedrich Nietzsche.[33] He despised liberalism for

---

[27] See p230, idem.

[28] See p230, idem; also Rawls, J., 'Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory', in: Collected Papers, (edited by Freeman, S.), Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999, pp303-358.

[29] See also Raz, J., The Morality of Freedom, Oxford: Clarendon Paperbacks, 1988; especially Section II. Berlin goes so far to say that the individualism of J.S. Mill and Kant is self-defeating, to live beyond the realm of natural causality – Kant – or to let go a wish if one cannot attain it – J.S. Mill – leads to self-denial and ultimately to suicide; see pp184-7, Berlin, Liberty.

[30] See p246, Rawls, 'Justice as Fairness'.

[31] See p247, idem.

[32] Just as a private language is impossible, so is a strictly individual conception of the good life.

[33] Nehemas treats Nietzsche's 'extremism' as metaphorical, see Nehemas, A., Nietzsche, Life as Literature, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985; but the frequency and persistence of extreme notions in Nietzsche's work

its egalitarianism, he believed that mankind has the duty to bring forth the 'Übermensch', he says: "Mankind must work continually to produce individual great human beings – this and nothing else is the task […] for the question is this: how can your life, the individual life, retain the highest value, the deepest significance? […] Only by your living for the good of the rarest and most valuable specimens."[34]

Aristotle and Nietzsche thought only few people are capable of perfection themselves, and others – slaves, women, '*Üntermenschen'* – can be used on mere whim. Not for Immanuel Kant: "Man […] exists as an end in himself. Whatever he may do, involving only himself or other rational beings, he must always be valued as an end, not merely as a means to be used at the whim of this or that will. […] A person is an object of respect; thus we cannot treat him in any arbitrary fashion. […] [H]e is an objective end, one who exists in himself as an end. We cannot make him a mere means to some end substituted in his place."[35] Every man is a rational being of intrinsic value not because every man has actually a good will, but because man could potentially have a good will, and because of man's potential we consider man of intrinsic value. This means we should be able to explain and justify our actions. From this Kant defines the practical imperative: "Always act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in another, as an end, and never merely as a means."[36]

The individual is situated or embedded as the communitarians say, but at the very same time we must say with Kant and Robert Nozick that "Individuals have rights, and there are things no person or group may do to them (without violating their rights)."[37] The quoted imperative states that rational beings have the right not to be merely used as means to a goal and our duty not to treat other rational beings as merely a means. The imperative does not say that beings are nothing but rational, because such a being has no reason to choose one thing over the other. The context in which we conduct our lives is important, but can change over time, though horizons can move through revaluations.

---

makes it difficult to treat those notions as ironic, see Rorty, R., Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

[34] Nietzsche, F., Untimely Meditations, Third Essay: Schopenhauer as Educator, Section 6, cited from p127, Hollingsdale, Nietzsche: The Man and His Philosophy, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965. See also Nietzsche, F., Thus spoke Zarathustra, (translated by Hollingdale, R.J.), London: Penguin Classics, 1969.

[35] See p155, Kant, I., On the Foundation of Morality, (translated and commented by Liddell, B.E.A.), Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970. See also Korsgaard, C.M., Creating the Kingdom of Ends, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

[36] See pp156-7, idem.

[37] See pix, Nozick, Anarchy, State, and Utopia.

Political liberalism makes a state-society division because of a plurality of normative value systems, and liberals do not want the state to decide which one is the best good life. Where Aristotle develops his theory of the right from his teleological doctrine of the good, liberals see the right as prior to the good,[38] and "given the priority of right, the choice of our conception of the good is framed within definite limits."[39] By example, no one is allowed to enslave or mutilate another, even if we have the other's consent (we are also not allowed to use ourselves as mere means).

Human beings are entitled to 'equal concern and respect' when they are able to give justice, i.e. to treat humanity at least as an end. This right – to 'equal concern and respect – is possessed by human beings as moral beings, irrespective of their social position; a right moral beings possess not by virtue of birth or excellence nor wealth.[40] "Moral persons are distinguished by two features: first they are capable of having (and are assumed to have) a conception of their good (as expressed by a rational plan of life); and second they are capable of having (and are assumed to acquire) a sense of justice, a normally effective desire to apply and to act upon the principles of justice, at least to a certain degree."[41]

From Kant's imperative we will derive in the next section the neutrality of the state.

Neutrality: the Political rather than Metaphysical State

Political liberalism does not constrain the liberty of a citizen because his conception of the good is viewed as inferior to other conceptions. A government must treat its citizens "with concern, that is, as human beings who are capable of suffering and frustration, and with respect, that is, as human beings who are capable of forming and acting on intelligent conceptions of how their life should be lived." [42] Political liberalism states as its central doctrine that citizens should be governed with a conception of equality, i.e. each and every citizen has the equal right to be treated with concern and respect. There are two ways to interpret this abstract right. First, it is the right to equal treatment, by example the one-man-one-vote principle in democracy. Second, it is the right to be treated as equals. The second is the more fundamental right, and where the first holds it follows from the second: equal treatment follows from the duty we have

[38] See p491, Rawls, J., A Theory of Justice.

[39] See p493, idem.

[40] See pp180-2, Dworkin, R., Taking Rights Seriously, London: Duckworth, 2000.

[41] See p442, Rawls, A Theory of Justice, and at the same page: "[T]hat moral personality is here defined as a potentiality that is ordinarily realized in due course".

[42] See p272, Dworkin, Taking Rights Seriously.

to treat others as equals as well as we have the right to be treated as equals.[43]

This fundamental right – the right citizens hold against their government to be treated with 'equal concern and respect' – is the rationale for state neutrality. "[P]luralism and disagreement about the good life do make political neutrality reasonable […]."[44] And neutrality is not justified by appealing to comprehensive liberalism, i.e. individual autonomy as human flourishing. Neutrality is a response to pluralism of existing conceptions of the good life without any hierarchy among them (this pluralism is thus different from comprehensive liberalism, which treats pluralism as more or less as the outcome of personal autonomy). The state should not promote a particular conception of the good life because it is supposed to be intrinsically better, i.e. truer, than other conceptions of the good life.

Now we can define neutrality: Neutrality means that political power is not to be used to promote a certain thick conception of the good. When policy is designed, only those arguments are allowed that have no linkage to controversial parts of thick conceptions of the good; and when policy is implemented people should be treated in accordance with neutrality. When the principle of neutrality endangers other liberal ideals, concessions are allowed when done in the spirit of neutrality.[45] Neutrality is with regard to controversial conceptions of the good life. The neutral state does not need to be neutral to what every one agrees upon.[46]

Neutrality does not mean that public interests are superior to the goals of thick conceptions of the good. And neutrality also does not demand

---

[43] See p273, also p227, idem. It is this distinction that communist theorists missed, they only saw the first, the derivative: to treat every one in an equal manner.

[44] See pp50-1, Larmore, Patterns of Moral Complexity.

[45] This definition leaves room for emancipation policy. Policy on emancipation can be necessary when a polity has been too long ignorant of the inequality between its members. Positive discrimination – i.e. policy that allows temporary preferential treatment – to improve by example the lives of Afro-Americans in the United States is justified because of long periods of slavery, apartheid, and racism. The definition also leaves room for some form of paternalism, by example when it comes to education. Paternalism can be justified when weakness of the will is the case. An:example: legislation on the mandatory use of seatbelts gives people an extra incentive to use the seatbelt because they know it is for their own safety, see pp200, 232, Kymlicka, Contemporary Political Philosophy. For this example to work we have to view a fine as in our interest and not in the interest of the one who enforces the law and hands out the fine. And the neutral state is not incompatible with the welfare state, but the welfare state could be incompatible with the rule of law, because welfarism gives the state power to decide in individual cases.

[46] See p55, Larmore, Patterns of Moral Complexity.

that the state should strive to a public sphere that is devoid of any values in general or religiosity in particular.[47] The neutral state is not a state that promotes secularization, but it gives room to all religions. The neutral state is not allowed to force a conception of the good on society, nor is it allowed to force its citizens to believe in a certain way. A neutral state leaves religion to society, and not necessarily secluded to the private sphere.[48] Neutrality is a political ideal and it does not demand that non-state institutions should be founded and operated in a likewise manner. Neutrality also does not mean that citizens should treat each other in a neutral way. Neutrality regulates the public relations between the state and its citizens; it does not regulate the private sphere. Neutrality is a political and not a social nor a private ideal.[49]

RULE OF LAW AND DEMOCRACY

Ancient Athens is generally seen as the birthplace of democracy. This view is problematic. Athens, first of all, was not always a democracy; the political system was sometimes oligarchic. And even when the polity was organized as a democracy not all inhabitants of Athens enjoyed citizenship, women, slaves, foreigners and descendents of foreigners (Aristotle was one of them) were excluded. And under ancient democracy the rights of a citizen were not fundamental; a majority vote could rule against a citizen (see the case against Socrates and the subsequent death penalty).[50] In ancient Athens no distinction was made between the political arena and society (as we have seen in Section II). Ancient Athens also had a state religion every one had to adhere to. Besides, the greatest theorists from this period, Plato and Aristotle, preferred aristocracy above democracy, the rule of the few best above the many. And knowledge of Greek civilization was long lost, because the ability to read Greek was lost during the Middle Ages. Only when Ibn Rushd (also known as Averroes) translated Aristotle's work did the Dark Ages became lighter. Despite the age of democracy, it is

[47] See pp186-7, Rawls, A Theory of Justice.

[48] Secularization is the process that less and less people intend to view themselves as part of a religion. And that they do not view themselves as a part of a religion does not necessarily mean they are atheists. We can define religion as an institutionalized belief system. See Chapter 10, Walzer, M., Spheres of Justice, A Defense of Pluralism and Equality, New York: Basic Books, 1983

[49] See p45-6, Larmore, Patterns of Moral Complexity.

[50] I discuss this at length in: 'As If We All Are Free, Socrates and Nietzsche on Moral Freedom', this text has earlier been spoken out as a general lecture at Universitas Parahyangan, Bandung, West Java, and forthcoming in: Melintas, 2005.

the rule of law that has shown a more continuous development in history, therefore I will discuss first the rule of law and next democracy.[51]

In the history of liberalism two things have been in the forefront: first, the legitimization of the ruler; and second, the limitation of the ruler's power. John Locke is a strong example of this. Locke is not concerned whether the form of a government is an oligarchy, democracy or even a monarchy,[52] Locke is concerned with the legitimation of polities. This legitimacy bounds the degree of power the state is allowed to hold over its citizens. Locke saw state legitimacy connected to rightful power, and rightful power is constrained power, constrained by law. Even though Locke's primary concern is not the form of the polity, and he therefore is not a democrat *per se*, giving consent to political obligations, though, is important to Locke (whether it is expressed or tacit consent).[53]

In the next three paragraphs I will discuss the rule of law by its three most important traits: 'government limited by law; formal legality; and rule of law, not man.'[54]

The first, 'government limited by law', is the oldest trait. The power of the state and its officials ought to be limited by law. This is first and foremost inspired not by safeguarding individual liberty, but by preventing state tyranny. State officials should not be above the law; they should be law-abiding as well. And when they change the law they cannot do it any way they like; democracy sets limits, as we will see below. Another legal limit on law-makers is the fundamental rights humans have as set forth in various declarations, like a Bill of Rights or the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The second trait is 'formal legality'. The principle of legality has four aspects. The first aspect of legality is that legal verdicts are based on written laws that make certain behaviors punishable. The second aspect is the principle of maximin certainty. That means that the boundaries of punishability should be defined as clearly as possible, thus the law should be foreseeable and accessible, which makes predictable what is and what is not punishable. The third aspect is that one is not to be punished by analogy, which means that a law defining a certain act is reused as an analog to turn

---

[51] It is a conceptual division, today we say we cannot have one without the other, see Plattner, M.F., 'Liberalism and Democracy; Can't Have One Without the Other', in: *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 77, no.2, March/April 1998, pp171-80.

[52] See Section 132, Locke, J., Two Treaties of Government, Second Treatise.

[53] See Sections 119, 120, 122, idem.

[54] See Chapter 9, Tamanaha, On the Rule of Law. See also Termorshuizen-Artz, M., 'The Concept Rule of Law', in: *Jentera, Jurnal Hukum*, edisi 3, tahun II, November 2004; and Peerenboom, R. (eds.), Asian Discourses of Rule of Law, Theories and Implementation of Rule of Law in twelve Asian Countries, France and the US, London/New York: Routledge, 2004.

another act into a crime as well and in so doing making it punishable. And the fourth aspect is non-retroactivity, which means one cannot be sentenced for a crime defined by a law that was not active at the time the crime was committed.[55]

The third trait, 'the rule of law, not man', is a fear and distrust of and shield against human weakness. For this reason Judith Shklar puts cruelty first as the worst human vice. To put cruelty first is to fear nothing more than fear. The fear of fear can be the end of political institutions such as rights (e.g. in many countries today limitations are brought on the rule of law because of the fear of terrorism). And the first right should be the protection against the fear of cruelty; other rights are derived from this right. Political liberalism wants to limit state power and wants to make power as predictable as possible.[56]

Democratic procedure is important to legitimate power. Democracy today differs as an ideal from ancient democracy because of its underlying egalitarianism. Democracy is legitimized when it meets the egalitarian demand: citizenship should be granted to all subject to the laws of that state (full inclusion), no one is to be excluded for arbitrary reasons, and every citizen has the right to be treated as equals, i.e. treated with 'equal concern and respect'. Every citizen is to be seen as autonomous, in the sense that every citizen is capable of reflective, critical and reasonable thinking. This intrinsic equality between citizens demands that "the government must give equal consideration to the good and interests of every person bound by those decisions."[57] It is unavoidable that from some government actions some conceptions of the good benefit more than others, some conceptions of the good are more expensive than others, the liberal state does not aim at a neutral outcome, it does not aim at making people equal.[58] In a democratic ruled polity injustice is still possible, but a democratic polity ruled by law is the best guarantee that the fundamental rights of all citizens are protected (and when harm is done there is the possibility to have recourse).[59]

Anarchists hope humans can do without political organization. And Karl Marx' ideal was that humans can provide their food, leisure, philosophize, and engage themselves in politics on the very same day. Polities, though, are too complex and too populated to exist without organization and representation. Dahl called the representative democracy with universal suffrage a polyarchy: the rule of the many; or – in Alexis de Tocqueville's words – the citizenry is the sovereign. This claim runs

---

[55] See part III and IV, Haveman, R.H., The Legality of Adat Criminal Law in Modern Indonesia, Jakarta: Tatanusa, 2002.

[56] See p237, Shklar, J.N., Ordinary Vices, Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1984.

[57] See p65, Dahl, R.A., On Democracy, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

[58] See pp43-4, Larmore, Patterns of Moral Complexity.

[59] See p48, Dahl, On Democracy.

counter to the traditional Platonic claim that often individuals do not know what is in their own best interest, and should therefore be led by the ones with knowledge, the philosophers.

To be able to participate in political life citizens are to be required to have freedom of expression. And freedom of expression is more than expressing one's own opinion. Freedom of expression also means that citizens have the right to get acquainted with other citizens' opinion. Citizens must have access to information that is not dominated by the government or by any another group.[60] A democratic polity that grants freedom of expression to all its citizens needs to deal with those who express hate and plan to overthrow the polity. But a democratic polity ought to do this in such a way that it does not betray its own principles: critics should not be dealt with in an autocratic manner.

Laws, of course, are not self-interpreting or self-applying.[61] Baron de Montesquieu gave an answer to this paradox of 'rule of law, not man' in his 'De l'Esprit des Lois', and it is known as *Trias Politica*: a system of checks and balances where power is balanced between separate powers: the executive, legislative and judicial, and each part is limited by the power of the other part. Another part of the answer lies in the ideal of state neutrality, as discussed in the previous section - thus, for example, judges have to appear neutral when interpreting the law and should refer to laws and not to the Bible.

TOLERANCE: A VIRTUE

So far political liberalism has been discussed from the point of view of how to limit state power so as to make public life more predictable. A more predictable public gives a better opportunity to pursue a conception of the good life. This, of course, can only work when citizens see neutrality, rule of law, and democracy as justified political means. If citizens do not want to restrain themselves as the state does – i.e. neutrality – or when citizens do not want to be involved in political institutions in a proper manner – i.e. citizens are not supposed to participate in political institutions to end democracy – political liberalism is not going to work. Political liberalism can only work when citizens agree with the rules of the game. And citizens have to realize that the game is in their mutual benefit: "[A] fair system of cooperation between free and equal persons."[62] Neutrality regulates the relation between the state and the citizens, this is a vertical relationship. Tolerance, on the other hand, is a social virtue which signifies the horizontal relationship between citizens. Citizens are not to be neutral about each other's life choices; therefore we need tolerance as a virtue.

---

[60] See pp96-7, Dahl, On Democracy.
[61] See p123, Tamanaha, On the Rule of Law.
[62] See p231, Rawls, 'Justice as Fairness'.

Tolerance is a moral virtue and as a moral virtue it is connected to the Kantian imperative that disallows disrespect of others' moral autonomy. Tolerance is a disposition. A disposition is a fully developed state, settled through habituation and education, to evaluate and do things in a certain manner and not in a different manner. There are three different dispositions: the good one, the virtue, and two vices.[63] Tolerance is the virtue. One vice, the deficiency, is dogmatism. The other vice, the excess, is indifference. Both vices are lack of respect of the other person.

Tolerance is respect for otherness, but that is not the same as opening the possibility to show affectionate friendship for the different other - that is too much inclusion. Some postmodernists seem to promote this position.[64] Tolerance directs a person towards something he perceives in a negative light. The person makes a negative judgment and prefers that the thing he has a negative judgment about would be negated, but he decides to tolerate and refrain from negation. This seems a paradox: why would we possibly want to tolerate something we do not value?

To solve this paradox we have to make a distinction between first-order judgments and second-order moral commitments.[65] First-order judgments include emotional reactions and other practical judgments that focus on concrete and particular attitudes and behaviors. The second-order moral commitment is the link to the Kantian imperative; it aims beyond emotion and particularity toward rational universal moral principles. The second-order commitment outweighs the first-order judgment, we have moral reasons to refrain from following through our initial negative judgment.

Tolerance is respect for the other's moral autonomy and is, therefore, not the same as indifference. Tolerance does not demand to be without opinion, we are still allowed to judge the other, but we have to discipline ourselves to restrain ourselves from acting upon the other. Tolerance is not easy, and, as with every virtue, it needs training and habituation. Indifference, on the other hand, is easy. And toleration is indifference without the tension between the first and second-order. Indifference does not acknowledge our negative judgment. We should not ignore our emotions. Emotions are cognitive connections with our surrounding. Tolerance does not require that we deny certain judgments; it requires that we refrain from acting upon them out of commitment to universal moral claims. Tolerance also does not involve moral skepticism as indifference does. Moral skepticism reduces judgments to mere tastes or preferences with no moral significance. Tolerance, though, is a moral virtue

---

[63] See p107, Book 2, Section VIII, 1108b9-33, Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, (translated by Thomson, J.A.K.), Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978.

[64] Like Young in the last chapter of her book: Young, I.M., Justice and the Politics of Difference, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.

[65] For this distinction and elaboration see Section 4 in Andrew Fiala's article on toleration at http://www.iep.utm.edu/t/tolerati.htm.

because it highlights the respect for every one's moral autonomy. Tolerance is no ethic of reciprocal non-interference,[66] since our lives are not confined to the private sphere, we should not want a culture of mutual avoidance.

Like indifference, dogmatism is too easy. Dogmatism also denies the tension between first-order judgments and second-order commitments. Dogmatism universalizes the values and judgments. Dogmatism is the position that requires one to conform to another's dogma. Tolerance is not a moral virtue that involves relativism. We do not have to tolerate when someone is dogmatic and does not respect someone else's autonomy. We do not have to tolerate bigotry. This non-toleration, though, should not become persecution (we should not want a witch hunt of the witch hunters). We do not tolerate the intolerant, not just because we disagree with their values, but because they threaten social peace. We cannot persecute them, but at the very same time we should prevent them from persecuting others – we can call this partial toleration.[67] In a stable society, we do not have to persecute the intolerant.[68] But as a general rule, says Habermas, "Tolerance only begins where discrimination ends,"[69]. The virtue of tolerance "only arises after those prejudices have been eliminated that led to discrimination in the first place."[70]

Tolerance covers more than freedom of conscience; the scope of toleration is as wide as freedom of speech, broadcasting, and print. If tolerance would be limited to freedom of conscience – i.e. freedom of thinking – without being allowed to express, we are confined to an inner citadel. To get people to conform to a truth is not the same as influencing people's conscious, political freedom, though, it is in such a situation abolished. As Socrates, Spinoza claims that we have the right to have more than an inward opinion, we also have the right to put this opinion to a test to express and discuss it.[71]

CONCLUSION

If we do not want our disagreements to lead to civil strife and civil

---

[66] See p155, Kymlicka, W., Multicultural Citizenship, A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003.

[67] See Essay II, Section 6.3, Kilcullen, J., Sincerity and Truth, Essays on Arnauld, Bayle, and Toleration, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.

[68] See p192, Rawls, A Theory of Justice. An example of some one we could tolerate partially is Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, while he himself is far from tolerant. March 3, 2005, he was sentenced to 30 months imprisonment.

[69] See p11, Habermas, J., 'Religious Tolerance, The Pacemaker for Cultural Rights', in: *Philosophy*, Vol.79, No.1, 2004, pp5-18.

[70] See p10, idem.

[71] See p18, Israel, J.I., Locke, Spinoza and the Philosophical Debate Concerning Toleration in the Early Enlightenment (c.1670-c.1750), Amsterdam: KNAW, 1999 (presented as a lecture, November 9, 1998).

war, we have to separate, as Thomas Hobbes already observed, politics from the metaphysical. This leads to the depoliticization of society. The ancient Greeks identified their polity as a whole; the political state and society were seen as an inseparable unity. Contemporary thinkers who try to revive the theory of the ancient polity bring in false assumptions: first, that the state can be seen as an extended family with a unifying purpose. Second, that individuals are 'political animals' who can only realize their being through politics. And third, that inequality is justified when every one has a particular function as a part in the whole.[72]

And it is the neutral state that depoliticizes pluralism. Neutrality goes necessarily together with every one's obligation to act upon the virtue of tolerance. Montesquieu emphasized the constitutive link between neutrality and the virtue of tolerance: "As soon as the laws of a land have come to terms with permitting several religions, they [the citizens] must oblige these [the laws] to show tolerance also to another."[73] And for the virtue of tolerance the universalization from our judgments of other people to moral commitments is important. Pierre Bayle wrote in length on tolerance, and he had the need: he was prosecuted by Catholics and virulently criticized by Protestants.[74] Bayle stressed that our place of birth and education influence our conception of the good: born in a different place we would be trained to have different opinions on matters. Spinoza agrees with him and forces us to look to our common nature – our rationality – and teaches us to live with the inevitable differences. Tolerance as a virtue takes the perspective of another person into account, but that does not mean that we ought to be neutral about someone else's opinion. Tolerance means that we are not allowed to use state institutions to persecute some values, nor should the state be taken over to make only a certain comprehensive conception of the good life possible. Tolerant people have negative judgments but restrain themselves towards fellow citizens.

I conclude with two examples on the heated headscarf debate in Europe. The first example is, of course, France, and the second is the United Kingdom.

France and Turkey are the only secular states. The ones who favor the secular state say that religion is a private matter that has to be kept out of the public domain.[75] In France a law is passed that rules out any religious

---

[72] For the first two see See Holmes, S.T., 'Aristippus in and out of Athens', in: *The American Political Science Review*, Vol.73, March 1979, pp113-28. Plato links in 'The Republic' the virtues of the different parts of the cities, 427d-434c, with different parts in a person, 434d-441c.

[73] Quoted from p6, Habermas, 'Religious Tolerance'.

[74] See Mori, G., 'Pierre Bayle, the Rights of the Conscience, the "Remedy" of Toleration', in: *Ratio Juris*, Vol.10, no.1, March 1997, pp45-60. See also Mori's website on Bayle (with e-texts, including Kilcullen): http://www.lett.unipmn.it/~mori/bayle/.

[75] See p15, Habermas, 'Religious Tolerance'.

symbol in public schools. But the students are not representatives of the government. And a religious symbol does not necessarily harm education. A Muslim girl wearing Islamic attire can perform just as well as any other student.. It would be something completely different if students would derive from this right the right to influence or even determine the curriculum of their school. The secular state overstates neutrality. Public space does not need to be a neutral arena, as long as religions do not want to overthrow the state and as long as a religion does not harm social peace. Neutrality is the relationship between the state and its citizens, it does not guide the relationships citizens might have in the public domain. France is too strict.

The situation in the United Kingdom is different from France. Public schools in the United Kingdom allow students to wear a headscarf. But for one student, Shabina Begum, this was not enough.[76] Although her school, Denbigh High School, used a dress code accommodating the students' wishes, Begum wanted to wear a stricter form of dress. And the school sent her home. Begum sought a judicial verdict, and finally the Court of Appeal granted it: The school had violated Begum's human right to exercise religion. This is a strange decision, the school already allowed its students to wear Islamic attire, the school only decided to draw a line. And can students now also demand to leave class to pray? The school already tried to accommodate the wishes of its students.. The students then have the duty not to be dogmatic (or choose a different school).

Neutrality and the virtue of tolerance are inclusive. Neutrality is egalitarian, because it forces the state to treat every citizen with 'equal concern and respect'. Neutrality does not promote a public space devoid of values, let alone religion. But a neutral state does not attempt to compel a belief on its citizens; the state exists for the sake of its citizens and should therefore avoid political instability. And the state will be more stable when more of its citizens are included, and they are included when they are are allowed to participate, i.e. democracy. And the virtue of tolerance is inclusive because by tolerating one another, citizens allow one another to

[76] See p12, Cawthorne, A., 'UK schoolgirl wins right to wear Muslim dress', in: *The Jakarta Post*, 3-3-2005; on the internet, among many others: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/beds/bucks/herts/4310545.stm;http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/_national_review-wrong.htm (the writer, T. Dalrymple, writes in rather apocalyptic terms, he sees the Western civilization at stake here); http://www.iccuk.org/media/reports/shabina_begum_wins_jilbab_case_against_school.htm (M. Hague writes as if Islam was under attack and has now won a battle); http://www.lawreports.co.uk/civmarf0.3.htm. And it is very strange thing that one of the advocates working on behalf of Begum was Cherie Booth, the wife of Tony Blair, the present prime minister of the UK.

participate in public life.[77] Tolerating differences is not the same as indifference; tolerance, though, is a moral virtue and does not cover injustice. We cannot, as Locke did in his 'Letter concerning Toleration', exclude fellow citizens from tolerance.[78] Tolerance is not a virtue between belief systems, but it is a virtue exercised by individuals towards individuals. Individuals can value and criticize the institutions they live in. Critics should not be condemned as heretic or blasphemous, as libelous or defamatory, as violating public or national integrity. The last thing we should want is the criminalization of expressions of opinion. Citizens will only be ably to interact peacefully – or civilly – when they are not dogmatic. And to say with Rawls: "The only alternative to a principle of toleration is the autocratic use of state power."[79]

Faculty of Philosophy
Parahyangan Catholic University
Bandung, Indonesia

[77] See p549, Rosenthal, M. A., 'Tolerance as a Virtue in Spinoza's Ethics', in: *Journal of the History of Philosophy,* Vol.39, no.4, 2001, pp535-557.

[78] Locke excluded Catholics from tolerance because they are loyal to a foreign power, the papacy in Rome. And he excluded atheists because they cannot be trusted since they do not believe in a final judgment day in the after life. Atheists are no nihilists; they are very well capable of forming a life plan and living a life based on that plan.

[79] See p230, Rawls, J., 'Justice as Fairness'.

CHAPTER XV

THE PLURALITY OF RELIGIONS IN TERMS OF LEVINAS' NOTION OF RESPONSIBILITY: REFLECTIONS ON THE CONFLICTUAL RELATIONSHIP OF RELIGIONS IN INDONESIA

HARYATMOKO

Five religions coexist in Indonesia. They are all officially recognized and assured by the state. Their coexistence is founded on the Constitution, specifically on the five principles (*Pancasila*) of the state's ideology. In fact, *Pancasila*, considered as the political platform for the nation, does not suffice for bringing about a socio-political cohesion and stability. The so-called political platform, in reality, does not manage to create a consensus of political life and yet is praised by the officials to foreigners.

There are some elements indicating the failure of such a claim. First, the flourishing political parties based on religious confession. The tendency of regrouping either in politics, organizations of professions or other social groupings based on religious membership is, to some extent, an insidious disavowal of the state's ideology. Second, the confessional conflicts which shook Ambon, Poso, Lombok and many other cities of Indonesia are the sad illustration of its failure. However many analysts blame a "staged" willful provocation of public disorder; the hatred for the adherents of other religions does exist. Since to hatch a plot will not be successful, if that hatred is not felt lively or at least lived latently by the different believers, the least provocation will easily incite aggressive behaviours or violence. How to cope with the question of plurality of religions in Indonesia? I'd like to base my reflection on Levinas' notion of responsibility

How far could Levinas' ideas inspire the spirit of pluralism of religions in Indonesia which implies the notion of responsibility? This question orientates my investigation on the plurality of religion and its possible philosophical foundation. My inclination towards philosophical investigation was prompted by my encounter with some theological reflections which lean heavily toward their approach on philosophical thoughts. I was struck by P. Knitter's ideas about liberating pluralism, namely pluralism which acknowledges the utterly 'other' would imply global responsability (P. Knitter,1995). His reflection emphasizes the notion of the utterly 'other', as he states: "Confronting the religious Other as the utterly Other or overwhelming Mystery, I must bow in silence" (1995:12).

This utterly Other will make up the philosophical foundation of the correlation between the difference in religion and political responsibility. The utterly Other, that is in Levinas' concept called «the appearance of the face » (*l'épiphanie du visage*) is analogous to the condition of the possibility of ethics (in term of transcendental philosophy). So the encounter with the utterly Other enables the ethical relationship to grow. In this way, the relationship between religions would reflect a responsible relationship and be the echo of the moment of ethics, if it is based on that pattern.

PLURALISM: A CONDITION OF POSSIBILITY FOR ETHICS

The concept of pluralism is like a mantra as if it could resolve the problem of violence and of intolerance. It is sad that violence and intolerance constitute a historical reality which prevails over the other faces of religion, such as peace, deep life, solidarity, love, and hope. Thus, the term pluralism is like an oasis which discloses a promise of the peaceful solution to the question of the difference of religions. The meaning of the word itself is inseparable from the acceptance of religious liberty.

The crucial question arises from the pattern of binary logics dominating the mode of the adherence of religion, namely the affirmation such as «mine is right, the others' is wrong ». How can a believer accept and respect the other religions and at the same time hold firmly as authentically true the truth of his own religion? This question stems from a more general question of how man can learn to cope wisely with the differences among religions so that they can live together in a more productive and peaceful atmosphere. This question can be solved only by good-will and collaboration,-- as if the collaboration of the believers of all religions to promote human rights, justice and peace suffice for overcoming the problem of the difference of religions. The question would be more focused on the motivation which drives someone to be a Muslim, Christian, Hindu or Budhist. Would anyone be an atheist or agnostic or religious believer if he had in fact grown up in a different social and cultural background ?

Of course, all the religious believers are marked by their tradition, inheritance and environment. Yet, they do not merely submit to the influence of their tradition and environment. Their belief does not arise merely from them or due to them. Their motivation should not only rest at the locus of exteriority, but must be founded also on inner rationality. So each religion is challenged to manifest its uniqueness. The conviction of its uniqueness confirms its identity so that the presence of other religions does not threaten its own existence. On the contrary, it allows it to affirm its singularity. In other words, demonstrating the uniqueness of one's own religion presumes the acceptance of religious pluralism because a singularity can only be perceived and forged by the encounter and

comparison with others. It is not absolutely a question of superiority. We should not confuse the question of truth with the argument of superiority. Uniqueness , meant as being the 'only one of its sort', is not identical with superiority.

Uniqueness is another word which could refer to the Levinas' concept of appearance of the face in the sense that the face marks its presence by refusing all efforts to define or to contain it. In its resistence to all kinds of domination, its presence becomes concrete. The face is totally other and not a relative otherness which could be compared with me. The existence of otherness does not depend on some quality distinguishing this other from me. Such a distinction of quality presumes that the other is still a part of the community or of the same unity. This apprehension puts an end to the possibility of the existence of otherness because I seize the other to be a part of me by applying my own categories. Yet, the relationship with the other does not entail violence provided that the other is considered as the appearance of the face. But it brings about peace and fundamentally arouses the positive structure of life, that is ethics [*L'épiphanie du visage est éthique* (1971:218)]. So the uniqueness presupposes the appearance of the face in which the acceptance of pluralism constitutes a decisive condition.

Pluralism should not only be considered as a condition *sine qua non* of a peaceful coexistence of different religions. Of course, it is a pivotal consideration. But the acceptance of religious pluralism should be understood first as a determination which reflects or manifests better the perfection of God without being trapped in the pitfall of relativism. The uniqueness of a religion will be confirmed and manifested through the process of dialogue with other religions. The dialogue is to some extent an openness to the other which is the moment of the appearance of the face.

DIFFERENT DEGREES OF DIALOGUE AND THE VULNERABILITY OF RELIGIOUS ROLES TO VIOLENCE

The dialogue between religions has some concrete forms. According to Claude Geffré, at least there are three degrees of dialogue[1]. *First*, the silent dialogue in prayer in which each religious tradition shares its own spiritual experiences with the other. Through prayer all religions witness to a supreme reality transcending the finitude of man, and the prayer represents to some extent a form of recognition of the mystery of the Other in the sense of Levinas' philosophy. Prayer is an accomplishment of hope in waiting, a longing for encounter with the other without imposition. This encounter with the other is marked by deep concern and disinterestness. There is no domination nor request. Throughout the centuries the various

[1] Claude Geffré**,** *Toward A Hermeneutics of Interreligious Dialogue*, in: W.G. Jeanrond (ed.), *Radical Pluralism and Truth, Crossroad*, New York, 1991, pp. 263-265.

religions have been associated with violence, fanaticism, intolerance, and conflict because of relationship based on self interest and of desire for domination. "Yet if Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Buddhists gather together to pray for peace, this act will provide assurance that the Spirit of God has not abandoned the main world religions", Claude Geffré affirmed.

Second, the dialogue means to challenge each religion's vision to contribute to the development of a better world which gives the priority to the creation of peace and promotion of justice. The transcendent vision must be put into practice that is to be confronted with the reality of human misery and sufferings. In every great religion, there is an awareness of the need to transcend its own particularity consisting of rituals, institutions and the limitations of its doctrines. So the dialogue will be perceived as an invitation to empower the religion's forces in favor of cooperation. Various religions are encouraged to develop a critical awareness in order to put into question the tendency to seek its own interest, to comfort the desire for domination, and to legitimize its proselytism. The fundamental awareness which arises from such a dialogue is that the future of the traditions of the great religions lies in the manner of how they deal with human suffering. They cannot ignore our common basic humanity. In other words, it is a question of how religion becomes more human.

Third, the most complicated dialogue is the theological dialogue in which each religion is confronted with a specific faith and profound spiritual experience of another religion. On this level, the dialogue is the most difficult one since we deal with the systems of religion which are not easily reconciled. The acceptance of difference is quite often unbearable because it entails the recognition of the conflictual positions due to the opposing theological doctrines. But at least, such a dialogue will allow us to overcome the ignorance and the suspicious attitude towards the traditions of other religions.

Anyway, this dialogue will help to understand better the singularity of every religion and to motivate people to seek for God beyond the formal conceptualizations of their own religion. In this way, the difference will be taken as means to manifest more fully the richness of the fullness of God. "God is too rich and unlimited that a particular religious tradition, which is to some extent limited, will not be able to draw exhaustively from the perfectness and fullness of God"[2]. So the fullness of God will be better expressed precisely through the plurality of religions than only through one religion. Such a dialogue respects seriously other religions in their uniqueness and in their richness of values. At the same time, it prevents any religion from claiming to possess the monopoly of truth. Will such a dialogue be trapped in the pitfall of relativism?

---

[2] Edward Schillebeeckx, *L'histoire des hommes, récit de Dieu* , translated from Dutch by H. Cornelis Gevaert, CERF, Paris, 1992, p. 225.

If the concept of "relativism" is understood in the sense of the acceptance of contingency without reducing the uniqueness of a religion's truth to a facultative conviction, it reflects the historical condition of existence. Fundamentally, the acceptance of contingency represents a justification of the human historical condition beyond the question of relativism and absolutism. The historical constitutes the way in which God reveals Himself to man. The revelation of the absolute truth in history acquiesces in the contingency of history. The absolute truth will be accessible, if only it complies with the categories of human history. God did not take this particularity of history (the event of revelation to a man or group of men in some place) as absolute. If God did not take it as absolute, God would not *a posteriori* take any religion, perceived as a socio-historical institution, for absolute. In other words, the revelation of God is absolute, but man's capacity to grasp that revelation is limited.

The main question that appears beyond the question of absolutism and relativism is the identity of religion. Man holds his religion as unique and at the same time respects the identity of other religions. The difference between religions challenges us to accept our limited grasp of the mystery of the other and to suspend our desire for domination in all its forms. So Levinas' ideas will be relevant to this perspective. "The relationship does not *ipso facto* neutralize the Other, but conserves the authenticity of the Other. The Other as utterly Other is not an object that becomes ours or is diluted with Me to become We. On the contrary, the Other withdraws himself into his mystery » (Levinas, 1982 : 59). But this quotation does not mean that various religions complete one another. It is analogous to the difference of sex. Woman was created not to complete man's existence and vice-versa. This idea of completion presumes the pre-existence of a fullness. So a separation or division would have led to reuniting both parts. Yet, a reciprocity rooted in this deficiency is always an act of reifying. It is not a question of duality of two concepts which complete each, since two complementary things would have presumed the pre-existence of the wholeness. Yet, the wholeness or the so-called fullness of sex has never existed before. That is the way to understand the differences among religions.

The differences among religions cannot be resolved in terms of completing each other. It should not be ignored that there are some formulations of faith which are in opposition with the theology of other religions. Theological differences which cannot be reconciled do exist. This statement would refute all kinds of solutions imposing their own categories on the other religion. Dialogue does not mean absorbing or denying the other and does not impose one's point of view on the other. Dialogue cannot be reduced to the problem of semantic confusion or of different perspectives. If so, the solution would have been resolved by giving clarifications of the usage of different terms or concepts. We should seriously restore our mind-set so that we understand the other neither as a

part of me, nor resembling me, but a consciousness exterior to me to whom I owe respect.

All three degrees of dialogue are interesting proposals. Yet, we have to realize that the common and dominant practices of religion emphasize those roles of religion which are more vulnerable to violence. There are three such roles: *First*, the role of religion as a frame of reference of the social interaction (or ideological function). This ideological function works as a factor for social cohesion thanks to its frame of reference for giving meaning to all social relationship. The key word to understand this ideological function is « interpretation ». The interpretation of sacred text tends to conceal the interest of those who are in power. Such a concealment is a pathological dimension of ideology when it concerns the factor of integration and the justification of domination. What is interpreted and justified is the relationship of power. That power requires more than that our conviction is in a position to give support what it deserves to be received. So to compensate for this deficit, religion is used as the system of legitimation of domination. *Second*, the role of religion as a factor of identity. This factor can be defined as a sense of belonging to a particular social group. Such a membership brings about a kind of social stability, status, way of life, way of thinking and a particular ethos. So the lack of respect for this religious identity or a demeaning attitude and action, taken as undermining it, will trigger a tension or conflict. *Third*, religion as a means of ethical legitimation for social relationship. It is not a question of a particular social system, but a particular social system would be adopted after having been judged to conform to a particular religion. Such a recuperation would entail refusal by other religions of the adopted system of values. For instance, Christianity's claim that The Human Rights Charter contains Christian values would *a priori* incite rejection by the other religions. It is not because of its contents, but because of such a claim. How can the three degrees of dialogue be taken into practice in the face of the dominant atmosphere of suspicion due to the emphasis on those three roles of religion?

THE GAME ANALOGY AND AN ETHICS OF POLITICS

The dialogue between religions on the level of theology tends to be formal. Such a formal dialogue emphasizes in general cognitive comprehension. Rationality and coherence prevail over the simplicity of encounter and simple presence. Seriousness and formal proceedings rule over the discussion. Such an atmosphere could be counter-productive when the discussion slides into the apology and the proselytical forum. So the participants are invited to take some distance from such a discussion.

There are many forms of distancing oneself. The ideological criticism is the negative form of distancing, while the analogy of the game represents the positive form of distancing (Paul Ricoeur, 1986). A game is a

form of distancing oneself from one's formal and serious life. In the game, the subject is freed from the fear of the social norms or sanctions, the seriousness of life and the social hierarchy. The game allows us to discover new possibilities which are imprisoned by so-called serious thoughts. It helps people to bring about a self-transformation or collective transformation. All these creative actions will not be flourishing if the vision of life is confined to merely moral considerations. Moral considerations suggest that an idea of imposing limitations on the maneuver of imagination is established. Yet, liberty is a fertile ground for creativity.

Through the analogy of the game, the fundamental phenomenon which appears is the birth process of creativity. It is firstly in the imagination and not in the will that the new creativities are in blossom, since the capacity to be captured by the new possibilities goes before the capacity to choose and decide. The imagination is a dimension of the subject which responds to the text as poetic force. So, first of all, it is to the imagination that a text comes up putting forward the new possibilities and the images liberating the subject. In terms of the analogy of the game, the dialogue between religions will consist in finding opportunities for the informal encounters such as sport, theatre, music, camping and other festivities. These activities will manage to ease the strained atmosphere of the relationship between religions and facilitate a personal encounter or other types of encounter released from any pretence. Such an opportunity suspends all kinds of dialogues based on self-interest.

All participants are freed from the fear of social sanctions and norms when they play together. Social segregation based on religious discrimination would be reduced. In such an environment, a creative idea or a breakthrough in coping with the difficult relationship between religions is expected to be in blossom. The analogy of the game will foster reducing prejudice in favor of a fruitful dialogue between religions in which the acceptance of pluralism will be its logical consequence.

In a sincere encounter, the other touches me and takes me hostage, to use Levinas' formulation. He takes me hostage because I am confronted with the impossibility to refuse the request of the face. Responsibility precedes liberty. The subjectivity is bewildered even before being able to decide. The presence of the other makes me responsible for his fate, especially his sufferings and misery. Have you ever been taken by surprise, abandoning all you have planned in order to help someone wounded in a road accident? Even before I have the opportunity to decide, the other has solicited me for responsible action. So in such an encounter the participants are confronted with the reality of the other which intervenes profoundly in their existence. The encounter with the other or the appearance of the face constitutes the moment of ethics. In the context of the dialogue between religions, ethics must be associated with politics.

Ethics of politics must be understood as a politic which is responsible for the other, namely all the others as a form of plurality

embodied in a community. So the main focus of the ethics of politics is the question of justice. Justice requires religions to organize the ethical relationship, to look at the poor and the victim as objects of our concern. This relationship is radically unequal. The other who is deprived of everything speaks to me from his transcendent position. This radically unequal position brings about an obligation in me. So ethics will bring back politics, in the sense that a responsibility becomes known by putting into question politics in order to promote the social justice.

The ethical relationship with the face puts me under the regard of the public (1971:212), namely the third part, look at me with the other's eyes which is nothing more than justice (1971:213). This third part requires the ethical relationship to be always in the context of politics, in the public space. So ethics, according to Levinas, is always politics. The encounter with the face represents a relationship with all humanity. Ethics asks people to cut themselves free from totalitarian politics. According to Levinas, Nazism is a form of anti-humanism. All kinds of sectarian politics based on ethnic, racial or religious discrimination are a refusal of the other, a form of anti-humanism. Such a politics tends to incite hatred and resentment. In fact, such hatred and resentment are deeply rooted in a hatred of the difference, of the other. The refusal of the other leads us to reduce the transcendent to be an object of my domination,-- otherwise the other or the difference will set up as a threat for me.

Discriminatory politics is a politics which has no concern for ethics. Levinas criticizes the conviction affirming that only the political rationality would be able to answer political problems. There is no space for the otherness. The strategic action prevails over the ethical considerations so that the other is reduced to a means. That is why the breakthroughs of humanitarian politics and the efforts of peace are always stranded in a blind alley. Yet, history has noted that the decision of Anwar Sadat, the assassinated President of Egypt, to pay a visit to Jerusalem was not merely a political consideration. There was an implied recognition of the existence of the other (the core of ethics). Thanks to his decision, a horizon of peace was then disclosed to the belligerent countries.

Politics often oscillates between two requests, namely a pragmatic need and a moral claim. On the one hand, Machiavelli's doctrine is pragmatic,-- affirming that politics must be autonomous in the sense of being kept apart from the tutelage of morality and theology. Then, politics is put in opposition to morality as it is analogous to the relationship of philosophy and naivete. This pragmatic vision emphasizes that politics is a question of struggle between various forces dominated by the conflict of interests. On the other hand, Machiavelli did not take its implications into account as if all fields were in the political sphere. Leaving politics to its own business means, according to Levinas, to bring down all the ethical constructions. Politics will reduce all the social fields, especially ethics, to mere politics. Politics is left alone to pass through its own tyranny. The

domination of politics, which means that politics swamps all social spaces, will bring about a situation of war, suspending morality. Ethics is suspended in favor of the realism of politics. This realism is the way materialism perceives politics.

Materialism is to some extent a refusal to base politics on human rights and the law. There is no law except a force which is able to impose itself on people. Only afterwards this force will be legitimized by law and human rights. Law is the name attributed *a posteriori* to the act of forgetting the origin of power by those who are in power. The origin of power is violence. In this way there is neither recognition of plurality, nor communication. That is why Hannah Arendt defines violence as mute communication par excellence. So the question of political responsibility lies fallow.

PLURALISM AND POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY

Ethics requires the presence of the other. This radical otherness is a stranger who shakes me up. "The infinite introduces himself as face in his ethical resistance which paralyzes the forces of my power and stands up tough and absolute from the deep down in eyes vulnerable due to his nudity and misery" (Levinas, 1971:218). To understand misery is to build up a closeness with the victim. The face expresses the vulnerability of the victim as an order: "Do not kill!" Responding to the invitation of the other, who is vulnerable to violence, the awareness of subjectivity is bewildered without relying in anticipation on his decision. Subjectivity and responsibility are synonymous for the victim. He is marked by his characteristics, namely that there is neither silence nor passivity in the face of the misery of the other. So Levinas' concept of ethics is heteronomous, which is different from Kant's concept which is autonomous.

Subjectivity is bewildered even before taking a decision. I am in the position of the impossibility of not being concerned for the other. In other words, I can recognize myself by recognizing the other. The responsibility which afflicts me as an order goes before my liberty. So I do not remember anymore such an order, because it stems from the past which does not exist anymore. Yet, such a rupture represents a warning sign referring to the dimension which goes beyond existence. It means that the face would always escape from any effort to define or contain it. The presence of the face or the other, according to Levinas, keeps me under his thumb, but it does not destroy me. The face becomes precisely the expression of the other's limits reminding me of my obligations, and judges me (Levinas, 1969: 215). So the other makes me morally liable or responsible for the situation at present: The starving man asks me to be responsible for feeding him. "Leaving a man without food is a big mistake. Such a mistake under whatever circumstances could not be used as an excuse to release anyone from responsibility. In this case, it is not at all a

question of something voluntary or involuntary" (Levinas 1971:219). Through this affirmation, Levinas would underline that the appearance of the face, whether someone likes it or not, solicits my concern or empathy. In front of the suffering Other, man cannot be indifferent.

Based on Levinas' conceptualization of responsibility, I do not refuse to agree with Paul Knitter's position concerning the criteria of dialogue in truth. "Therefore, in a globally responsible dialogue, what decides between true or false, good or bad, better or worse among different beliefs and practices is …whether a particular religion or religious belief or practice is able to bring about greater peace and justice and unity in this world. That is the bottom-line measuring stick for truth and goodness" (Paul Knitter, 1995). Of course, those criteria are pragmatic. So praxis prevails over doctrine or theory. In other words, the utility for the most deprived must be the measure of truth. Moreover, Knitter affirms, "The poor and oppressed themselves are to decide whether a religious belief or practice can help resolve problems of hunger, oppression, violence" (1995). I do agree that the poor and oppressed themselves must have the final word on the compatibility or incompatibility of a religion's concerns or of its social effectiveness with their struggle and aspirations. Yet, quite often this fact is denied, as shown by the second objection mentioned below.

That pragmatic approach has two objections: first, where can man place the contemplative life? Such a criterion requires consequently that the value of prayer should be measured by its concrete output. Second, it seems that Knitter adopted the same premise of the liberation theologians in which they affirm that the theologians are the poor themselves. In reality, they are the religious dignitaries and the academic theologians who elaborated the theology of liberation. This means that ultimately religious dignitaries determine the validity of the effectiveness of a particular religion in coping with poverty, injustice and conflict. What is important is that the concern for the poor constitutes the common ground to attain a mutual comprehension so that all religions take a firm position: namely, the preferential option for the poor and oppressed. This position, which is not far from Levinas' ideas of the appearance of the face, is well defined by P.Knitter: "The suffering Other becomes a mediator or conduit of trust and comprehension between differing religious worlds" (1995).

This statement would represent to some extent the synthesis of the three degrees of dialogue mentioned above. There are the elements of prayer in silence (trust and comprehension), concern for human sufferings (the suffering Other), and the system of religion (a mutual comprehension). I am sure that such a conviction was not the result of a deduction from theories. It was brought about from the various experiences of many encounters with other religions. So it confirms Levinas' conviction that ethics is not merely an idea or a series of norms, but firstly it is an experience. The ethical experience appears in the movement of concern for the Other that is totally exterior to the subject. This movement is called

"goodness". The encounter with the face (the Other) represents a form of relationship marked by empathy and disinterestedness. Such a relationship invites everyone to be responsible for the Other, without asking the Other to do the same in return. There is neither mutual demand, nor domination. The other is totally other and incommensurable to me (Levinas, 1971).

If ethics is, according to Levinas, fundamentally an experience, the transmission of values and norms would be more effective through experiences. This transmission of values is not perceived in the perspective of cognitive apprehension, but in the sense of Bourdieuan *habitus*. The values and norms should become finally the disposition engraved on the personality of an individual as a skill in practical action (not always being aware of it) which develops in a particular social environment (Bourdieu, 1994: 16-17). So to develop tolerance for the other religion's adherents, empathy towards the poor and deprived, immersion should be the way of its transmission.

By immersion, the apprentice is invited to have an experience of living during some period of time with the poor or deprived. He has to seek opportunities to encounter victims of violence, intolerance, religious conflict so that empathy will grow up. So the appearance of the face through a personal encounter would take place. Such an apprenticeship will bring down all kinds of unfavorable prejudices against other religions and reshape a sense of responsibility for the other. Moreover, various events must often be organized to facilitate the encounter among the believers of different religions without the pretence of resolving any difference. Familiarity with the other helps one to be at ease in dealing with the presence of the other or with anyone different. It is the first step to skillful conflict management.

Philosophy Department
University of Indonesia
Jakarta, Indonesia

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Arendt, Hannah, *Condition de l'homme moderne*, traduit de l'anglais par Georges Fradier, Calmann-Levy, Paris, 1983.

Bourdieu, Pierre, *Raisons pratiques. Sur la théorie de l'action*, Paris, Seuil, 1994.

Critshley, Simon, *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1992

Gordon, Neve, "Ethics as Reciprocity: An analysis of Levinas's Reading of Buber," in: *International Studies in Philosophy*, 1999 (031:002), pp.91-109

Jayme, Virginia L., "Emmanuel Levinas' Philosophy of Responsible Subjectivity," in: *Philippiniana Sacra*, Vol.XXVI, no. 77 (1991), pp.227-262.

Jeanrond, W.G. and Rike, J.L., *Radical Pluralism and Truth, David Tracy and The Hermeneutics of Religion*, Crossroad, New York, 1991.

Knitter, Paul, *One Earth Many Religions. Multifaith Dialogue and Global Responsibility,* Orbis Books, 1995.

Levinas, Emmanuel, *Totalité et infini. Essai sur l'extériorité*. La Haye, Martinus Nijhoff, 1971.

Levinas, Emmanuel, *Ethique et Infini*, Fayard, Paris, 1982, Quilab, Oliver D., "Welcoming The Stranger: Levinas'Ethical Philosophy of Responsibility," in: *Diwa* 20 (November 1995), pp.97-116

Ricoeur, Paul, *Du texte à l'action. Essais d'herméneutique II*, Esprit-Seuil, Paris, 1986.

Ricoeur, Paul, *Soi-même comme un autre,* Paris , Seuil, 1991.

Schillebeeckx, Edward, *L'histoire des hommes, récit de Dieu*, traduit du néerlandais par Hélène Cornelis-Gevaert, CERF, Paris, 1992.

Thayse, Jean Luc, "Fécondité et évasion chez Levinas," in: *Revue Philosophique de Louvain*, 1998 (096:000), pp.624-659.

Westphal, Merold, "Levinas and The Immediacy of The Face," in: *Faith and Philosophy,*Vol.10, no. 4 October 1993, pp.486-501.

CHAPTER XVI

THE VIETNAMESE RECONCILIATION OF CULTURES AND RELIGIONS

LE THI LAN

Vietnam has been known as a nation combining multi-cultures and religions, with the most popularity belonging to Viet culture and Buddhism. According to some leading experts, Vietnamese culture has been one of most unique cultures in the world. Throughout history, with more than 1000 years under Chinese domination, over 80 years as a French colony and 20 years of Vietnam war, the Vietnamese have nonetheless preserved and developed their own culture. The Vietnamese cultural tree has been growing richer on the basis of folklore, native belief, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, etc., that is, by the vitality of its *reconciliatory* tradition.

THE TRADITION OF 'RECONCILING': CONTENT AND BASIS

Up to now, reconciliation is a primary 'living-principle' of the Vietnamese. Its contents include:

1. Harmonization with nature: man's actions are in accordance with nature and not resisting nature (though one can 'naturally' adjust nature). For example: the practice of tattooing; technique of building temples, houses with low high, curved roofs as a boat style; season festival customs, etc.

2. Reconciliation in social aspect: the Vietnamese implemented the principle "formal dependence but true independence" in the relation with China, in order to protect the country. The Vietnamese follow the "respect peace", "reconcile interests" principles in social communication.

3. Reconciliation between and in culture-religion: In the process of acculturation, the Vietnamese used the "not refusing" principle. They received some foreign cultural elite factors, changed them and made them to fit themselves. For example, Cham music and Chinese play in court's arts. There are many etymologies of Mon-Khmer, Tay, Thai, Malaya, Chinese, and French in the Vietnamese language. Confucism, Taoism, Buddhism and native religion are unified in the religious essence of Vietnam, and this happened in the early centuries already.

The 'Reconcilement' principle of Vietnamese culture-religion is based on:

1. Human-geography: the living environment of the Pro Vietnamese is the Hong River delta, where they strengthened many rivers, lakes and pools at the time. Moreover, Vietnam is located at the point of international exchanging trade and dense cultural relations. So, this position

and water environment is a condition for establishing the trend of reconciliatory culture of the Vietnamese.

2. History of the nation: ethnically, the Vietnamese included many ethnic groups linked together under a general leader. The developing process of the Viet community is an adding and growing process of new ethnic groups such as: the Chinese, Cham, Khmer... and other groups which live in the Western Highlands (Tay Nguyen). "The Vietnamese and their language are a result of the most strange, mysterious contacts, interchanges and alternations of languages, ethnic groups, cultures in Southeast Asian history"[1]. So, the ethnic, cultural environment, always strengthened, is the most important ground for the appearance of the 'reconcilement' principle as basic for the Vietnamese nation's existence.

3. History: The 'Reconcilement' principle was established at the early period of national history. This principle was practiced during the 'ups' and 'downs' of Vietnam's historical periods with different measures. Throughout history, the contents of the 'reconcilement' principle have become ever deeper, richer and wider.

HISTORY OF THE RECONCILIATORY TRADITION

The 'establishment' period for the 'reconcilement' principle was in the 7th-5th century BC period. In this time, this principle's substance was the harmony with nature and the harmony in community. This is the first living principle which was established at the beginning of our national history. We can read about it through the legend of the Ancestors of the Vietnamese ('Dragon Father and Fairy Mother'). This legend interpreted the origin of the Vietnamese as taking a water monster's form in order to fish for a living more easily. The tattooing custom lasted until the 19th century. This custom came directly from Viet living conditions in early history and indirectly revealed the awareness that the Viets must to be unified with nature for their existence. That consciousness was reflected in the orthodox history (*Dai Viet Chronicles* of Ngo Si Lien) as the reconcilement principle, which means a philosophical way of behavior and the authentic 'life-form'of the Vietnamese. The Vietnamese houses were made from bamboo wood. The house was low under a tree's shadow with a curved roof like a boat. That house's style suited the typical tropical weather in Southeast Asia where the weather is hot, humid and raining. Folklore festivals are a population's cultural actions. A festival was always organized in spring and autumn when the farmers had finished their harvest and had some free time for entertainment. On the Dong Son bonze drums, we can see many couples and groups working in collaboration with each other. The cheerful, open-hearted, collaborative character of the Vietnamese was

[1] Tran Quoc Vuong. *The Vietnamese Culture. Searching and thinking*. Literature Published House. Hanoi. 2003. Page. 47.

reflected on those antique things. The reconcilement principle in the early period of the Vietnamese nation founded a peaceful cultural space and happy life for people in general.

Throughout a long historical process, the reconcilement principle showed a truth -- that this is the most effective principle for the existence and development of the Vietnamese nation. In the early independence period under Chinese government, the reconcilement principle obtained the political-social aspects. The Vietnamese applied this principle in response to the Chinese government which had a huge force, in order to protect their sovereignty. In order to avoid an unbalanced war, the Viet leaders offered Trieu Da King many value donations to maintain their right to the Southern China reign. So they were allowed to rule their people as usual. The policy "formal dependence but true independence" which was used in the relation with China for protecting the country, was started by the Viet leaders at that time and later became the commanding principle in the political culture of the Vietnamese. After the Vietnamese nation liberated itself from Chinese reign, the resounding military victory of Ngo Quyen, the Vietnamese kings continued to ask from Chinese rulers a patrol to maintain the long freedom and independence for their country.

Under the Chinese reign, because Chinese culture was being imposed, there were two cultural tendencies. One was the tendency to prevent the Vietnamese from Sinicization by protecting the customs, behaviors and local laws of their community. The other was to receive and apply many overseas cultural-religious factors, from China and India into the native culture which resulted from cross-culture in international relations. So, in that period, the reconcilement principle added a new content which was reconcilement between religions and schools of thoughts from overseas. Confucianism, Buddhist sects, Taoism from China, Indian Buddhist sects, were received, changed, found their roles in the native cultural life and became the component elements of the Vietnamese culture. From this time, "multi-religions or the reconciliatory trend of ideologies and religions certainly were essential for Vietnamese spirit" [2] . People transformed their deities of native religion, such as the deities of Rain, Wind, Cloud and Thunder, into female Buddhas. So Buddha, who was a male deity in his original nation, became a female deity in the new country. Under the Si Nhiep government (3rd century), the reconcilement principle was used very effectively. He respected all religions which existed in Vietnam at that time. He applied elements of Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, native Deities to carry out his policies. Thansk to that, he was successful in establishing a peaceful, prosperous and diverse cultural period in Vietnam. From Si Nhiep, who was considered the founder of education in Vietnam, religions from overseas were applied and integrated with the native religion, establishing the essence of the Vietnamese culture.

---

[2] Tran Quoc Vuong. Opcit. Page 491.

After 938, when Vietnam entered the period of freedom, independence, the content of the reconcilement principle was ever more enhanced, especially in the 11th-14th centuries, under the reigns of the Ly and Tran dynasties. Thanks to maintaining the political principle "formal dependence but true independence" in the relation with China, the Vietnamese had had a long peaceful time. In this time, the Ly's kings received many Cham, Chinese cultural factors into cultural-religious life of their court, such as music, architecture. These kings had policies for developing Buddhism in the social-cultural life widely, such as building more and more Buddhist pagodas, allowing unlimited increase of the number of Buddhist monks, using Buddhist elites as political advisers. Ly's kings used Confucianism in developing education and training, in establishing the national organization's orders. At the same time, they continuously kept native customs, local laws, native religion, for example,-- respect for women, tattooing, the festival of Dong Co swearing, etc. The political and life philosophy of Tran's dynasty was "dissolving light in dust". It manifests very clearly the reconcilement tendency in the cultural development of the Tran dynasty. Following that tendency, everything, which was considered good and suitable to the Vietnamese world life at that time, although each could come from different roads, was still welcomed. With that meaning, the reconcilement principle between cultures and religions was strengthened and became ever deeper. The cultural life, which Ly-Tran dynasties wished to build, can be generalized by four words: tolerance, simplification, peace and happiness. And with those guidelines, the Vietnamese culture developed splendidly and wealthily. Many kinds of folk-art were born and grew up in that time, such as folk-songs, traditional operas, classical drama, etc. Chinese-transcribed Vietnamese script was made in that time and applied as a new tool for developing of the national literature. The Zen poem of Ly-Tran's time contained internal philosophical and human values. Confucian morality supplemented a clear, enduring standardized system of native morality. By the reconcilement method, the ruling class established a unified culture from top to bottom in the Vietnamese society. In this period, there was no split between folk culture and orthodox culture.

From the 15th century, the Vietnamese ruling class paid more attention to promoting Confucianism in a rigid and Sinicized method. Confucianism became orthodox theory only in society. In penetrating the Confucian culture, the Vietnamese obtained the argument for the reconcilement principle in the Confucian theory of harmony [3], which was

[3] Read more in Tran van Doan: *Harmony and Consensus: Confucius and Habermas on Politics*. International symposium on Confucianism and the modern world. Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China. November 12-17, 1987. The main contents in the harmony principle of Confucius were classified as follow:

1-Harmony as order: -natural order - established order: + traditional customs

distorted through Neo- Confucianism with some basic clauses, such as "God and men are unified", “God and men are in mutual relationship", "govern by morality", "the middle road", etc. However, Le's kings promoted Confucianism so excessively that they tended to drift from the reconcilement principle. Confucianism was considered the orthodox way only by Le Thanh Tong King. There was a tendency of denying Buddhism in/to the elites. Because of those factors, culture differed more and more from the folk culture, whereby the first was influenced by Chinese culture and the latter attained Southeast-Asian features.

However, in the 17th-18th centuries, in the process of going southwards of the Vietnamese, the Nguyen lords enhanced the ‘reconcilement’ principle. Cham cultural elements and initial Catholicization created the diversity in Vietnamese culture. So, we can say that, Confucianism has never been unique in the Vietnamese culture. Buddhism, Taoism, native religions (such as worship of ancestors, mother worship, magic, etc.) still were popular religions, even in the strongest developing period of Confucianism. Absolutely, there is no religious war in Vietnamese history.

Under the French colonization, Western culture entered the Vietnamese cultural life by two ways: by force and by self-perception. The principle of "not refusing", the reconciliatory culture as a preconscious-instrument took part in de-Sinicizing orthodox culture but Westernized it. So to Vietnamese culture was applied a new factor once more. In this period, Confucian culture was retrograde but did not disappear. Western culture was received and developed, especially in urban society,--the intelligentsia and bourgeois. Buddhist culture and folk culture were popular again. The reconcilement principle strengthened for Vietnamese culture once more. In the early half of the 20th century, stimulated by the touch of Western culture, the Vietnamese received new humanitarian values of mankind such as: freedom, equality, humanity, human rights, democracy, and so on. These were welcomed because they were close to the Vietnamese humanitarian tradition. Especially, the reconciling with new Western culture and religions in that time enabled a booming of science-culture with new Westernized trends in the Vietnamese culture. At the same time, many old and new Western philosophical theories flowed into Vietnam, such as Neo-Cartesianism, psychoanalysis, existentialism, Marxism, etc. Many schools of science, literature, art, which were oriented towards Westernization, were born,;for example, lyrical music, romantic arts, new styles of poems, the realistic novel, etc. and basic sciences. Those were important achievements

---

+ moral codes+ laws

2- Harmony as arts: - art of appropriation

- art of living

- aesthetic art (art of enjoyment)

3- Harmony as instrumental-purposive rationality.

in the process of the Westernization, modernization of the Vietnamese culture. At the same time, all religions, old and new, such as native religions, Buddhism, Catholicism, Cao Dai, Harmonism developed fast. All these brought in new features and vitality to the Vietnamese cultural world.

In the period of establishing the socialist society, the socialistic culture has built upon standards of scientism, nationality, and popularity. The structure of culture is changed towards a socialist orientation. Under this influence, the former separation of inner culture, especially before 1954, seemed to be wiped out, at least on the surface of society. However, cultural-religious reconcilement was respected in theory. In fact, for certain reasons, especially due to some extreme guidance, in the transfer period of the modern cultural structure, the sense of nationality was overlooked, while the sense of 'strata' was concentrated on. The temples and pagodas were de-powered. They were converted into storehouses, schools or even destroyed. The churches and temples were not allowed to renovate or build. Almost all native religions were considered to be superstitious. Many folk-cultural festivals were not organized. Confucianism, Buddhism, Western ideologies not considered as socialist, were criticized. While the socialist culture was in the process of establishment, it lacked the spiritual background and the method of application in the national culture, which seemed to be attached to the Vietnamese reconciliatory tradition. Hence, the government did not relate smoothly to the people's daily life. These extremes resulted in an 'emptiness' of the spiritual life of the people, especially of the youth,--and this situation masked a crisis of cultural values.

The Communist Party recognized the danger of the crisis and began carrying out an all-sided social reform in 1986, in which the ruling circles took steps in the direction of a return to the cultural-religious 'reconcilement' tradition. This trend of all-sided reform of society is not beyond the common international trend of "indigenization", and "resurrection of non-western cultures". This has been happening for 80-90 years, the 20th century, in non- Western societies where "the growing power produced by modernization is generating the revival of non-Western cultures throughout the world"[4]. The contents of the reconcilement tradition have gradually been reconsidered and applied in real life.

In the cultural-religious aspect, religious belief is respected. Religions and traditional festivals are restored and are developing quickly. The numbers of Buddhist monks are increasing rapidly. Pagodas and temples are renovated or newly built. Catholicism has had a strong effect on the society and culture, so that Catholic holidays such as Christmas, New Year, Easter, etc. are socialized and popularized more than ever. The prestige of religious organizations is increasing day by day in political, cultural, and social life.

---

[4] Samuel P. Huntington. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. Published by Simon & Schuster. USA. 1997, pages. 91-92.

In the economic aspect, coordination between the different interests of people, establishment of a harmonious environment for collaborating and coming into a share of the society's products, are included in the content of the reconcilement principle. Indeed, this is one of the most important purposes which the Vietnamese government tries to achieve. In fact, this purpose has been delineated, and unified with the socialist ideal by the Vietnamese Communist Party. However, experience shows that the way of modernization through imposition from 'top to bottom' is not successful. The way of coordination between the different interests of people must come from the Vietnamese cultural-social essence: this is the way to combine and integrate modernization with the indigenization.

However, in the modernization process, harmonizing with the nature of the reconcilement principle tends to be set aside. Due to the pressure of 'economic development', the backward and rigid perception of 'conquest' nature [in the name of economic advancement], the loss of scientific knowledge about authentic living process, the weakness of promulgation and implementation of the environmental laws,--because of all these, Vietnamese nature is being seriously destroyed. Pollution, forest fires, shortage of water resources... these have caused the quality of life to be degraded. The imbalance of the ecological system has resulted in the imbalance of the Vietnamese life-world and life-style, creating a rat race which leads to unstable [rather than stable] development. This is a huge challenge for Vietnam. To overcome this challenge, it is important that the Vietnamese obtain the knowledge of environmental protection, learn from the experience of developed countries in order to protect ecology, promote the environmental awareness of people, establish a realistic law of the environment and apply it effectively, and especially to re-learn the experience [from past Vietnamese history] of harmonizing with nature. These not only constitute the work of government but are also the responsibility of the whole people, especially the task of religious and cultural organizations in the whole country,--to promote the tradition of 'reconciling' values.

PROSPECTS FOR VIETNAMESE CULTURE

Being open, multi-lateral in foreign relations, multi-form in international relationship, joining with the world economy, industrialization, modernization policies based on conservation and improvement of the identities of the national culture,--these are the true way for Vietnam's development in the time of globalization. By this road, the 'reconcilement' tradition, the "not refusing" principle, are respected in foreign, political treatment and economic, cultural development. This is the key that opens a path to modernization of the national culture in these new times. This way has a practical value because it is not only coincident with the international trend of indigenization today, as pointed out by Huntington in his famous

book, but also suitable to the cultural-religious reconciliatory tradition of the Vietnamese. The Vietnamese authentic culture shows that, at any period, under any reign, when the cultural-religious 'reconcilement' principle was respected, maintained and strengthened by powerful, intelligent and forward-looking rulers, then this period was lasting, this reign was prosperous and had potentiality for developing. The Vietnamese cultural essence has been built and defined through applying the reconcilement principle. So, in the globalization context, despite the danger of losing the sense of the national culture, applying the Vietnamese cultural-religious 'reconcilement' principle in a flexible way, is one of the truly golden methods for developing the Vietnamese culture.

According to experts, in the future, the Vietnamese culture will combine with a lot of humankind's achievements while retaining the native features of the culture. We consider the Vietnamese culture to be truly unique, and one of the most remarkable cultures in the world.

Institute of Philosophy
Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences
Hanoi, Vietnam

CHAPTER XVII

TOWARDS SOLIDARITY AND PEACE BETWEEN FILIPINO CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS: A PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMEWORK

MANUEL B. DY, JR.

> Our national culture is not what we have in the beginning; it is what we have today. And what we have today is not what we have to begin with, it is also what we have made our own. It is this totality with all its diversity of parts and complexity of structure, that we have any right to call the culture of the Filipinos
>
> -- Horacio de la Costa, S.J.[1]

The intent of this paper is to provide a philosophical, and therefore holistic, framework of our efforts towards solidarity for peace between Filipino Christians and Muslims, especially in Mindanao. In our passionate work for peace and development in our communities, we can easily lose sight of the whole, and our efforts become fragmented and directionless. In the end, we forget why we are doing what we are doing.

The conflict in Mindanao, simplistically and conveniently termed as religious in nature, presents a unique case of the interrelationship of culture, religion, and history. Being part of the Philippines, which up to the emergence of East Timor, was the only predominantly Catholic nation in Asia, Mindanao was a case where several religious traditions co-exist within one cultural framework, the Filipino culture, and where the same religion may find expression in different cultural contexts. So it is, for example, that the Tausug Muslims are different from the Maguindanao Muslims, though both profess the same Islamic faith, just as the Filipino Christian is different from the European Christian. And this is because of history. Islam came to the Philippines during the pre-hispanic times brought by the traders and voluntarily assimilated by the tribes in Sulu and the Southern coast of Mindanao, unlike Christianity which was brought by the West through the conquestadores.[2] Islam, like other Asian religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism) in a way bypassed the islands of Luzon and Visayas because it did not spread throughout the islands, unlike Christianity which spread widely, from 1565 with the arrival of Miguel Lopez de Legaspi, and when the Spanish friars mass converted

---

[1] Quoted by Nick Joquin, *Culture and History*, p. 333.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 30. *Under the Cresent Moon*, p. 162.

the natives. In 1578 the Spaniards tried to subjugate the Muslims and natives of Mindanao, resulting in 320 years of Spanish-Moro Wars. And for many centuries even up to the present, the central government has neglected the island of Mindanao. It was in the 1950s that Mindanao was declared a 'promised land' and Christians from Luzon and Visayas began to settle there, claiming lands belonging to original inhabitants unaware of the process of legalizing ownership. Many Muslims turned to violence as the solution to their economic and social marginalization, joining the MNLF and the MILF. The peculiarity in the Muslim struggle in the Philippines is that it is triggered by abuses against a minority group in a largely Catholic nation. [3] And yet many Filipino Muslims have little connection and knowledge of neighboring Indonesia and Malaysia; they know more of the Arab world.[4]

What has aggravated the problem is globalization. In our present context of a globalized world, the homogenization of cultures has resulted in the dismantling of social diversity and pluralism of cultures. The standardization of lifestyles by the domination of a centralized culture identified with the West (sometimes termed as "McDonaldization" or "Cocalization") undermines the Muslim culture's self-reliance and identity and attacks the religious values that hold their communities together. The removal of market barriers has only made the rich richer and the poor poorer, giving rise to the culture of poverty. The Muslim areas of Mindanao are among the poorest in the country. This has given rise to the modern phenomenon of global terrorism, which can be traced to a fundamentalist reaction to modernization. While before the MNLF and the MILF were before simply tagged as "rebels," now after 9/11, they are called by the military and the media by the label "terrorists," lumped together with the Abu Sayap. The conflict has acquired an even more religious tone.

Now, religion occupies a central position in one's culture, for in spite of cultural transformations brought about by the mass media and greater mobility, it is still religion that gives distinct identity to a culture. Religion is the transcendent dimension of culture and its soul.[5] Thus there is an urgent need for inter-faith dialogues between Filipino Muslims and Christians to eliminate tensions and conflicts, and potential confrontation. The aim of these dialogues is to achieve solidarity for peace and development of the country.

But what is genuine solidarity?

---

[3] *Under the Crescent Moon*, p. 163.

[4] *Ibid*., p. 162.

[5] Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue, "Dialogue and Proclamation," 45.

SOLIDARITY

The German philosopher Max Scheler (1874-1928) speaks of several essential types of social unity:[6]

1. The mass or the herd among animals. Here there is no understanding and experience of the other. There is only the involuntary imitation and psychic contagion of the members. The mob possesses its own lawfulness not determined by the members. There is no individuality and sphere of the person as the transference of feeling takes place in the absence of knowledge, and the individual is absorbed in total experience. As such, there is really no solidarity because the individual does not exist at all as an experience.

2. Life Community (as in the family, tribe, or a people). Here there is understanding but not preceding the experience of togetherness. There is an immediate experience of the other and the content of all experience is identical, though varying in course and content in their total dependency on the variations of the collective experience. Togetherness is here experienced as a common stream having its own lawfulness. Solidarity exists here as representable solidarity; that is to say, self-responsibility is built upon an experience co-responsibility for the willing, acting, and effecting of the whole community. The responsibility corresponds to the different tasks of the community: the caste, class, dignity, occupation, etc.

3. Society. Society is characterized by conscious acts of the self and consciousness of the acts of others. It is an artificial unit constituted by mature and self-conscious individual persons who agree to come together for common interests. The basic disposition of society is distrust; as such, every willing-together and doing-together presuppose acts of promising and contract. No real solidarity exists in society because the responsibility for others is based on self-responsibility. Nevertheless, there is a nexus between society and the life community, because "there can be no society without life community (though there can be life community without society). All possible society is therefore founded through community"[7] For instance, contracts are formed in a common language of the life community.

4. The highest type of social unity is "the unity of independent, spiritual, and individual single persons 'in' an independent, spiritual, and individual collective person."[8] At this point, responsibility-for is distinct from responsibility-to. In the collective person, every individual and the collective person are self-responsible and at the same time every individual is responsible for the collective person, just as the collective person is responsible for each of its members. In other words, mutual responsibility

---

[6] Max Scheler, *On Feeling, Knowing, and Valuing*, edited by Harold J. Bershady (The University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 240-246.

[7] *Ibid*., p. 244.

[8] *Ibid*., p. 246.

exists between the individual person and the collective person. On the other hand, as far as responsibility-to is concerned, there is neither an ultimate responsibility of the individual to the collective person (as found in the life community) nor an ultimate responsibility of the collective person to the individual or majority of individuals (as found in society), but both the collective person and the individual person are responsible to the person of persons, to God or an Absolute, in terms of self-responsibility as well as co-responsibility. Here solidarity takes on a new sense: a change from representable solidarity to an unrepresentable solidarity takes place: "The individual person is responsible for all other individual persons 'in' the collective person not only as the representative of an office, a rank, or any other positional value in the social structure, but also, indeed, first of all, as a unique personal individual and as the bearer of an individual conscience."[9]

It is in the fourth kind of unity that solidarity exists as a principle. The principle of solidarity is an eternal component and fundamental article of the cosmos of finite moral persons, where the total moral world becomes one encompassing whole. Every person, both individual and collective, participates in this according to his special and unique membership.

Two propositions ground the principle of solidarity: First, the community of persons belongs to the essence of a possible person. Second, the possible unities of sense and value of such a community possess an *a priori* structure of mutuality or reciprocity of social acts such as love, esteem, promising, etc.[10]

Our task then is to intentionally rise from the life-community to bring society (where there is no solidarity) to the fourth kind of unity, the totality-person, where genuine solidarity reigns. But do our Muslim and Christian religious traditions or life-communities have these elements to achieve solidarity? The answer lies in the common elements found in Christianity and Islam, for after all both religions can claim to have descended from Abraham.

ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

Common Elements

First, there is in both Christianity and Islam a sense of community which forms an essential component of their cultures. The person exists and finds his identity in the community, whether Muslim or Christian.

Second, both Islam and Christian traditions possess social acts or values that imply mutuality or reciprocity. The Golden Rule, for instance, is found in each, though expressed differently:

---

[9] *Ibid*., p. 247.
[10] *Ibid*., p. 248.

In Christianity: "So, do to others whatever you would that others do to you: there you have the Law and the Prophets." (Matt: 7: 12)

In Islam: "No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself." (Sunnah)

There are other common societal values found in both religions. They are the values of love and compassion, peace, forgiveness, respect for all and justice. The root word "Islam" itself in Arabic is "Salama" which is the origin of the words "peace" and/or "submission," a submission to God and peace to all humanity, just as in Christianity, Jesus often addressed his apostles with "Peace be unto you."

Thirdly, the ultimate responsibility-to of both Islam and Christianity is a Transcendent. In Christianity, this is God, while in Islam this is Allah.

Fourthly, both religions speak of spirituality. Spirituality is not exactly synonymous with religiosity. One can be spiritual without being religious. Spirituality is "the inner meaning of human experience under the impact of a human worldview."[11] And "a worldview is a perspective, or lens, through which we can approach and interpret global reality, a philosophy of life, as it were."[12]

Religious Differences

It is the worldview of each religious tradition that makes it unique. The uniqueness comes from the inner cohesive vision of reality peculiar to the place of origin or to the prophetic figure who taught and gathered disciples, from the specificity in the expression of this vision as "enveloped in the philosophical, cultural, linguistic and geo-political realities of the place of its origin," eventually finding articulation as systems of beliefs, rituals, and culture.[13] But there is also universality in each religious tradition. The universality is explicit or implicit in the validity claims of the faith-experience of each religious tradition, that these are for all people, and therefore the message must be spread to the four corners of the earth. And this is where religious conflicts can arise.

Among the differences between Islam and Christianity, one stands out –the belief that Jesus is the Son of God for the Christians, and for the Muslims, that he is one of the prophets. To this one may add the emphasis of the Muslims on the oneness of God, whereas for the Christians there is the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, three persons in one God.

---

[11] George E. Saint-Laurent, *Spirituality and World Religions, A Comparative Introduction* (California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 2000), p. 12.

[12] *Ibid*., p. 12.

[13] S. Wesley Ariarajah, "Religious Diversity and Interfaith Relations in a Global Age," *Quest*, vol. 2, number 2, November 2003, p. 3.

One may also add the perception among Filipino Christians that Islam allows the Muslim to have as many wives.

Jurgen Habermas states the problem in this way: "Can those who belong to different cultures meet on a common basis of understanding, and where might this universal, all embracing commonality be found?"[14] In the words of Karl Jaspers, which Habermas quotes;

> Today we are in search of the basis on which human beings from all the various religious traditions could encounter each other in a meaningful way across the entire world, ready to re-appropriate, purify and transform their own historical traditions, but not to abandon them. Such common ground for the (plurality of) faiths could only be clarity of thought, truthfulness and a shared basic knowledge. Only these (three elements) would permit that boundless communication in which the wellsprings of faith could draw each other closer, by virtue of their essential commitment.[15]

Clarity of thought, truthfulness and a shared basic knowledge bring us to the role of philosophy as mediation of intercultural understanding.

PHILOSOPHY AS MEDIATION

Intercultural understanding can take different forms of inter-religious dialogue:[16]

1. The dialogue of life, where Muslims and Christians strive to live in open and neighborly spirit, sharing joys and pains, problems and preoccupation;
2. The dialogue of action, where Muslims and Christians collaborate for integral development and liberation of people;
3. The dialogue of theological exchange, where Muslims and Christians seek to deepen their understanding of their religious heritages; and
4. The dialogue of religious experience, where Muslims and Christians share their spiritual experiences with regard to prayer and contemplation, to ways of searching for God or the Absolute.

---

[14] Jurgen Habermas, *The Liberating Power of Symbols* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001), p. 33.

[15] *Ibid*., p. 30.

[16] Pontifical Council for the Inter-religious Dialogue, 42.

The aim of inter-religious dialogue is to "eliminate tensions and conflicts, and potential confrontation by a better understanding among the various religious cultures of any given region."[17]

For philosophy to mediate in inter-religious dialogue, several preconditions have to be met:[18]

1. Participants must renounce the use of violence and dogmatism. The Peace Talks between the government and the MILF cannot guarantee peace in the communities as long as both parties do not have a ceasefire agreement and come to the negotiating table with certain preconditions. Even then, the Peace Talks cannot guarantee instant peace in the communities, for real dialogue in Mindanao must start from the grassroots level, and this cannot happen "as long as there is an unseen war going on in the hearts of our people.[19]

2. They must recognize each other as partners with equal rights. In April 2003, after a violent confrontation between the military and the MILF in February 2003, displacing 45,000 civilians, a delegation of Muslims and Christians went to Manila to dialogue with the President, legislators, military officials, foreign embassy officials, church leaders and human rights groups, to press for a ceasefire to end the violence in Mindanao. When nothing happened, the delegation brought their appeal to the streets, occupying the Cotabato-Davao National Highway "to pressure the government and MILF to halt the violence and to go back to the negotiating table."[20]

In another incident, three years ago, Datu Musin, a well-loved Muslim in Pikit, was implicated in the bombing incident in Kidapawan city that killed and injured a number of civilians. He was taken in custody by the military pending a case filed in court by the Philippine National Police. Believing in his innocence, the friends of Datu Musim, many of whom are Christians, trooped to the Army Brigade headquarters and later to the Provincial Capitol to give support to the man they knew was a good man. He was released from military custody two days later.[21]

3. They must be willing to learn from each other, to view things from the perspective of the other. The Greenhills Shopping Mall incident in Metro Manila is an example of this precondition. The mall administration wanted to build a prayer room for the Muslim vendors of the mall as there

---

[17] *Ibid*., 46.

[18] Jurgen Habermas, *The Liberating Power of Symbols*, pp. 43-44.

[19] Roberto C. Layson, OMI, "Christian-Muslim Dialogue on Moral and Economic Transformation," unpublished paper for the Philosophical Association of the Philippines National Conference on Christian-Muslim Dialogue on Moral and Economic Transformation, April 9, 2005, Las Brisas Resort, Antipolo City, p. 4.

[20] *Ibid*., pp. 6-7.

[21] *Ibid*., p. 6.

was already a Christian chapel in the mall. This drew protest from some biased Christians in the area, to which other open-minded Christians counter-protested, until the mayor intervened and allowed the prayer room to be built. In another instance, Layson testifies: "Some of our Christians before wondered why I allowed Muslims to pray inside my room. I asked them, "Why are you so disturbed? You should be happy when people pray and feel disturbed when people don't."[22]

With these preconditions, philosophical reason can then interpret the ethical and the moral. Ethical reason inquires into what is good for me or for us, while moral reason inquires into what is equally good for everyone. The moral pertains to the questions of justice or what all could will, whereas the ethical can be rationally clarified in the context of a specific life-history or a particular form of life.[23] When Muslims and Christians come together to discuss the government's population control program, they are employing ethical reason. Even here, one should not expect a consensus in controversial existential questions. But in the process of dialoguing, philosophy as fundamental knowledge takes the task of disclosing to religious and metaphysical worldviews their own inherent reflexivity. Reflexivity does not mean an abandonment of essential truth-claims but a self-criticism of one's religious tradition. Only through self-criticism can a religious tradition "stabilize the inclusive attitude that it assumes within a universe of discourse delimited by secular knowledge and shared with other religions."[24] This reflexivity is for Habermas a modernization of faith. Modernization of faith is necessary for the preservation and transmission of tradition. "The tradition of modernity is the critique of tradition for the sake of tradition."[25]

Needless to say, this modernization of faith has political consequences. First, the community of the faithful must refrain from the use of violence, especially state-sponsored violence in promoting religious belief.[26] Secondly, religious tolerance means not only a respect for the otherness of another religion but a celebration of that otherness. Therefore, Muslims and Christians must avoid proselytizing or converting the other to one's religion.

---

[22] *Ibid*., p. 5

[23] Jurgen Habermas, "Transcendence from Within, Transcendence in This World," in Don S. Browning and Francis Schussler Fiorenza (eds.) *Habermas, Modernity and Public Theology* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1992), p. 243.

[24] Jurgen Habermas, "A Conversation about God and the world, Interview with Eduardo Mendieta," *Religion and Rationality, Essays on Reason, God, and Modernity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002), p. 150.

[25] Eduardo Mendieta, "Introduction" to *Jurgen Habermas, Religion and Rationality, Essays on Reason*, *God and Modernity*, p. 17.

[26] Jurgen Habermas*, Religion and Rationality*, p. 151.

Today, Filipino Muslims and Christians are faced with the moral issue of the culture of poverty and its perceived primary cause, the culture of corruption. I use the term "culture" for both poverty and corruption because they have become a way of life for Christians and Muslims alike in Philippine society. Each must look reflexively at oneself to acknowledge how he has contributed to these cultures, and reach out to the other to be his brother or sister's keeper. Muslims and Christians must make these problems their own.

CONCLUSION

Has religion failed in the solidarity between Muslims and Christians in Philippine society? Layson says, "As I reflected, [I came to the conclusion that] it's not that religion has failed. It's just that it has never been tried…I think the biggest challenge in Muslim-Christian dialogue, is to change the way people look at themselves and the way they look at others. People need to accept the reality that we are not just a brother or sister's keeper to the other. We are more than that. We are, in fact, real brothers and sisters."[27]

Let me conclude then with an old Hasidic Tale:[28]

"The rabbi asked his students: 'How can we determine the hour of dawn, when the night ends and the day begins?'

One of the rabbi's students suggested: 'When from a distance you can distinguish between a dog and a sheep?'

'No,' was the answer of the rabbi.

'Is it when one can distinguish a fig tree and a grapevine?' asked a second student.

'No,' the rabbi said.

'Please tell us the answer, then,' said the students.

'It is, then,' said the wise teacher, 'when you can look into the face of another human being and you have enough light in you to recognize your brother or your sister. Until then it is night, and darkness is still with us.'"

Department of Philosophy
Ateneo de Manila University,
Manila, Philippines

[27] Roberto C. Layson, OMI, op. cit., p. 5.

[28] Henry Nouwen, *Finding My Way Home* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2004), pp. 86-87.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PEACEFUL TRADITION: TRANSFORMATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

SISWONO YUDOHUSODO

Southeast Asia is a unique region in Asia seen from the point of view of the role played in the past and its prospects in the future. The geographic situation in the area which is always busy all year long has led to a variety of cultures in the region which makes it a melting pot. Despite the impact of the west in the form of colonialism and from the South of India, and also from China, the region has never lost its characteristic which emphasizes harmony.

It may be said that the cultural development of Southeast Asia has taken place in harmony. Religions, which have been followed by the majority of the populations, have given a touch to their cultures and every religion has also been touched by the local cultural nuance. The specifically religious contribution in the development of kingdoms found in Southeast Asia is significant. Sriwijaya for 500 years from the 7th century up to the 12th century followed Buddhism; then the Majapahit reign began, following the Hindu religion from the 13th century up to the 15th century. The next period was dominated by Islam spreading from Pasai in the 12th century to the Demak Sultanate up to Mataram in the 16th and 18th century.

With the cultural changes, the characteristics brought always some nuances such as "wayang kulit" (leather puppetry), the legends of Ramayana, Mahabrata, the big mosque drum and Islamic religious boarding schools, which is a continuation of Hindu boarding schools, etc.

Historical evidence shows that religion was an aspect of interest to all civilizations growing in this region. Different monuments have formed sites, which later on have been known as religious sites not palaces, thus proving that this community of that given region were very religious from the beginning. And even before the said religions were known and followed in this region, the population believed that there was a spiritual power outside of themselves,--the population practiced 'animistic' faith.

What is interesting is, the change in faith has generally taken place in peace and some characteristics of the past faith have been taken along with the new belief or religion. This is true,--such as syncretism: as in Java we find the Mendut Temple dating back to the Buddhist religion, the oldest, and the Prambanan Temple dates back to the Hindu religion. Even various religious symbols of Buddhism and Hinduism were combined in many other temples. In the Islamic era the impact was very strong, but nonetheless the Javanese populations were still retaining some traditions, aspects of which show the influence of the Hindu religion.

Other interesting matters are the differences compared with other regions in the world such as Europe and the transformation from animism to Christianity, or in India, from animism to Hinduism, or China from animism to Confucianist Buddhism. In these regions, a majority religion was propagated. The first-comer was Hinduism, then Buddhism, later on Islam followed by Christianity and Catholicism. The Islamic religion was brought to this region by the sailing merchants, causing the spread of said religion from the coastal areas. Protestant Christians and Catholics came to Indonesia at the same time with the arrival of the Europeans in this region. It started with merchants who ended up as colonizers. The French people in Vietnam, Laos Cambodia, the English people in Malaysia, Brunei, the Spanish people in the Philippines and the Dutch in Indonesia. Religious missions started spreading Protestant and Catholic religions. Culturally all the local people of this region believed in God. They believed in the supra natural power, a power source outside of themselves. The entry of significant religions introducing God was easily digested or accepted by them.

It is also interesting to note how these globally significant religions could grow together hand in hand in Southeast Asia. Nearly all the countries in Southeast Asia are countries with multi-faceted religions, and the majority of their followers are different in the respective countries. Therefore there is a different culture due to the fact that religion has given a touch of color/nuance to their cultures. In southern Thailand the majority of the people have been Islamic, and in other parts of this country they are Buddhists; in the southern Philippines majority is Islamic, and in the other regions it is Catholic. The majority population of Malaysia is Islamic and the others are Buddhists. Bali – Hindu, and East NusaTeggara such as Flores is Catholic, and in Timor – they are Protestants. In Maluccu, Papua and North Sulawesi – they are Christians, and other parts of the country are Islamic with many various sects of this religion. Even in one province in the respective regions, the majority of religious followers vary one from one another. In general, the social interaction between the religious followers in these countries has taken place harmoniously and well.

Eastern values, which also played a significant role in the customizing of relationship patterns between the cultures and religions in Southeast Asia, have been kinship values; and the religion that followed has become a part of kinship ties. I am a Moslem, maybe because I was born in 1943, from a Moslem mother and a Moslem father in Indonesia. If I were born in the 6th century in Java Island, I might have been a Hindu. And if I were born in the 11th century, I might have been a Buddhist; and should I have been born in Menado as a Menadonese I might have been a Christian.

Southeast Asia at present consists of eleven countries, namely Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei and Timor Leste. Transformation is faster and faster, and the pattern is difficult to forecast, and it has hit Southeast Asia

recently. This has led to what is experienced by Indonesia, clearly showing that the rapid progress has melted the traditional values which have been the reference-point of the people, while the new values have not yet become the life guides for the people. Consequently, the people at large experience disorientation in terms of values. This disorientation produces a society with melted values, and leads to a sensitive attitude, aggressive, often destructive, liable to conflicts, between groups of teachings in the society, though I consider these flare-ups (commotions) such as have been happening in South Thailand, Southern Philippines, Poso and Ambon have not represented the inter-religion relationship between the entire 500 million Southeast Asian population. However, the religious politicizing in the context of political interest and the competition of individuals, are stirred up by outside influences which have vested interests in the rioting; and they are stirred up by extremists who are immature and use terrorism for religious reasons, involving citizens; and these extremists are organized internationally, so this inter-country network is a threat to the tradition of tolerance and harmony between religions, which has its roots in our regions going back hundreds of years.

It is very difficult to generalize the relationship between culture and religion in this region, and the more so because each country is unique and specific.

Jakarta, Indonesia

INDEX

THE COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH IN VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY

PURPOSE

Today there is urgent need to attend to the nature and dignity of the person, to the quality of human life, to the purpose and goal of the physical transformation of our environment, and to the relation of all this to the development of social and political life. This, in turn, requires philosophic clarification of the base upon which freedom is exercised, that is, of the values which provide stability and guidance to one's decisions.

Such studies must be able to reach deeply into one's culture and that of other parts of the world as mutually reinforcing and enriching in order to uncover the roots of the dignity of persons and of their societies. They must be able to identify the conceptual forms in terms of which modern industrial and technological developments are structured and how these impact upon human self-understanding. Above all, they must be able to bring these elements together in the creative understanding essential for setting our goals and determining our modes of interaction. In the present complex global circumstances this is a condition for growing together with trust and justice, honest dedication and mutual concern.

The Council for Studies in Values and Philosophy (RVP) unites scholars who share these concerns and are interested in the application thereto of existing capabilities in the field of philosophy and other disciplines. Its work is to identify areas in which study is needed, the intellectual resources which can be brought to bear thereupon, and the means for publication and interchange of the work from the various regions of the world. In bringing these together its goal is scientific discovery and publication which contributes to the present promotion of humankind.

In sum, our times present both the need and the opportunity for deeper and ever more progressive understanding of the person and of the foundations of social life. The development of such understanding is the goal of the RVP.

PROJECTS

A set of related research efforts is currently in process:

1. *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change: Philosophical Foundations for Social Life.* Focused, mutually coordinated research teams in university centers prepare volumes as part of an integrated philosophic search for self-understanding differentiated by culture and civilization. These evolve more adequate understandings of the person in society and look to the cultural heritage of each for the resources to respond to the challenges of its own specific contemporary transformation.

2. *Seminars on Culture and Contemporary Issues*. This series of 10 week crosscultural and interdisciplinary seminars is coordinated by the RVP in Washington.

3. *Joint-Colloquia* with Institutes of Philosophy of the National Academies of Science, university philosophy departments, and societies. Underway since 1976 in Eastern Europe and, since 1987, in China, these concern the person in contemporary society.

4. *Foundations of Moral Education and Character Development.* A study in values and education which unites philosophers, psychologists, social scientists and scholars in education in the elaboration of ways of enriching the moral content of education and character development. This work has been underway since 1980.

The personnel for these projects consists of established scholars willing to contribute their time and research as part of their professional commitment to life in contemporary society. For resources to implement this work the Council, as 501 C3 a non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Colombia, looks to various private foundations, public programs and enterprises.

PUBLICATIONS ON CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CONTEMPORARY CHANGE

Series I. Culture and Values
Series II. Africa
Series IIA. Islam
Series III. Asia
Series IV. W. Europe and North America
Series IVA. Central and Eastern Europe
Series V. Latin America
Series VI. Foundations of Moral Education
Series VII. Seminars on Culture and Values

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CONTEMPORARY CHANGE

Series I. Culture and Values

I.1 *Research on Culture and Values: Intersection of Universities, Churches and Nations*. George F. McLean, ed. ISBN 0819173533 (paper); 081917352-5 (cloth).

I.2 *The Knowledge of Values: A Methodological Introduction to the Study of Values;* A. Lopez Quintas, ed. ISBN 081917419x (paper); 0819174181 (cloth).

I.3 *Reading Philosophy for the XXIst Century*. George F. McLean, ed. ISBN 0819174157 (paper); 0819174149 (cloth).

I.4 *Relations Between Cultures*. John A. Kromkowski, ed. ISBN 1565180089 (paper); 1565180097 (cloth).

I.5 *Urbanization and Values*. John A. Kromkowski, ed. ISBN 1565180100 (paper); 1565180119 (cloth).

I.6 *The Place of the Person in Social Life*. Paul Peachey and John A. Kromkowski, eds. ISBN 1565180127 (paper); 156518013-5 (cloth).
I.7 *Abrahamic Faiths, Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflicts*. Paul Peachey, George F. McLean and John A. Kromkowski, eds. ISBN 1565181042 (paper).
I.8 *Ancient Western Philosophy: The Hellenic Emergence*. George F. McLean and Patrick J. Aspell, eds. ISBN 156518100X (paper).
I.9 *Medieval Western Philosophy: The European Emergence*. Patrick J. Aspell, ed. ISBN 1565180941 (paper).
I.10 *The Ethical Implications of Unity and the Divine in Nicholas of Cusa*. David L. De Leonardis. ISBN 1565181123 (paper).
I.11 *Ethics at the Crossroads: 1.Normative Ethics and Objective Reason*. George F. McLean, ed. ISBN 1565180224 (paper).
I.12 *Ethics at the Crossroads: 2.Personalist Ethics and Human Subjectivity*. George F. McLean, ed. ISBN 1565180240 (paper).
I.13 *The Emancipative Theory of Jürgen Habermas and Metaphysics*. Robert Badillo. ISBN 1565180429 (paper); 1565180437 (cloth).
I.14 *The Deficient Cause of Moral Evil According to Thomas Aquinas*. Edward Cook. ISBN 1565180704 (paper).
I.15 *Human Love: Its Meaning and Scope, a Phenomenology of Gift and Encounter*. Alfonso Lopez Quintas. ISBN 1565180747 (paper).
I.16 *Civil Society and Social Reconstruction*. George F. McLean, ed. ISBN 1565180860 (paper).
I.17 *Ways to God, Personal and Social at the Turn of Millennia: The Iqbal Lecture, Lahore*. George F. McLean. ISBN 1565181239 (paper).
I.18 *The Role of the Sublime in Kant's Moral Metaphysics*. John R. Goodreau. ISBN 1565181247 (paper).
I.19 *Philosophical Challenges and Opportunities of Globalization*. Oliva Blanchette, Tomonobu Imamichi and George F. McLean, eds. ISBN 1565181298 (paper).
I.20 *Faith, Reason and Philosophy: Lectures at The al-Azhar, Qom, Tehran, Lahore and Beijing; Appendix: The Encyclical Letter: Fides et Ratio*. George F. McLean. ISBN 156518130 (paper).
I.21 *Religion and the Relation between Civilizations: Lectures on Cooperation between Islamic and Christian Cultures in a Global Horizon*. George F. McLean. ISBN 1565181522 (paper).
I.22 *Freedom, Cultural Traditions and Progress: Philosophy in Civil Society and Nation Building, Tashkent Lectures, 1999*. George F. McLean. ISBN 1565181514 (paper).
I.23 *Ecology of Knowledge*. Jerzy A. Wojciechowski. ISBN 1565181581 (paper).
I.24 *God and the Challenge of Evil: A Critical Examination of Some Serious Objections to the Good and Omnipotent God*. John L. Yardan. ISBN 1565181603 (paper).
I.25 *Reason, Rationality and Reasonableness, Vietnamese Philosophical Studies, I*. Tran Van Doan. ISBN 1565181662 (paper).
I.26 *The Culture of Citizenship: Inventing Postmodern Civic Culture*. Thomas Bridges. ISBN 1565181689 (paper).

I.27 *The Historicity of Understanding and the Problem of Relativism in Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics*. Osman Bilen. ISBN 1565181670 (paper).
I.28 *Speaking of God*. Carlo Huber. ISBN 1565181697 (paper).
I.29 *Persons, Peoples and Cultures in a Global Age: Metaphysical Bases for Peace between Civilizations*. George F. McLean. ISBN 1565181875 (paper).
I.30 *Hermeneutics, Tradition and Contemporary Change: Lectures In Chennai/Madras, India*. George F. McLean. ISBN 1565181883 (paper).
I.31 *Husserl and Stein*. Richard Feist and William Sweet, eds. ISBN 1565181948 (paper).
I.32 *Paul Hanly Furfey's Quest for a Good Society*. Bronislaw Misztal, Francesco Villa, and Eric Sean Williams, eds. ISBN 1565182278 (paper).
I.33 *Three Theories of Society*. Paul Hanly Furfey. ISBN 9781565182288 (paper).
I.34 *Building Peace In Civil Society: An Autobiographical Report from a Believers' Church*. Paul Peachey. ISBN 9781565182325 (paper).
I.35 *Karol Wojtyla's Philosophical Legacy*. Agnes B. Curry, Nancy Mardas and George F. McLean ,eds. ISBN 9781565182479 (paper).
I.36 *Kantian Form and Phenomenological Force: Kant's Imperatives and the Directives of Contemporary Phenomenology*. Randolph C. Wheeler. ISBN 9781565182547 (paper).
I.37 *Beyond Modernity: The Recovery of Person and Community in Global Times: Lectures in China and Vietnam*. George F. McLean. ISBN 9781565182578 (paper)
I. 38 *Religion and Culture*. George F. McLean. ISBN 9781565182561 (paper).
I.39 *The Dialogue of Cultural Traditions: Global Perspective*. William Sweet, George F. McLean, Tomonobu Imamichi, Safak Ural, O. Faruk Akyol, eds. ISBN 9781565182585 (paper).
I.40 *Unity and Harmony, Compassion and Love in Global Times*. George F. McLean. ISBN 978-1565182592 (paper).

Series II. Africa

II.1 *Person and Community: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies: I.* Kwasi Wiredu and Kwame Gyeke, eds. ISBN 1565180046 (paper); 1565180054 (cloth).
II.2 *The Foundations of Social Life: Ugandan Philosophical Studies: I.* A.T. Dalfovo, ed. ISBN 1565180062 (paper); 156518007-0 (cloth).
II.3 *Identity and Change in Nigeria: Nigerian Philosophical Studies, I*. Theophilus Okere, ed. ISBN 1565180682 (paper).
II.4 *Social Reconstruction in Africa: Ugandan Philosophical studies, II*. E. Wamala, A.R. Byaruhanga, A.T. Dalfovo, J.K.Kigongo, S.A.Mwanahewa and G.Tusabe, eds. ISBN 1565181182 (paper).
II.5 *Ghana: Changing Values/Chaning Technologies: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies, II*. Helen Lauer, ed. ISBN 1565181441 (paper).
II.6 *Sameness and Difference: Problems and Potentials in South African Civil Society: South African Philosophical Studies, I*. James R.Cochrane and Bastienne Klein, eds. ISBN 1565181557 (paper).

II.7 *Protest and Engagement: Philosophy after Apartheid at an Historically Black South African University: South African Philosophical Studies, II*. Patrick Giddy, ed. ISBN 1565181638 (paper).

II.8 *Ethics, Human Rights and Development in Africa: Ugandan Philosophical Studies, III*. A.T. Dalfovo, J.K. Kigongo, J. Kisekka, G. Tusabe, E. Wamala, R. Munyonyo, A.B. Rukooko, A.B.T. Byaruhanga-akiiki, M. Mawa, eds. ISBN 1565181727 (paper).

II.9 *Beyond Cultures: Perceiving a Common Humanity: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies, III*. Kwame Gyekye ISBN 156518193X (paper).

II.10 *Social and Religious Concerns of East African: A Wajibu Anthology*: *Kenyan Philosophical Studies, I.* Gerald J. Wanjohi and G. Wakuraya Wanjohi, eds. ISBN 1565182219 (paper).

II.11 *The Idea of an African University: The Nigerian Experience: Nigerian Philosophical Studies, II*. Joseph Kenny, ed. ISBN 978-1565182301 (paper).

II.12 *The Struggles after the Struggles: Zimbabwean Philosophical Study, I.* David Kaulemu, ed. ISBN 9781565182318 (paper).

II.13 *Indigenous and Modern Environmental Ethics: A Study of the Indigenous Oromo Environmental Ethic and Modern Issues of Environment and Development: Ethiopian Philosophical Studies, I.* Workineh Kelbessa. ISBN 978 9781565182530 (paper).

Series IIA. Islam

IIA.1 *Islam and the Political Order*. Muhammad Saïd al-Ashmawy. ISBN ISBN 156518047X (paper); 156518046-1 (cloth).

IIA.2 *Al-Ghazali Deliverance from Error and Mystical Union with the Almighty: Al-munqidh Min Al-dalil*. Critical Arabic edition and English translation by Muhammad Abulaylah and Nurshif Abdul-Rahim Rifat; Introduction and notes by George F. McLean. ISBN 1565181530 (Arabic-English edition, paper), ISBN 1565180828 (Arabic edition, paper), ISBN 156518081X (English edition, paper)

IIA.3 *Philosophy in Pakistan*. Naeem Ahmad, ed. ISBN 1565181085 (paper).

IIA.4 *The Authenticity of the Text in Hermeneutics*. Seyed Musa Dibadj. ISBN 1565181174 (paper).

IIA.5 *Interpretation and the Problem of the Intention of the Author: H.-G.Gadamer vs E.D.Hirsch*. Burhanettin Tatar. ISBN 156518121 (paper).

IIA.6 *Ways to God, Personal and Social at the Turn of Millennia: The Iqbal Lectures, Lahore*. George F. McLean. ISBN 1565181239 (paper).

IIA.7 *Faith, Reason and Philosophy: Lectures at Al-Azhar University, Qom, Tehran, Lahore and Beijing; Appendix: The Encyclical Letter: Fides et Ratio*. George F. McLean. ISBN 1565181301 (paper).

IIA.8 *Islamic and Christian Cultures: Conflict or Dialogue: Bulgarian Philosophical Studies, III*. Plament Makariev, ed. ISBN 156518162X (paper).

IIA.9 *Values of Islamic Culture and the Experience of History, Russian Philosophical Studies, I.* Nur Kirabaev, Yuriy Pochta, eds. ISBN 1565181336 (paper).

IIA.10 *Christian-Islamic Preambles of Faith*. Joseph Kenny. ISBN 1565181387 (paper).
IIA.11 *The Historicity of Understanding and the Problem of Relativism in Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics*. Osman Bilen. ISBN 1565181670 (paper).
IIA.12 *Religion and the Relation between Civilizations: Lectures on Cooperation between Islamic and Christian Cultures in a Global Horizon*. George F. McLean. ISBN 1565181522 (paper).
IIA.13 *Modern Western Christian Theological Understandings of Muslims since the Second Vatican Council*. Mahmut Aydin. ISBN 1565181719 (paper).
IIA.14 *Philosophy of the Muslim World; Authors and Principal Themes*. Joseph Kenny. ISBN 1565181794 (paper).
IIA.15 *Islam and Its Quest for Peace: Jihad, Justice and Education*. Mustafa Köylü. ISBN 1565181808 (paper).
IIA.16 *Islamic Thought on the Existence of God: Contributions and Contrasts with Contemporary Western Philosophy of Religion*. Cafer S. Yaran. ISBN 1565181921 (paper).
IIA.17 *Hermeneutics, Faith, and Relations between Cultures: Lectures in Qom, Iran*. George F. McLean. ISBN 1565181913 (paper).
IIA.18 *Change and Essence: Dialectical Relations between Change and Continuity in the Turkish Intellectual Tradition*. Sinasi Gunduz and Cafer S. Yaran, eds. ISBN 1565182227 (paper).
IIA. 19 *Understanding Other Religions: Al-Biruni and Gadamer's "Fusion of Horizons"*. Kemal Ataman. ISBN 9781565182523 (paper).

Series III.Asia

III.1 *Man and Nature: Chinese Philosophical Studies, I*. Tang Yi-jie, Li Zhen, eds. ISBN 0819174130 (paper); 0819174122 (cloth).
III.2 *Chinese Foundations for Moral Education and Character Development: Chinese Philosophical Studies, II.* Tran van Doan, ed. ISBN 1565180321 (paper); 156518033X (cloth).
III.3 *Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity and Chinese Culture: Chinese Philosophical Studies, III*. Tang Yijie. ISBN 1565180348 (paper); 156518035-6 (cloth).
III.4 *Morality, Metaphysics and Chinese Culture (Metaphysics, Culture and Morality, I)*. Vincent Shen and Tran van Doan, eds. ISBN 1565180275 (paper); 156518026-7 (cloth).
III.5 *Tradition, Harmony and Transcendence*. George F. McLean. ISBN 1565180313 (paper); 156518030-5 (cloth).
III.6 *Psychology, Phenomenology and Chinese Philosophy: Chinese Philosophical Studies, VI*. Vincent Shen, Richard Knowles and Tran Van Doan, eds. ISBN 1565180453 (paper); 1565180445 (cloth).
III.7 *Values in Philippine Culture and Education: Philippine Philosophical Studies, I*. Manuel B. Dy, Jr., ed. ISBN 1565180412 (paper); 156518040-2 (cloth).

III.7A *The Human Person and Society: Chinese Philosophical Studies, VIIA*. Zhu Dasheng, Jin Xiping and George F. McLean, eds. ISBN 1565180887.

III.8 *The Filipino Mind: Philippine Philosophical Studies II*. Leonardo N. Mercado. ISBN 156518064X (paper); 156518063-1 (cloth).

III.9 *Philosophy of Science and Education: Chinese Philosophical Studies IX*. Vincent Shen and Tran Van Doan, eds. ISBN 1565180763 (paper); 156518075-5 (cloth).

III.10 *Chinese Cultural Traditions and Modernization: Chinese Philosophical Studies, X*. Wang Miaoyang, Yu Xuanmeng and George F. McLean, eds. ISBN 1565180682 (paper).

III.11 *The Humanization of Technology and Chinese Culture: Chinese Philosophical Studies XI*. Tomonobu Imamichi, Wang Miaoyang and Liu Fangtong, eds. ISBN 1565181166 (paper).

III.12 *Beyond Modernization: Chinese Roots of Global Awareness: Chinese Philosophical Studies, XII*. Wang Miaoyang, Yu Xuanmeng and George F. McLean, eds. ISBN 1565180909 (paper).

III.13 *Philosophy and Modernization in China: Chinese Philosophical Studies XIII*. Liu Fangtong, Huang Songjie and George F. McLean, eds. ISBN 1565180666 (paper).

III.14 *Economic Ethics and Chinese Culture: Chinese Philosophical Studies, XIV*. Yu Xuanmeng, Lu Xiaohe, Liu Fangtong, Zhang Rulun and Georges Enderle, eds. ISBN 1565180925 (paper).

III.15 *Civil Society in a Chinese Context: Chinese Philosophical Studies XV*. Wang Miaoyang, Yu Xuanmeng and Manuel B. Dy, eds. ISBN 1565180844 (paper).

III.16 *The Bases of Values in a Time of Change: Chinese and Western: Chinese Philosophical Studies, XVI*. Kirti Bunchua, Liu Fangtong, Yu Xuanmeng, Yu Wujin, eds. ISBN l56518114X (paper).

III.17 *Dialogue between Christian Philosophy and Chinese Culture: Philosophical Perspectives for the Third Millennium: Chinese Philosophical Studies, XVII*. Paschal Ting, Marian Kao and Bernard Li, eds. ISBN 1565181735 (paper).

III.18 *The Poverty of Ideological Education: Chinese Philosophical Studies, XVIII*. Tran Van Doan. ISBN 1565181646 (paper).

III.19 *God and the Discovery of Man: Classical and Contemporary Approaches: Lectures in Wuhan, China*. George F. McLean. ISBN 1565181891 (paper).

III.20 *Cultural Impact on International Relations: Chinese Philosophical Studies, XX*. Yu Xintian, ed. ISBN 156518176X (paper).

III.21 *Cultural Factors in International Relations: Chinese Philosophical Studies, XXI*. Yu Xintian, ed. ISBN 1565182049 (paper).

III.22 *Wisdom in China and the West*: *Chinese Philosophical Studies, XXII*. Vincent Shen and Willard Oxtoby †. ISBN 1565182057 (paper)

III.23 *China's Contemporary Philosophical Journey: Western Philosophy and Marxism: Chinese Philosophical Studies, XXIII*. Liu Fangtong. ISBN 1565182065 (paper).

III.24 *Shanghai : Its Urbanization and Culture: Chinese Philosophical Studies, XXIV*. Yu Xuanmeng and He Xirong, eds. ISBN 1565182073 (paper).

III.25 *Dialogue of Philosophies, Religions and Civilizations in the Era of Globalization: Chinese Philosophical Studies, XXV*. Zhao Dunhua, ed. ISBN 9781565182431 (paper).

III.26 *Rethinking Marx: Chinese Philosophical Studies, XXVI*. Zou Shipeng and Yang Xuegong, eds. ISBN 9781565182448 (paper).

III.27 *Confucian Ethics in Retrospect and Prospect: Chinese Philosophical Studies XXVII*. Vincent Shen and Kwong-loi Shun, eds. ISBN 9781565182455 (paper).

IIIB.1 *Authentic Human Destiny: The Paths of Shankara and Heidegger: Indian Philosophical Studies, I*. Vensus A. George. ISBN 1565181190 (paper).

IIIB.2 *The Experience of Being as Goal of Human Existence: The Heideggerian Approach: Indian Philosophical Studies, II*. Vensus A. George. ISBN 156518145X (paper).

IIIB.3 *Religious Dialogue as Hermeneutics: Bede Griffiths's Advaitic Approach: Indian Philosophical Studies, III*. Kuruvilla Pandikattu. ISBN 1565181395 (paper).

IIIB.4 *Self-Realization [Brahmaanubhava]: The Advaitic Perspective of Shankara: Indian Philosophical Studies, IV*. Vensus A. George. ISBN 1565181549 (paper).

IIIB.5 *Gandhi: The Meaning of Mahatma for the Millennium: Indian Philosophical Studies, V*. Kuruvilla Pandikattu, ed. ISBN 1565181565 (paper).

IIIB.6 *Civil Society in Indian Cultures: Indian Philosophical Studies, VI*. Asha Mukherjee, Sabujkali Sen (Mitra) and K. Bagchi, eds. ISBN 1565181573 (paper).

IIIB.7 *Hermeneutics, Tradition and Contemporary Change: Lectures in Chennai/Madras, India*. George F. McLean. ISBN 1565181883 (paper).

IIIB.8 *Plenitude and Participation: The Life of God in Man: Lectures in Chennai/Madras, India*. George F. McLean. ISBN 1565181999 (paper).

IIIB.9 *Sufism and Bhakti, a Comparative Study: Indian Philosophical Studies, VII*. Md. Sirajul Islam. ISBN 1565181980 (paper).

IIIB.10 *Reasons for Hope: Its Nature, Role and Future*: *Indian Philosophical Studies, VIII*. Kuruvilla Pandikattu, ed. ISBN 156518 2162 (paper).

IIB.11 *Lifeworlds and Ethics: Studies in Several Keys*: *Indian Philosophical Studies, IX*. Margaret Chatterjee. ISBN 9781565182332 (paper).

IIIB.12 *Paths to the Divine: Ancient and Indian*: *Indian Philosophical Studies, X*. Vensus A. George. ISBN 9781565182486. (paper).

IIB.13 *Faith, Reason, Science: Philosophical Reflections with Special Reference to Fides et Ratio*: *Indian Philosophical Studies, XIII*. Varghese Manimala, ed. IBSN 9781565182554 (paper).

IIIC.1 *Spiritual Values and Social Progress: Uzbekistan Philosophical Studies, I*. Said Shermukhamedov and Victoriya Levinskaya, eds. ISBN 1565181433 (paper).

IIIC.2 *Kazakhstan: Cultural Inheritance and Social Transformation: Kazakh Philosophical Studies, I*. Abdumalik Nysanbayev. ISBN 1565182022 (paper).
IIIC.3 *Social Memory and Contemporaneity: Kyrgyz Philosophical Studies, I*. Gulnara A. Bakieva. ISBN 9781565182349 (paper).
IIID.1*Reason, Rationality and Reasonableness: Vietnamese Philosophical Studies, I*. Tran Van Doan. ISBN 1565181662 (paper).
IIID.2 *Hermeneutics for a Global Age: Lectures in Shanghai and Hanoi*. George F. McLean. ISBN 1565181905 (paper).
IIID.3 *Cultural Traditions and Contemporary Challenges in Southeast Asia*. Warayuth Sriwarakuel, Manuel B.Dy, J.Haryatmoko, Nguyen Trong Chuan, and Chhay Yiheang, eds. ISBN 1565182138 (paper).
IIID.4 *Filipino Cultural Traits: Claro R.Ceniza Lectures*. Rolando M. Gripaldo, ed. ISBN 1565182251 (paper).
IIID.5 *The History of Buddhism in Vietnam*. Chief editor: Nguyen Tai Thu; Authors: Dinh Minh Chi, Ly Kim Hoa, Ha thuc Minh, Ha Van Tan, Nguyen Tai Thu. ISBN 1565180984 (paper).
IIID.6 *Relations between Religions and Cultures in Southeast Asia*. Donny Gadis Arivia and Gahral Adian, eds. ISBN 9781565182509 (paper).

Series IV. Western Europe and North America

IV.1 *Italy in Transition: The Long Road from the First to the Second Republic: The Edmund D. Pellegrino Lectures*. Paolo Janni, ed. ISBN 1565181204 (paper).
IV.2 *Italy and the European Monetary Union: The Edmund D. Pellegrino Lectures*. Paolo Janni, ed. ISBN 156518128X (paper).
IV.3 *Italy at the Millennium: Economy, Politics, Literature and Journalism: The Edmund D. Pellegrino Lectures*. Paolo Janni, ed. ISBN 1565181581 (paper).
IV.4 *Speaking of God*. Carlo Huber. ISBN 1565181697 (paper).
IV.5 *The Essence of Italian Culture and the Challenge of a Global Age*. Paulo Janni and George F. McLean, eds. ISBB 1565181778 (paper).
IV.6 *Italic Identity in Pluralistic Contexts: Toward the Development of Intercultural Competencies*. Piero Bassetti and Paolo Janni, eds. ISBN 1565181441 (paper).

Series IVA. Central and Eastern Europe

IVA.1 *The Philosophy of Person: Solidarity and Cultural Creativity: Polish Philosophical Studies, I*. A. Tischner, J.M. Zycinski, eds. ISBN 1565180496 (paper); 156518048-8 (cloth).
IVA.2 *Public and Private Social Inventions in Modern Societies: Polish Philosophical Studies, II*. L. Dyczewski, P. Peachey, J.A. Kromkowski, eds. ISBN.paper 1565180518 (paper); 156518050X (cloth).
IVA.3 *Traditions and Present Problems of Czech Political Culture: Czechoslovak Philosophical Studies, I*. M. Bednár and M. Vejraka, eds. ISBN 1565180577 (paper); 156518056-9 (cloth).

IVA.4 *Czech Philosophy in the XXth Century: Czech Philosophical Studies, II.* Lubomír Nový and Jirí Gabriel, eds. ISBN 1565180291 (paper); 156518028-3 (cloth).

IVA.5 *Language, Values and the Slovak Nation: Slovak Philosophical Studies, I.* Tibor Pichler and Jana Gašparí-ková, eds. ISBN 1565180372 (paper); 156518036-4 (cloth).

IVA.6 *Morality and Public Life in a Time of Change: Bulgarian Philosophical Studies, I.* V. Prodanov and A. Davidov, eds. ISBN 1565180550 (paper); 1565180542 (cloth).

IVA.7 *Knowledge and Morality: Georgian Philosophical Studies, 1*. N.V. Chavchavadze, G. Nodia and P. Peachey, eds. ISBN 1565180534 (paper); 1565180526 (cloth).

IVA.8 *Cultural Heritage and Social Change: Lithuanian Philosophical Studies, I.* Bronius Kuzmickas and Aleksandr Dobrynin, eds. ISBN 1565180399 (paper); 1565180380 (cloth).

IVA.9 *National, Cultural and Ethnic Identities: Harmony beyond Conflict: Czech Philosophical Studies, IV*. Jaroslav Hroch, David Hollan, George F. McLean, eds. ISBN 1565181131 (paper).

IVA.10 *Models of Identities in Postcommunist Societies: Yugoslav Philosophical Studies, I*. Zagorka Golubovic and George F. McLean, eds. ISBN 1565181211 (paper).

IVA.11 *Interests and Values: The Spirit of Venture in a Time of Change: Slovak Philosophical Studies, II*. Tibor Pichler and Jana Gasparikova, eds. ISBN 1565181255 (paper).

IVA.12 *Creating Democratic Societies: Values and Norms: Bulgarian Philosophical Studies, II*. Plamen Makariev, Andrew M.Blasko and Asen Davidov, eds. ISBN 156518131X (paper).

IVA.13 *Values of Islamic Culture and the Experience of History: Russian Philosophical Studies, I*. Nur Kirabaev and Yuriy Pochta, eds. ISBN 1565181336 (paper).

IVA.14 *Values and Education in Romania Today: Romanian Philosophical Studies, I.* Marin Calin and Magdalena Dumitrana, eds. ISBN 1565181344 (paper).

IVA.15 *Between Words and Reality, Studies on the Politics of Recognition and the Changes of Regime in Contemporary Romania: Romanian Philosophical Studies, II*. Victor Neumann. ISBN 1565181611 (paper).

IVA.16 *Culture and Freedom: Romanian Philosophical Studies, III*. Marin Aiftinca, ed. ISBN 1565181360 (paper).

IVA.17 *Lithuanian Philosophy: Persons and Ideas: Lithuanian Philosophical Studies, II*. Jurate Baranova, ed. ISBN 1565181379 (paper).

IVA.18 *Human Dignity: Values and Justice: Czech Philosophical Studies, III*. Miloslav Bednar, ed. ISBN 1565181409 (paper).

IVA.19 *Values in the Polish Cultural Tradition: Polish Philosophical Studies, III*. Leon Dyczewski, ed. ISBN 1565181425 (paper).

IVA.20 *Liberalization and Transformation of Morality in Post-communist Countries: Polish Philosophical Studies, IV*. Tadeusz Buksinski. ISBN 1565181786 (paper).

IVA.21 *Islamic and Christian Cultures: Conflict or Dialogue: Bulgarian Philosophical Studies, III*. Plament Makariev, ed. ISBN 156518162X (paper).

IVA.22 *Moral, Legal and Political Values in Romanian Culture: Romanian Philosophical Studies, IV*. Mihaela Czobor-Lupp and J. Stefan Lupp, eds. ISBN 1565181700 (paper).

IVA.23 *Social Philosophy: Paradigm of Contemporary Thinking: Lithuanian Philosophical Studies, III.* Jurate Morkuniene. ISBN 1565182030 (paper).

IVA.24 *Romania: Cultural Identity and Education for Civil Society: Romanian Philosophical Studies, V*. Magdalena Dumitrana, ed. ISBN 156518209X (paper).

IVA.25 *Polish Axiology: the 20th Century and Beyond: Polish Philosophical Studies, V*. Stanislaw Jedynak, ed. ISBN 1565181417 (paper).

IVA.26 *Contemporary Philosophical Discourse in Lithuania: Lithuanian Philosophical Studies, IV*. Jurate Baranova, ed. ISBN 156518-2154 (paper).

IVA.27 *Eastern Europe and the Challenges of Globalization: Polish Philosophical Studies, VI*. Tadeusz Buksinski and Dariusz Dobrzanski, ed. ISBN 1565182189 (paper).

IVA.28 *Church, State, and Society in Eastern Europe: Hungarian Philosophical Studies, I*. Miklós Tomka. ISBN 156518226X.

IVA.29 *Politics, Ethics, and the Challenges to Democracy in 'New Independent States': Georgian Philosophical Studies, II*. Tinatin Bochorishvili, William Sweet, Daniel Ahern, eds. ISBN 9781565182240 (paper).

IVA.30 *Comparative Ethics in a Global Age: Russian Philosophical Studies II*. Marietta T. Stepanyants, eds. ISBN 978-1565182356 (paper).

IVA.31 *Identity and Values of Lithuanians: Lithuanian Philosophical Studies, V*. Aida Savicka, eds. ISBN 9781565182367 (paper).

IVA.32 *The Challenge of Our Hope: Christian Faith in Dialogue: Polish Philosophical Studies, VII*. Waclaw Hryniewicz. ISBN 9781565182370 (paper).

IVA.33 *Diversity and Dialogue: Culture and Values in the Age of Globalization: Essays in Honour of Professor George F. McLean*. Andrew Blasko and Plamen Makariev, eds. ISBN 9781565182387 (paper).

IVA. 34 *Civil Society, Pluralism and Universalism: Polish Philosophical Studies, VIII*. Eugeniusz Gorski. ISBN 9781565182417 (paper).

IVA.35 *Romanian Philosophical Culture, Globalization, and Education*: *Romanian Philosophical Studies VI.* Stefan Popenici and Alin Tat and, eds. ISBN 9781565182424 (paper).

IVA.36 *Political Transformation and Changing Identities in Central and Eastern Europe: Lithuanian Philosophical Studies, VI*. Andrew Blasko and Diana Janušauskienė, eds. ISBN 9781565182462 (paper).

IVA.37 *Truth and Morality: The Role of Truth in Public Life: Romanian Philosophical Studies, VII.* Wilhelm Dancă, ed. ISBN 9781565182493 (paper).

IVA.38 *Globalization and Culture: Outlines of Contemporary Social Cognition: Lithuanian Philosophical Studies, VII.* Jurate Morkuniene, ed. ISBN 9781565182516 (paper).

Series V. Latin America

V.1 *The Social Context and Values: Perspectives of the Americas*. O. Pegoraro, ed. ISBN 081917355X (paper); 0819173541 (cloth).
V.2 *Culture, Human Rights and Peace in Central America*. Raul Molina and Timothy Ready, eds. ISBN 0819173576 (paper); 0819173568 (cloth).
V.3 *El Cristianismo Aymara: Inculturacion o Culturizacion?* Luis Jolicoeur. ISBN 1565181042.
V.4 *Love as theFoundation of Moral Education and Character Development*. Luis Ugalde, Nicolas Barros and George F. McLean, eds. ISBN 1565180801.
V.5 *Human Rights, Solidarity and Subsidiarity: Essays towards a Social Ontology*. Carlos E.A. Maldonado ISBN 1565181107.

Series VI. Foundations of Moral Education

VI.1 *Philosophical Foundations for Moral Education and Character Development: Act and Agent*. G. McLean and F. Ellrod, eds. ISBN 156518001-1 (cloth) (paper); ISBN 1565180003.
VI.2 *Psychological Foundations for Moral Education and Character Development: An Integrated Theory of Moral Development*. R. Knowles, ed. ISBN 156518002X (paper); 156518003-8 (cloth).
VI.3 *Character Development in Schools and Beyond*. Kevin Ryan and Thomas Lickona, eds. ISBN 1565180593 (paper); 156518058-5 (cloth).
VI.4 *The Social Context and Values: Perspectives of the Americas*. O. Pegoraro, ed. ISBN 081917355X (paper); 0819173541 (cloth).
VI.5 *Chinese Foundations for Moral Education and Character Development*. Tran van Doan, ed. ISBN 1565180321 (paper); 156518033 (cloth).
VI.6 *Love as theFoundation of Moral Education and Character Development*. Luis Ugalde, Nicolas Barros and George F. McLean, eds. ISBN 1565180801.

Series VII. Seminars on Culture and Values

VII.1 *The Social Context and Values: Perspectives of the Americas*. O. Pegoraro, ed. ISBN 081917355X (paper); 0819173541 (cloth).
VII.2 *Culture, Human Rights and Peace in Central America*. Raul Molina and Timothy Ready, eds. ISBN 0819173576 (paper); 0819173568 (cloth).
VII.3 *Relations Between Cultures*. John A. Kromkowski, ed. ISBN 1565180089 (paper); 1565180097 (cloth).
VII.4 *Moral Imagination and Character Development: Volume I, The Imagination.* George F. McLean and John A. Kromkowski, eds. ISBN 1565181743 (paper).

VII.5 *Moral Imagination and Character Development: Volume II, Moral Imagination in Personal Formation and Character Development*. George F. McLean and Richard Knowles, eds. ISBN 1565181816 (paper).

VII.6 *Moral Imagination and Character Development: Volume III, Imagination in Religion and Social Life.* George F. McLean and John K. White, eds. ISBN 1565181824 (paper).

VII.7 *Hermeneutics and Inculturation*. George F. McLean, Antonio Gallo, Robert Magliola, eds. ISBN 1565181840 (paper).

VII.8 *Culture, Evangelization, and Dialogue.* Antonio Gallo and Robert Magliola, eds. ISBN 1565181832 (paper).

VII.9 *The Place of the Person in Social Life*. Paul Peachey and John A. Kromkowski, eds. ISBN 1565180127 (paper); 156518013-5 (cloth).

VII.10 *Urbanization and Values.* John A. Kromkowski, ed. ISBN 1565180100 (paper); 1565180119 (cloth).

VII.11 *Freedom and Choice in a Democracy, Volume I: Meanings of Freedom*. Robert Magliola and John Farrelly, eds. ISBN 1565181867 (paper).

VII.12 *Freedom and Choice in a Democracy, Volume II: The Difficult Passage to Freedom*. Robert Magliola and Richard Khuri, eds. ISBN 1565181859 (paper).

VII 13 *Cultural Identity, Pluralism and Globalization* (2 volumes). John P. Hogan, ed. ISBN 1565182170 (paper).

VII.14 *Democracy: In the Throes of Liberalism and Totalitarianism*. George F. McLean, Robert Magliola, William Fox, eds. ISBN 1565181956 (paper).

VII.15 *Democracy and Values in Global Times: With Nigeria as a Case Study*. George F. McLean, Robert Magliola, Joseph Abah, eds. ISBN 1565181956 (paper).

VII.16 *Civil Society and Social Reconstruction*. George F. McLean, ed. ISBN 1565180860 (paper).

VII.17 *Civil Society: Who Belongs?* William A.Barbieri, Robert Magliola, Rosemary Winslow, eds. ISBN 1565181972 (paper).

VII.18 *The Humanization of Social Life: Theory and Challenges*. Christopher Wheatley, Robert P. Badillo, Rose B. Calabretta, Robert Magliola, eds. ISBN 1565182006 (paper).

VII.19 *The Humanization of Social Life: Cultural Resources and Historical Responses*. Ronald S. Calinger, Robert P. Badillo, Rose B. Calabretta, Robert Magliola, eds. ISBN 1565182006 (paper).

VII.20 *Religious Inspiration for Public Life: Religion in Public Life, Volume I.* George F. McLean, John A. Kromkowski and Robert Magliola, eds. ISBN 1565182103 (paper).

VII.21 *Religion and Political Structures from Fundamentalism to Public Service: Religion in Public Life, Volume II*. John T. Ford, Robert A. Destro and Charles R. Dechert, eds. ISBN 1565182111 (paper).

VII.22 *Civil Society as Democratic Practice*. Antonio F. Perez, Semou Pathé Gueye, Yang Fenggang, eds. ISBN 1565182146 (paper).

VII.23 *Ecumenism and Nostra Aetate in the 21st Century*. George F. McLean and John P. Hogan, eds. ISBN 1565182197 (paper).

VII.24 *Multiple Paths to God: Nostra Aetate: 40 years Later*. John P. Hogan, George F. McLean & John A. Kromkowski, eds. ISBN 1565182200 (paper).
VII.25 *Globalization and Identity*. Andrew Blasko, Taras Dobko, Pham Van Duc and George Pattery, eds. ISBN 1565182200 (paper).
VII.26 *Communication across Cultures: The Hermeneutics of Cultures and Religions in a Global Age*. Chibueze C. Udeani, Veerachart Nimanong, Zou Shipeng, Mustafa Malik, eds. ISBN: 9781565182400 (paper).

The International Society for Metaphysics

ISM.1 *Person and Nature*. George F. McLean and Hugo Meynell, eds. ISBN 0819170267 (paper); 0819170259 (cloth).
ISM.2 *Person and Society*. George F. McLean and Hugo Meynell, eds. ISBN 0819169250 (paper); 0819169242 (cloth).
ISM.3 *Person and God*. George F. McLean and Hugo Meynell, eds. ISBN 0819169382 (paper); 0819169374 (cloth).
ISM.4 *The Nature of Metaphysical Knowledge*. George F. McLean and Hugo Meynell, eds. ISBN 0819169277 (paper); 0819169269 (cloth).
ISM.5 *Philosophhical Challenges and Opportunities of Globalization*. Oliva Blanchette, Tomonobu Imamichi and George F. McLean, eds. ISBN 1565181298 (paper).
ISM.6 *The Dialogue of Cultural Traditions: Global Perspective*. William Sweet, George F. McLean, Tomonobu Imamichi, Safak Ural, O. Faruk Akyol, eds. ISBN 9781565182585 (paper).

The series is published and distributed by: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, Cardinal Station, P.O. Box 261, Washington, D.C.20064, Tel./Fax.202/319-6089; e-mail: cua-rvp@cua.edu (paper); website: http://www.crvp.org. All titles are available in paper except as noted.